

Coming up poses

The living is easel for young society artist Phoebe Dickinson

'I think portraits can be so depressingly dull – I don't want mine to be the type you just walk past,' says Phoebe Dickinson as she sits cross-legged on the floor of her Fulham studio. You could regard such a sentiment as nothing more than the youthful optimism of a pretty 23-year-old who is lucky enough to have eminent art dealer Simon Dickinson as a father, but then you would be missing the point of her work entirely.

Phoebe has always drawn. 'When I was five I saw a boy in my class with fluorescent pencils. I wanted them so much I stole them.' She ignored the advice at boarding school St Mary's Calne to go to university and went to the Charles H Cecil Studios in Florence for two and a half years, where the training included plenty of life drawing. Never one to be fazed, even by the male nudes, Phoebe took the inventive approach of embarrassing her subjects rather than being embarrassed by them. She painted them to Britney Spears hits: 'In the end, even the most hardcore techno-lovers rather enjoyed it.'

Her subjects range from regulars of *Tatler's* Little Black Book (her von Preussen cousins are frequent models) to musician King Charles. But her style is less recognisable. Her portraits are not quite classically perfect – self-consciously unfinished, they give the viewer a role in figuring the picture out. Whether you recognise them or not from last night's party becomes immaterial.

There is a touch of quirkiness to every piece. Charming little dressed mice occur frequently as her subject matter set amid a background of strange, swirling colour, the result being more Banksy than Beatrix Potter.

Everyone wants her art – even Anni-Frid Lyngstad of Abba tried to get her hands on one of Phoebe's paintings, which sold at a charity auction for £32,000. Next year, in the search for new challenges and new faces to fill her frames, Phoebe plans to travel the world with her easel and paintbrush in tow. Expect to see Dickinson paintings on the walls of prominent socialites' homes round the globe very soon. **Violet Henderson**
Phoebe Dickinson shows at Talisman, 79–91 New King's Road, SW6, 26 November–6 December.



I painted naked men to Britney hits – even the techno-lovers enjoyed it

artscene

PHOEBE DICKINSON WEARS SILK-SATIN MINDRESS, £645, BY TEMPERLEY LONDON. LEATHER BOOTS, £785, BY CHRISTIAN LOUBOUTIN. YELLOW-GOLD EARRINGS WITH IOLITE, AMETHYST AND BLUE APATITE, £490, BY SWEET PEA. YELLOW-GOLD PENDANT, £2,347, BY PHILIPPA HOLLAND. YELLOW-GOLD NECKLACES, £975 EACH, BY CAROLINA BUCCI. BRACELETS AND RINGS, PHOEBE'S OWN. FOR DETAILS, SEE STOCKISTS. STYLED BY CHUKWUNWIKE OBI. HAIR AND MAKE-UP BY HAMILTON AT SLR.