



art | business | soul

Unit 33 Al Serkal Avenue  
Street 8, Al Quoz 1, Dubai  
Tel: 04 323 6367  
email: gallery@mojo-me.com  
www.themojogallery.com

# The **Social** Seen

Observations on Human Interaction | By Hatty Pedder

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Thanks to: Gerry O'Leary, Michelle Chedotal and everyone at Mojo.



Her human subjects are bird-like, out-of-shape, vain, pasty, camp, hairy, snobby, pretentious, over-confident, over-dressed, oblivious, bewildered and absurd.

Yet we feel a strange kinship with the creatures in Hatty Pedder's paintings. They might be weird or even grotesque, but there is an underlying vulnerability and emptiness that we can all relate to.

Every character in Hatty's work is infused with exaggerated life. Hatty's pen is always searching, exploring every nook and cranny of her subject – inventing slow-burning subplots that make her paintings a never-ending discovery.

Although finished with daring flourishes of mixed-medium techniques Hatty's work is essentially born from the drawn line – infinitely varied, with thicks and thins, delicate and abrasive, smooth lines and jagged – and it is this that gives each subject it's satirical bite.



## HATTY PEDDER BIOGRAPHY

Hatty Pedder was born in the UK in 1969, but spent the majority of her childhood abroad, including a number of years in Dubai during the 1980's.

From an early age Hatty developed a deep love for figurative art – particularly the Pre-Raphaelite movement - and in 1989 she won a place at Central St. Martin's College of Art & Design in London where she began to develop her unique style. Her narrative, observational work may not betray an overt Pre-Raphaelite link, but the influence of Aubrey Beardsley's beguiling black line figures is unmistakable.

Ironically, the biggest inspiration behind Hatty's complex compositional style is one of the Pre-Raphaelite movements most ardent detractors – English Victorian social painter William Frith. However, in Hatty's hands, this apparent contradiction in artistic influence merely works to create a style that comes across as both freeform and yet immensely disciplined.

At the start of her career Hatty was commissioned by a number of UK publications, including Tatler, to illustrate stories and articles, and in 1994 she moved back to Dubai with her husband and new-born daughter.

Always comfortable moving between various genres and working in different mediums, Hatty took on many artistic and commercial art commissions in the UAE which included producing a wide scope of photographic, illustrative and montage work.

During this time her art was also exhibited at the New Orientalists Exhibition at the Abu Dhabi Cultural Foundation, and at The Majlis and XVA Galleries in Dubai.

In the last few years Hatty has returned to her first love, painting – quietly absorbing and studying the goings-on at the many events in the Emirates, and building up the body of work that forms the basis of 'The Social Seen' Exhibition at The Mojo Gallery.

## Q&A WITH HATTY PEDDER



### Hatty, tell us about your latest collection.

'The Social Seen' Exhibition is my personal interpretation of social interaction in Dubai using various different mediums. Some of the pieces are inspired by Dubai's incredible events like the Dubai World Cup, Dubai Fashion Week and the Dubai Boat Show. Other works have been created by simply observing life in places like beaches and parks. Included in the exhibition is a series of large collages with very detailed panoramic scenes, where hopefully the viewer will discover all sorts of stories and sub-plots. In contrast I have also produced a series of spontaneous black ink linear images which examine and sometimes exaggerate individual characteristics. As a combined body of work, 'The Social Seen' series has been designed to reflect the bubbling cauldron of Dubai's multi-cultural population and their interaction within this very unique city.

### From where do you draw your inspiration?

All my inspiration comes from people, and here in Dubai there is a wealth of shall we say, raw material. It's a multi cultural population from every walk of life; people celebrating fashion, art, sport and life-in-general against a backdrop of wonderful quirky and opulent environments. Sometimes my inspiration originates from something very simple and insignificant, it could be bizarre shop signage, a strange mannerism or someone interacting awkwardly with someone else.

### What about artists?

I have always loved the work of Aubrey Beardsley and William Frith. I draw inspiration from their very contrasting styles - the powerful, stark compositions and linear black lines of Beardsley's work, and the detailed panoramic social scenes of Frith's Victorian reportage paintings. Of course there are many others - probably too many to mention - but I'll say Gauguin, Matisse, Klimt and Ronald Searle just to get us started.

### Ronald Searle is an interesting one, as he would normally be described as an 'illustrator' or a 'cartoonist'. Do you think illustration is a legitimate artform?

Have you seen the line drawings he did when he was a Prisoner of War? They are some of the most poignant works of art you will ever see. When you think he risked his life just to record what was going on, that is the calling of a true artist. He was also a huge influence on people like Ralph Steadman and Gerald Scarf who will undoubtedly go down in history as great stylistic social commentators just as people like Hogarth and even Beryl Cook have done in retrospect. I think

labels are just there to differentiate what is perceived to be 'important' at the time. Great work is great work whatever people choose to call it.

### So, we probably shouldn't label your work as 'Social Satire' then?

Well, I think the literal definition of 'satire' is to ridicule or criticize, and in this sense I think it's maybe too strong a word, because that isn't my intention. I'm not trying to focus on something to bring about change or to question the system.

However, - as an artist - I naturally exaggerate form and subject in order to highlight inconsistencies, contradictions and vulnerabilities: the woman who is too old for her designer wardrobe, the incongruous couple, the obsession with fitness or tanning etc. I'm not saying it should change, that I disapprove or even that it's particularly funny, - I'm simply portraying things as they are and exaggerating them to highlight the world as I see it. If you look around you, it's not that far removed from reality. In fact, people who enjoy my style often say to me "I saw someone who looked like they were in one of your paintings today." Which is deeply flattering for me, but probably not for the person they were referring to. So, it's social commentary with satire seasoning, but a form of satire which is joyful and positive rather than seeking to put down, if there is such a thing.

### Tell us about your technique and the materials you use.

I work in a variety of mediums. I choose my medium depending upon the scale of the piece and the subject matter. Sometimes I love to work with a rich vivid palette, at other times I work with monochrome black ink on paper. When I am working with black ink I use a collection of dip pens and even sticks from the garden. I use a stick if my format is large, as it allows me a freedom and fluidity in the application. The dip pens allow me to express the fine detail. My large panoramic scenes are collages mixing watercolour, gouache, crystals, different papers, feathers, photographs and any strange objects that might seem appropriate. These pieces all have a vibrant rich palette and are very intricate in their execution.

### Finally, where will your work take you from here?

The real challenge for any artist is to keep fresh - to build on what you have and to grow your body of work. I am lucky insofar as I'm very comfortable using different mediums, and I am already experimenting with different forms and materials for my next exhibition. Wherever it goes, it will still be about people. Maybe you'll be in it.



**2 Men and a Lady**  
Ink



**Couple**  
Ink



**Dubai World Cup Guests 1**  
Mixed Media



**Yacht Show**  
Mixed Media



**Rain**  
Ink



**Diera**  
Ink



**Evening Dress**  
Mixed Media



**Dubai World Cup Guests 2**  
Mixed Media



**Dancer**  
Ink



**Party**  
Ink



**Dubai World Cup Guests 3**  
Mixed Media



**Dubai World Cup Guests 4**  
Mixed Media



**Best Friends**  
Ink



**Smoking**  
Ink



**Make-up**  
Mixed Media



**Man with Models**  
Mixed Media



**Dubai World Cup**  
Mixed Media



**Dubai World Cup VIP Box**  
Mixed Media



**Manicure**  
Mixed Media



**Photograph**  
Mixed Media



**Jumeirah Beach**  
Mixed Media



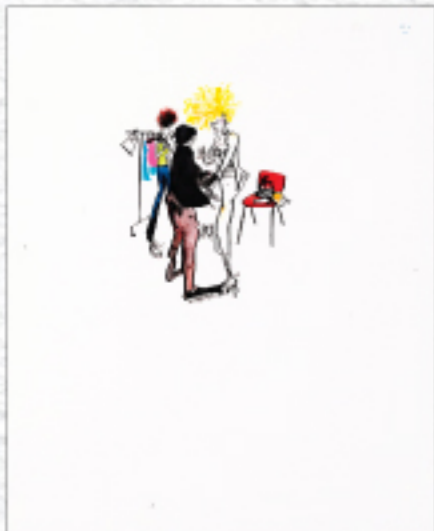
**Raffles Prom**  
Mixed Media



**Catwalk**  
Mixed Media



**Art Fair Party**  
Mixed Media



**Shoes**  
Mixed Media



**Final Touch**  
Mixed Media



**Safa Park**  
Mixed Media



**Wedding Show**  
Mixed Media