

[EXHIBITION OF THE MONTH]

Blast from the past

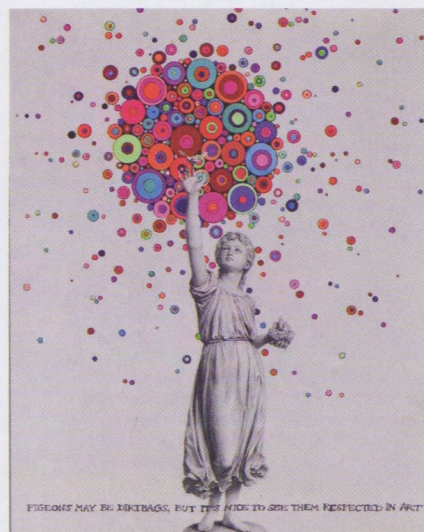


ABOVE: I CAN'T TAKE HIM ANYWHERE, I APOLOGISE, 2017, INK, GOUACHE AND ACRYLIC ON ENGRAVED PAPER, 38 X 48CM.

RIGHT: PIGEONS MIGHT BE DIRTBAGS, BUT IT'S NICE TO SEE THEM RESPECTED IN ART, INK, GOUACHE AND ACRYLIC ON ENGRAVED PAPER, BOTH OLIZA CAMPBELL.

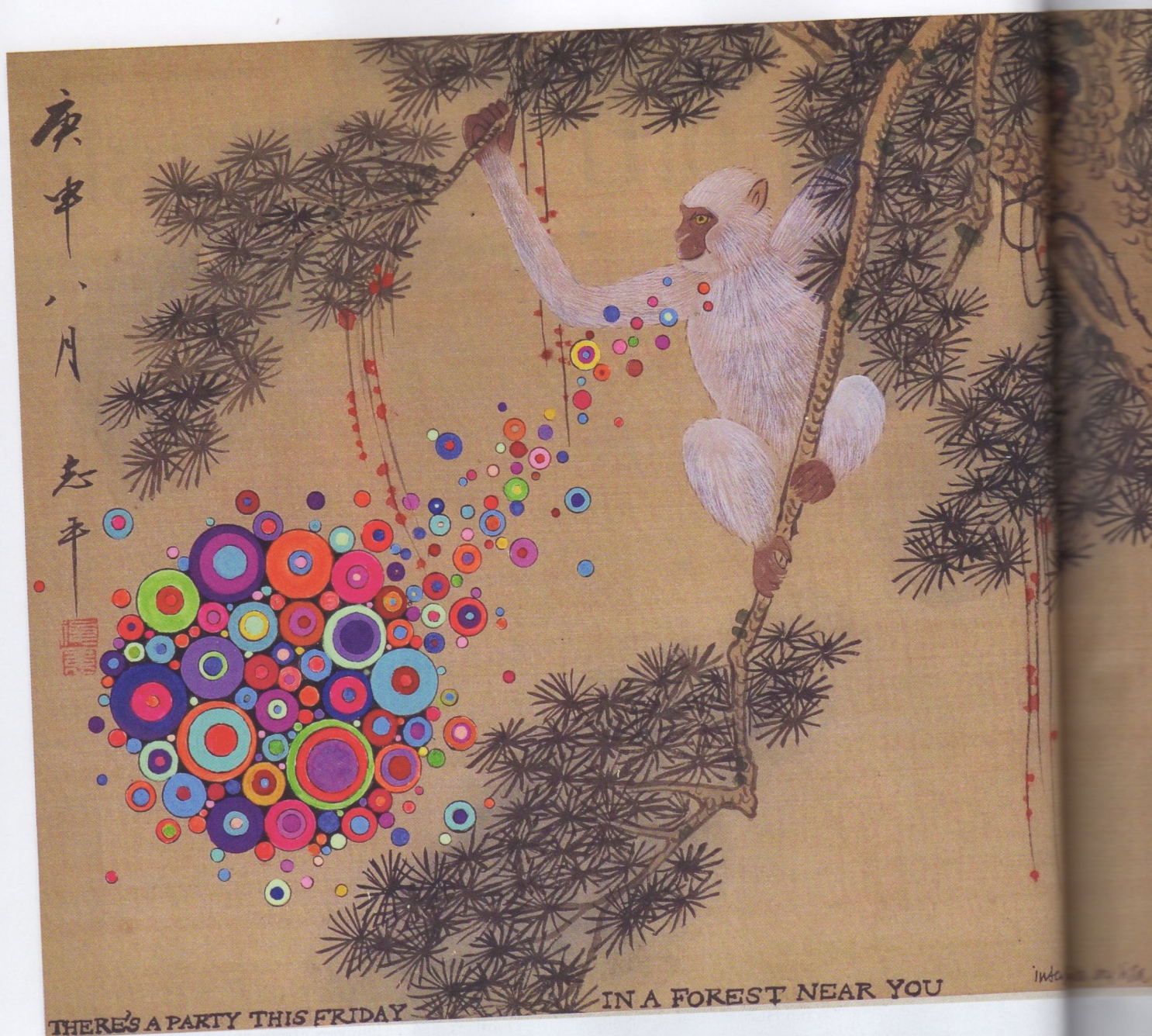


As Liza Campbell, Lucy Temple and Sarah Hiscox put the finishing touches to their group exhibition at Rebecca Hossack Art Gallery this month, the trio talks to **Lauren Romano** about reworking traditional art forms



Some artists take brushes to canvas; others mould clay at a wheel, or chisel stone into sculptures – and then there's Liza Campbell. She "tinkers", "intrudes" and "attacks" old silk and paper etchings, reworking them with bold psychedelic shapes, pithy one-liners and anachronistic quips. "A Gemini with instability rising" reads the caption beneath a 19th century engraving of an austere-looking Lord Raglan, Commander in Chief of the British Army in the East; while a parochial scene from the same era is re-titled: "You are not the king of gypsies Clive, you are my accountant".

This month, Campbell's way with words has provided the name for a group exhibition at Rebecca Hossack Art Gallery. *There's a Party On A Thursday in a Forest Near You*, will feature her engravings alongside ►



► Islamic patterns by Lucy Temple and icon paintings from Sarah Hiscox.

Campbell, who was born in the Scottish Highlands and grew up in Cawdor Castle (alluded to in Shakespeare's *Macbeth*), learnt about the art of soapstone engraving while living on a remote island off the coast of Kenya. She's been putting the "rave back into engraving" since her first show in 1997.

Today, she doctors old "overwrought Victorian" etchings ("the more ludicrously over the top and biblical the better") sourced at fairs in Surrey's Kempton Park, with maverick words and iridescent ink. "I'm constantly writing things down; words always find their way into my art," she says. "I'm intrigued by

satire and iconoclasm and I just want to laugh; people don't always laugh a lot when it comes to art.

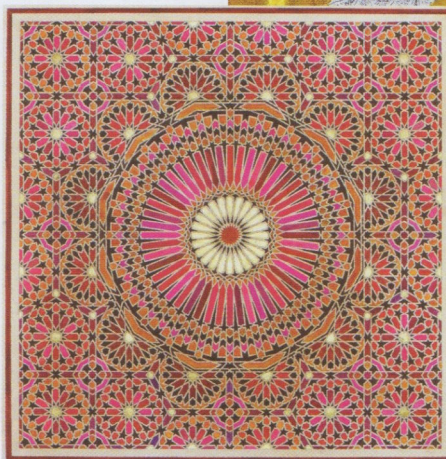
"The more seriously an etching is taking itself, the more I'm drawn to it. Back in my studio I've got lists of things I want to use as titles and then I kind of match them up and start giving the works a bit of 'MDMA' in the background to cheer things up," she adds with a wry smile. Other pieces to be shown include a map made up of passive aggressive comments and a tapestry. "I've got some inner Victorian in me, I'm a slave to cross-stitch," Campbell laments. "Sewing is so serious and homely that I wanted to give it a kick in the shins, so the tapestry is mainly a list of complaints."

Although visually very different, all three artists are united in their use of traditional materials and techniques, which they update for the 21st century.

Lucy Temple's brightly coloured Islamic geometry patterns are made the traditional way – with a compass and a ruler. The level of intricate detail is almost dizzying, not least because of the scale of the works, some of which measure a metre and a half in height. Temple gives the ancient and revered art form a modern twist with a Pop Art-inspired colour scheme. But is this “sacred geometry” in danger of dying out?

Temple is optimistic. “Now that I’m on Instagram, there’s a whole community of us out there who have found each other,” she says. It was her father, the renowned icon dealer Sir Richard Temple, who persuaded her to do an MA in Islamic Design at the Prince’s School of Traditional Arts. As a lifelong lover of patterns and detail, she relishes the repetitiveness of the process. “I feel calm and relaxed when I paint and then I end up with this beautiful, colourful thing,” she tells me.

Lucy's father also inspired the work of fellow exhibitor Sarah Hiscox. “Icons are really powerful and meditative,” she says. “I always loved going to Lucy’s dad’s gallery and looking at them all.” Hiscox studied with a Russian icon master who taught her all about the revered process and symbolic meaning involved in creating an icon. Her works continue in this tradition, with ink and gold leaf on handmade gesso panels. “For this exhibition I didn’t want to go back to creating saints like I have done before; I wanted to move forward. I love the thought process behind icons, so I decided to use the same technique but depict different subjects from the natural world.” The result is a striking collection of gold leaf panels featuring flora and fauna.



“People don’t always laugh a lot when it comes to art”

The trio are firm friends (Temple and Hiscox have known each other since they were teenagers, meeting Campbell four years ago at a New Year’s Eve party) and have exhibited together once before. They describe each other’s input as “invaluable”, especially as the life of an artist can be a

solitary one and finding shared studio space in West London virtually impossible, despite the booming local art scene. They also provide mutual support to get through the dreaded opening night.

“It’s always very nerve-wracking, but what’s nice about doing the show as a trio is that we all get nervous at different times,” Campbell says. “You might have been working on a collection for several years and then most of the selling happens on one night. Sometimes you think ‘is anyone actually going to like my work?’”

Take note readers: there’s a party this month at a gallery near you, and Campbell, Temple and Hiscox want to see you there. ■

There’s a Party On A Thursday in a Forest Near You, 11-21 October, Rebecca Hossack Art Gallery, 2a Conway Street, W1T, rebeccahossack.com

FROM LEFT TO RIGHT:
LIZA CAMPBELL, *THERE’S A PARTY THIS FRIDAY IN A FOREST NEAR YOU*, 2017, INK, GOUACHE AND ACRYLIC ON ENGRAVED PAPER, 40.3 X 47CM; LUCY TEMPLE, *CREOLE*, 2017, WATERCOLOUR ON TEA STAINED PAPER, 85 X 85CM; SARAH HISCOX, *HYDRANGEA*, 2017, INK AND GOLD LEAF ON GESSO, 28 X 33CM