

## Michael Landy: Saints Alive

**Issued: January 2013**

23 May – 24 November 2013

Sunley Room

Admission free

This summer, the National Gallery's Sunley Room comes alive with an exhibition of vibrant kinetic sculptures created by artist Michael Landy. Inspired by works in the Gallery's collection, [Michael Landy: Saints Alive](#) is the culmination of Landy's position as the Gallery's current Rootstein Hopkins Associate Artist in residence.

Landy's imagination has been captured by images of saints in the collection; the colourful and detailed portrayal of their lives, their attributes, and stories of their single-mindedness and strength have provided powerful stimuli for Landy's work. Towering over visitors, the seven large-scale sculptures swivel and turn, in movements that evoke the drama of each saint's life. Saints Apollonia, Catherine, Francis, Jerome, Thomas – and an additional sculpture that takes a number of saints as its inspiration – fill the Sunley Room alongside collages on paper that show the creative process on which Landy embarked to arrive at the kinetic sculptures.

The large-scale sculptures are formed of re-imagined fragments of National Gallery paintings cast in fibreglass, painted and assembled with the surprising addition of metal cogs, wheels, defunct fan belts and motors that Landy has accumulated from junkyards, car boot sales and flea markets. Landy has reworked the two-dimensional images into energetic three-dimensional pieces, creating elements hidden from view in the original paintings, such as a saint's back or the fullness of folds of drapery. Keen to involve visitors and to facilitate interaction with the works, Landy has devised foot pedal mechanisms that crank the works to life.

Landy was particularly attracted to works by artists of the early Renaissance displayed in the Gallery's Sainsbury Wing, including Carlo Crivelli, [Saint Jerome](#) (about 1476); Lucas Cranach the Elder, [Saints Genevieve and Apollonia](#) (1506); Sassetta, [The Stigmatisation of Saint Francis](#) (1437–44); and Cosimo Tura, [Saint Jerome](#) (probably about 1470). The show includes a three-metre-diameter fibreglass interactive wheel installation in response to a work by Pintoricchio: [Saint Catherine of Alexandria with a Donor](#) (probably about 1480–1500). Visitors can spin the wheel, the symbol associated with Saint Catherine, to reveal episodes of the saint's life as they pass among the sculptures or view the large collage created with fragments of wheel images reproduced from paintings in the collection.

Born in London in 1963, Landy attended Goldsmiths College and is part of the generation of artists who became known as the YBAs (Young British Artists). He is best known for his 2001 installation, 'Break Down', where he catalogued and then destroyed all of his possessions in a former department store in London. Michael Landy became the [National Gallery Rootstein Hopkins Associate Artist](#) in residence in 2010.

### Notes to Editors:

#### About Michael Landy

Michael Landy's work varies from monumental installations and epic performances to meticulous drawings and collages. His work can be at the same time naturalistic and allegorical, extreme yet light-hearted, and offers a subtle, playful and highly idiosyncratic critique of society, consumerism and the alienation of the self.

### Related events

#### Michael Landy: Saints Alive

23 May – 24 November 2013

### See also

#### Press and media

Find out more about press and media at the National Gallery

#### Associate Artist Scheme

More about the contemporary artists who have taken part in the scheme

After studying at Loughborough College of Art and Design and Goldsmiths College, he participated in the seminal 1988 London exhibition 'Freeze'. His first major project, 'Market' (1990), consisted of a large-scale assembly of generic market stalls, artificial turf and plastic bread crates, installed in the vast disused 'Building One' in East London. His 1996 'Scrapheap Services', now in the Tate collection, is a room-size installation of a fictional 'people-cleansing' company.

His scrupulous re-examination of the oeuvre of Swiss sculptor Jean Tinguely culminated in 'Joyous Machines', an exhibition of works by both artists at Tate Liverpool.

His work has been in numerous group shows since 1989, including the 1997 'Sensation' exhibition at the Royal Academy, and 'Brilliant! New Art from London' at the Walker Art Centre in 1995.

Recent projects have included 'Art Bin' (2010), installed at the South London Gallery. Artists were invited to throw their failed works into a huge skip, which occupied the entire Gallery space. For 'Michael Landy: Art World Portraits' (2011), a small selection of Landy's portrait drawings were displayed at the National Portrait Gallery. Most recently, 'Acts of Kindness' (2010–11), commissioned by Art on the Underground, saw Landy ask members of the public who had witnessed or taken part in acts of kindness while travelling on the London Underground, to write about them. A selection of these is published on the Transport for London website: [art.tfl.gov.uk/actsofkindness](http://art.tfl.gov.uk/actsofkindness) [External link]. A further selection was printed and displayed as artworks in trains and on Central Line stations.

Michael Landy lives and works in London.

Landy began his residency at the National Gallery in March 2010.

#### **About the Rootstein Hopkins Foundation Associate Artist Scheme**

The Rootstein Hopkins Foundation Associate Artist Scheme enables leading contemporary artists to work with a collection of paintings that were made before 1900.

The appointment is by invitation and is for a period of two years. The artist is given a studio in which to make new work that in some way connects to the National Gallery Collection. It is designed to demonstrate the continuing inspiration of the Old Master tradition on today's artists.

For more information about the Foundation please visit [www.rhfoundation.org.uk](http://www.rhfoundation.org.uk) [External link]

**For press information please contact Lizzie Phillips at [lizzie.phillips@ng-london.org.uk](mailto:lizzie.phillips@ng-london.org.uk) / 020 7747 2532.**

For public information, please contact 020 7747 2885 or [information@ng-london.org.uk](mailto:information@ng-london.org.uk)

**Publicity images** can be obtained from <http://press.ng-london.org.uk>. To obtain a username please contact the National Gallery Press Office on 020 7747 2865 or email [press@ng-london.org.uk](mailto:press@ng-london.org.uk)

#### **Catalogue**

##### **'Michael Landy: Saints Alive'**

Colin Wiggins, with Richard Cork and Jennifer Sliwka  
Published by the National Gallery Company: £9.99

#### **Dates and opening hours**

Open to public: 23 May – 24 November 2013

Open daily 10am–6pm (last admission 5pm)  
Fridays 10–9pm (last admission 8.15pm)



The National Gallery, Trafalgar Square, London WC2N 5DN