

Get your canine on canvas and get a manicure

BY CHARLOTTE CRIPPS

Why not get your dog painted at Miami Art Fair this weekend? British born artist Robert Clarke, who has been commissioned to paint Victoria Beckham's bulldog, Coco, for Christmas, will be producing on-the-spot portraits as your pooch receives a 'pawdicure'.

This pop-up event is taking place tomorrow in Miami's glamorous nail salon Lace, where stars such as Jamie Foxx and Anna Kournikova get their nails done.

"Pawdicure and Portraits" is expected to be light relief from all the serious art buying and wild parties.

Clarke, who trained at St Martin's School of Art, has also showcased a series of dog portraits at the Paul Smith store in London's Sloane Square. This series, presented as part of "Pawdicure and Portraits" in Miami, show his whimsical renderings, which capture the essence of each dog's personality in a "loose and painterly style", set off against a bold colour plan background.

"It is not traditional portraiture in any sense," says Ben Austin, director of FluffPr, which organises pop-up art and fashion events all over the world. "Clarke puts the dog at the bottom of the picture with lots of space above it. This special Miami series is done in pastel pinks and baby blues, which is in keeping with the art deco feel of Miami. There is so much going on in the art world in Miami that we decided to do something a bit tongue-in-cheek that appeals to the high flyers in town. We wanted to capture some of the spirit of Miami and this is a novel way to do it. Dog owners can also get a manicure while the dog is painted."

Clarke first started painting dogs 10 years ago when he got a Jack Russell. He went to puppy class, which he describes as an "awakening experience". Then he began to "embrace the whole dog community". It was only natural that he wanted to celebrate this world in drawings and paintings.

"You take the dog to the park and meet fabulous people you wouldn't come across everyday..." says Clarke. "I started to draw and paint and really its been a voyage of canine discovery ever since."

Observations



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