

THOMAS DANE GALLERY

Maitland, Hayley. 'Anthea Hamilton Might Not Be Excited About Her Latest Exhibition - But You Really Should Be'. *Vogue*, Online. 13 March 2019.

VOGUE

Anthea Hamilton Might Not Be Excited About Her Latest Exhibition -
But You Really Should Be

ART

Anthea Hamilton Might Not Be Excited About Her Latest Exhibition - But You Really Should Be



CREDIT: COLIN DODGSON

11 DUKE STREET, ST JAMES'S, LONDON SW1Y 6BN

TEL +44 (0)20 7925 2505 FAX +44 (0)20 7925 2506 info@thomasdane.com

THOMAS DANE GALLERY

"I never look very excited," Anthea Hamilton tells me, fixing me with a withering stare. "I think that's quite well known. It's just how I am." We're standing in the middle of Mayfair's Thomas Dane Gallery, mere days before her latest show is due to open. It's an odd statement for any creative to make - not to mention an artist known for putting a pair of vast golden buttocks in the Turner Prize exhibition and taking over Tate Britain with a series of pumpkin-headed figures dressed by Loewe's Jonathan Anderson.

Making it even more bizarre? The inspiration behind *The Prude*. Hamilton's latest installation is a sort of retort to Cecil Vyse, the insufferable Edwardian killjoy in E. M. Forster's *A Room With A View*, and the exhibition is full of...well, excitement. There are vast prints of cheerful Gerbera daisies and a room that feels like being inside a Battenberg cake and a gigantic portrait of a Sasquatch Lady by cartoonist R Crumb. Yes, there are nods to her earlier work here - see the tiled "interventions" and the *Wrestler Sedan Chair* - but it's more joyful than anything she has done previously.

Below, the Turner Prize nominee shares the thought process behind her breath-taking installation.



"I see all of the pieces in an exhibition as a cohesive work. I've really considered the environment. If you climb an oak-panelled staircase up into a prestigious Mayfair gallery, you have specific...preconceptions, let's say, about what you're going to find there. So, I've covered all of the walls in fur. It's faux, of course. I actually sourced it from this old-fashioned cloth house near my studio in south London owned by a man named Maurice. All of the answers can be found in the few bolts of fabric that he has. I'm always looking for different ways to change the acoustics in a place as well - and this will soften the noise in here."

"The walls in this section were airbrushed by hand. I lifted the pattern from an Ed Ruscha painting. It's ever-changing in the light. My inspiration for the layout of this room is actually David Hockney's studio in Notting Hill in

THOMAS DANE GALLERY

the Sixties. There are photographs of it filled with laser cut outs of trees. Lately, I've been using a lot of source material from that period. I started working with butterflies for my exhibition at the Secession Building in Vienna, a famous art nouveau space. I was looking for something symmetrical to match the artifice of its natural lines - and butterflies are everywhere in our culture, for better or worse. I was like, if I try and work with them as a theme, will I fall into the pitfalls of the cliché of the motif? It was almost a test of my criticality as a maker. I refracted each species' natural patterns as a nod to insects' compound vision."

"I decided that this room would be monochrome - a sort of antidote to the chaos of Mayfair visible through the window. The wall coverings are a muted, blown up version of the Hamilton tartan. It's a bit like staking my claim on the gallery - except that obviously this tartan was never intended to represent me. My father is from the Caribbean, and Hamilton is an adopted name for us. It allows for many different readings of the work. These prints were taken in Kettle's Yard while the museum was closed. I had a photographer shoot the multidisciplinary artist Carlos Maria Romero (also known as Atabey) handling all of these priceless objects from the collection while nude. It felt like quite a liberty even though I had obviously been given permission. I was keen for the room overall to feel a bit like it was designed by David Hicks."

"I captured the African daisies in this section on a trip to Tuscany. The flowers were just exploding in these pots on somebody's windowsill. Their blossoms cover the walls but also a particular sculpture - which is sort of an amalgamation of a plinth and a frame. I juxtaposed them with prints of autumn leaves - and the metal, which reminds me of an icy winter's day. Basically, there's lots of seasons happening at once in this room. Then, the Hamilton tartan is carried over from next door, although this time it's slanted - which mimics the parquet floor and draws you almost irresistibly into the room."

The Prude is at Thomas Dane Gallery through May 18.

<https://www.vogue.co.uk/article/anthea-hamilton-the-prude-thomas-dane-gallery>