

A WORK OF HEART

Popular contemporary artist **Peter Smith** takes a warm and witty look at the weird eccentricities of modern life in his latest collection 'May Contain Nuts', which sees him affectionately revisit his quirky and lovable characters



↑ **Meet The Lubbas**
Boxed Canvas edition of 150
Image 30" x 40"
£575



Mention the name Peter Smith in art circles and the word 'Impossimals' and 'Zeppos' will be flying round the room in no time. These signature striped animal characters are Smith's hallmark and one that he has explored to great effect since his launch collection was snapped up just over three years ago.

The impressive new collection 'May Contain Nuts' sees him revive long established themes of love and emotional happiness. It's a collection packed with wry humour and quirky perceptions on everyday life - a compelling factor in Smith's success - which to date has seen phenomenal sales of his limited edition prints.

The title is Smith's own reflection on the absurdities of modern life: "I was walking around Woolworths one day and saw this child's Superman cape with a warning that said 'Wearing does not enable the user to fly'. It got me thinking about the ridiculous things we have become used to. Is it just me or does everything in today's society seem to carry some kind of advice that used to form part of general common sense?" asks Smith, who says it is those 'nuts' of life - the eccentric, the weird, and the unexpected, that he wanted to explore.

A self-taught artist, Smith made a huge impact on the art world when he first produced his colourful and striking paintings. Now best loved for his colourful portraits of rotund and cuddly hippopotamus-like creatures, it is important in understanding his work to be able to follow the Smith



'code.' For example, he explains that the Zeppos with their black and white stripes and ties are authoritarian, work-related characters while the lovable Impossimals represent everyday people with emotions and feelings. In a similar vein, rings represent the body, hills are a barometer of happiness, houses represent the need for stability and security, while hearts equal love, relationships, companionship and trust. "My work generates different stories for different individuals - some see it as painting, →





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Think of a title for the artist Peter Smith’s next artwork and tell us the reason behind your choice in less than 50 words. The winner will receive the fabulous original when it’s completed. Call into the gallery for an entry form, and there’s no purchase necessary to enter. More details at washingtongreen.co.uk

↑ ***May Contain Nuts**
Boxed Canvas
Edition of 150
Image 36" x 36"
£625

a decorative object or a serious look at the world,” says Smith.

Fans of the Impossimals will enjoy seeing the circle completed in the ‘final instalment’ painting of ‘Meet The Lubbas’ - a colourful riot of pink and white stripes in which Mr and Mrs Lubba, now joined by two children come together in a loving embrace with the signature stripes forming what Smith calls “the eternal shield of love”. That same sense of emotional intimacy is portrayed in another Impossimal portrait ‘In Your Arms’ in which he explores the theme of parental love. “It is expressing the unconditional love of a parent for a child. The intimacy of the pose shows that this is a special moment. At some point childhood leaves us and the soft toy will be discarded, but the memory of a special bond will always remain,” explains Smith.

Parental love and control are themes also relevant in ‘Do You Come Here Often?’ in which Smith turns the clichéd old pick-up line on its head. “It’s actually to do with the naughty step that friends of mine instigated for their children – one of the children

would be sent to the naughty step and the parents would feel hugely guilty and then the next one would go and they would end up feeling twice as bad, and I liked the idea of the naughty step being a place of meeting and hanging out.”

‘Revolution’ is the most serious and profound piece in the collection. A striking and technically brilliant painting, Smith explores the idea of life whizzing by: “You pass people every day in the street with barely a glance – faces merging into a blur, but if you stand and watch life pass each side of you, the fact is the slower you go the more you see.” He explains that each Impossimal on the rings displays different characteristics. “Some are interested in others and some are determined to go faster” says Smith who sagely adds with a note of wisdom, “Maybe the next revolution will come when we all stand still!”

The biggest and most ambitious piece in the collection is ‘The Eternal Gift’ – a 3D sculpture which derives from his earlier,

↓ **The Naughty Step**
Hand-Painted Sculpture
Edition of 150
Height 8½"
£350





← **Revolution**
 Canvas edition of 150
 Image 30" x 40"
 Framed £850

more serious collection 'Far Beyond Driven'. Now a five foot stainless steel and bronze sculpture carefully crafted to maintain perfect balance, it is a visualisation of everything a relationship has to offer in terms of love and trust, and represents a bold new step for the ever evolving work of Peter Smith. "I should add that you can put this in your garden and it will be totally weatherproof too," says the gifted and highly collectable Mr Smith.

→ **Do You Come Here Often?**

Boxed Canvas
 Edition of 150
 Image 30" x 40"
 £575



Peter Smith will be exhibiting in galleries nationwide from November onwards