

NICOLE WASSALL: PRECIOUS METTLE

25 SEPTEMBER – 15 NOVEMBER 2019

FIUMANO CLASE



Nicole Wassall, 'Thank You', limited edition of 10 black and white prints (giclée) on Somerset Enhanced 100% cotton paper. Unframed print size: 33 x 48cm, 2019

Precious Mettle, a unique solo exhibition by British artist Nicole Wassall, opens at contemporary London gallery Fiumano Clase on 25 September and runs until 15 November 2019. This show investigates emotional strength through Wassall's intriguing use of a variety of materials: brass frames, suspended gold wires, granite, coins, wood, sound, and a silver marionette puppet.

Complex processes, such as water-gilding, are combined with high concept ideas to create evocative artworks which pose questions on very human subjects, such as religion, war and gender equality.

Thank You (pictured above) consists of multiple parts: the first part is a pile of polished two pence coins, each coin has had 'EQUAL PAY 4 WOMEN' stamped across the two sides. The second part of the piece is a print, showing the detail of a 1971 two pence coin. This was the year, after the 1970 Equal Pay Act, that the 'new' decimal currency was introduced. It was also the year when Queen Elizabeth II's allowance was more than doubled, from £475,000 to £980,000.

This piece is inspired by the one penny coins which appeared circa 1912 with a crudely stamped 'VOTES FOR WOMEN' across King Edward VII's head. Little is known about these coins, but they

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were regarded as part of Suffragette action, targeting the patriarchy. Wassall uses contemporary and classical techniques to create a thought-provoking dialogue between past, present and future.

The artist's work is often concerned with feminist ideas and issues of inequality more broadly in terms of race, class and religion, an increasingly relevant source of debate in today's world. She uses a metronome in her piece entitled, *Equality*, to demonstrate, through sound, the uncomfortably slow dance for equality. As the repetitive beat of the metronome disappears into background noise, Wassall draws the viewers' attention to how quickly we, as a society, become unquestioningly comfortable with outdated social norms.

A black granite stone with Wassall's poem *Where White Poppies Grow* engraved on its surface, makes up one of three parts of *Maquette of the memorial that will never be made*. The artist describes war as "an aching symbol of the failure of human nature", something expressed clearly in this memorial which focuses on futility and loss.

Wassall's use of natural materials demonstrates the idea of physical and emotional resilience in her work. Art for her is a way of commenting on the best and worst aspects of human nature.

Private view: **24 September 2019 (6 – 8.30pm)**

Francesca Fiumano & Jo Baring in conversation with Nicole Wassall: **1 October 2019 (10am)**

Fiumano Clase
Unit 12
21 Wren Street
London WC1X 0HF

Opening hours:
Tuesday – Friday 12– 6pm
Saturday – 12– 4pm