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VOGUE

ARTS & LIFESTYLE

Anthea Hamilton On Her Intriguing New Tate Commission

The 40-year-old British artist tells *Vogue* about her Tate Britain Duveen Commission, *The Squash*, with costumes by Jonathan Anderson.



SERAPHINA NEVILLE

"Look at this picture. It's a bum, but it's a doorway – that's great." Thus went Anthea Hamilton's thought process when she discovered Italian architect Gaetano Pesce's 1972 design for a Manhattan doorway, comprising a splayed pair of buttocks. Having secured Pesce's permission, Hamilton made a super-size golden version and it promptly became the most-Instagrammed work at the 2016 Turner Prize exhibition. The selfies didn't annoy her. "That's just how people interact with things." It was the "lack of ability to see beyond – anything," that she found more problematic.

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SERAPHINA NEVILLE



Anthea Hamilton in her studio in Clapham, wearing Maison Margiela, photographed for the January 2018 issue. Hair: Tommy Taylor. Styling: Poppy Kain.
COLIN DODGSON

Hamilton, 40, is a thinker - as is evident when one experiences her latest work, *The Squash*, an installation that comprises Tate Britain's Duveen Commission 2018. Having covered the floor of the imposing neoclassical gallery in 7,000 white bathroom-style tiles (in conjunction with set designer Dylan Atkins), and displayed items from Tate's collection on plinths (Henry Moore, in abundance), she has placed a solo performer in a squash-like costume at the heart of the Duveen. Every day for six months, a performer will select a costume from a rack of seven created by Loewe and its creative director, Jonathan Anderson, and explore the space.

With a practice that's research-heavy, taking her from Venetian architecture to a photograph of a brilliantly young Karl Lagerfeld in one swift library scour, her work is multifarious. She works in three-year cycles and hoards ideas - though she's finally kicked her car boot habit. "I used to collect lots and lots of things - bricks, for instance - but then I completely stopped. Now, I've got more questions to ask things, so I don't need as much stuff." Turns out the hoarding, however, was behind this latest project.

Here, she tells *Vogue* what inspired her Tate Duveen commission, the day before it opens to the public, on March 22.

"The starting point of the work is a found image I've had for many years. It shows a person dressed in a costume like a squash, pumpkin or gourd. I no longer have the caption for it, so cannot trace it. It's a wonderful mystery. I don't know what the purpose of that image was, so the only way to get to know more about it was to try and make my own version of it. The initial remake of the image was staged as a 6-minute extract for a performance at the Serpentine Galleries in 2016. The commission takes that small moment and stretches it in to a 6-month performance in the Tate Britain's Duveen galleries.

"The tiled floor is there to assert a space alternative to the domineering architecture of the Duveen galleries and is there to function as a stage for the performer, a neutral space which is on the performers terms rather than that of the institution. What is most exciting is that despite the scale of the installation and the complexity of the build, the essence of the work is that it is a slow, secretive process. The performers are the only ones privy to the references to the work - I've shared those secrets with them. The length of the performance, the numerous costumes and long

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duration means no visitor will be able to take in all the performance, for them it'd be different at each viewing, it's all for the performers to know. In that way, it goes beyond me. It has it's own life, I've merely set it in (slow) motion.

"A small group of works from the Tate's collection is part of the display as part of the mis-en-scène, they were chosen upon the criteria of what would be most satisfying to the touch, rather than the eye. Although a highly-visual environment, vision is least important of the senses here."



MATT GREENWOOD

Anthea Hamilton's *The Squash* is at Tate Britain from March 22 until Oct 7; Tate.org.uk.

<http://www.vogue.co.uk/article/anthea-hamilton-tate-commission-2018>

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