

## DEAN KELLAND

### *IMPOSTER SYNDROME*

### 20 SEPTEMBER – 22 DECEMBER 2023



Dean Kelland, *Walk a Mile in My Shoes* (2022).  
Performance film still. Image courtesy the artist

Ikon's exhibition *Imposter Syndrome* (20 September – 22 December 2023) features a number of Kelland's new films, prints and sketchbooks that reimagine the psychoanalytic dialogue that has occurred between Pop Art and Prison Art since the 1960s. Referencing figures from popular culture such as Elvis and David Bowie, Kelland interrogates male identity and flawed notions of masculinity. The exhibition is the culmination of British artist Dean Kelland's four-year artist's residency at HMP Grendon (2019-2023), funded by the Marie-Louise von Motesiczky Charitable Trust.

Birmingham-born artist Dean Kelland (b.1973) has been making art for nearly three decades. Despite this, his chosen exhibition title, *Imposter Syndrome*, reflects his experience at HMP Grendon, an all-male, Category B therapeutic prison. By setting up a studio in the carceral setting,

with its own history and typology of art, Kelland has found himself assuming multiple identities. HMP Grendon opened in the post-war period, as an experimental psychiatric prison and, by taking on the residency, Kelland understood that the compulsive behaviour underlying his filmed performances – in which he repeats a physical action in a prolonged and painful way – would be examined by the prison’s therapeutic community.

In 2019 Kelland started documenting his dialogues with the prisoners and therapeutic staff in his sketchbooks that test ideas for moving image works. Between the page and the screen, Kelland carries the therapy method of ‘masking’ through a series of collaborative performances and prints. *Walk a Mile in My Shoes* (2022) is a 16mm film of a lone male figure, wearing a grey tracksuit and oversized Elvis mask, in a prison corridor. Caught in the flash of the strip lighting on the gloss floor, the figure momentarily impersonates Elvis’ signature gyration. Lasting a few seconds, they quickly lose momentum, returning to their long, lumbering walk. Kelland’s film stems from an early interaction at Grendon when a C Wing community member shared his painting of Elvis Presley. When asked why he had chosen that subject, the prisoner answered: “He’s *the man* isn’t he, Elvis...he’s just *the man*”.

A further work *Man and Boy* (2022) is a sketchbook page that has been blown up, on a colossal scale, for the exhibition. It features a photo of Elvis in the film *Flaming Star* (1960) and famously appropriated by Andy Warhol in *Double Elvis* (1963). Kelland has collaged a Boy George mask on top of this image, prompting questions around cultural stereotypes of masculinity. It was an A Wing prisoner who put forward the idea of an alternative identity: “Elvis is an ideal male figure. If you want someone who challenges masculinity whilst retaining it then Boy George is your man”. The work’s title refers to both ‘man’ and ‘boy’, with the latter serving to destabilise expectations of the former.

*Tin Soldiers* (2023) is an installation of collages that attempt to resist the social regulation of gender roles that occurs during childhood. Pages from an illustrated copy of Hans Christian Andersen’s *The Steadfast Tin Soldier* (1838) are colour-washed and marked with lines representing the prison corridor. Figures, presented using a ‘join the dots’ technique, are topped with heads of notable men, selected by the prisoners for how they connect with notions of identity. With cut-out eyes, we are faced with a series of masks that demonstrates how we choose between countless cultural images depending on our changing environment.

In 2022, sixty years after the opening of HMP Grendon, Ikon opened the Marie-Louise von Motesiczky Studio at the prison, offering workshops in screen printing and dry point etching. While the prisoners have collaborated with Kelland on his artistic practice, he has given them the materials and equipment to start processing the plethora of imagery that has accumulated in their cells. In doing this, he has established the prison as a centre of cultural production, where pop iconography is appropriated for the purpose of a carceral realism.

Dean Kelland’s exhibition is accompanied by a showcase of artwork by HMP Grendon prisoners at Ikon Gallery, 7 – 17 December, and a public programme of events, including a screening of Kelland’s film work *Catch Back the Breeze* (2022) and artist’s talk, both on Friday 10 November. Two publications are available - *Notes from Grendon 1* and *2* – including excerpts from Kelland’s

sketchbooks and an interview with Nick London (pseudonym), a writer for *Inside Time*. An exhibition catalogue designed by Fraser Muggeridge studio will be available, including an essay by Dr Sue Tate, freelance art historian and author of *Pauline Boty: Pop Artist and Woman* (2013).

Ikon has engaged in meaningful discussions with Victim Support to inform the development of Dean Kelland's exhibition.

**For more information, press appointments, high-res images and to request interviews please contact Rebecca Small by email [r.small@ikon-gallery.org](mailto:r.small@ikon-gallery.org) or call Ikon on 0121 248 0708.**

Social Media Handles - Instagram, Twitter and Facebook:

@ikongallery #IkonGallery @DeanKelland @deankellandofficial @ace\_national @aceagrams  
@ace\_midlands @bhamcitycouncil @VictimSupport @victimsupport\_uk

Notes to Editors:

1. **Dean Kelland** works across performance, photography and filmmaking. His practice touches on cultures of taste and histories of class in order to produce engaging observations on collective and mediated identities. Kelland has exhibited nationally and internationally and undertaken residencies at New Art Gallery Walsall and the Birmingham & Midland Institute. Kelland holds a PhD from Central Saint Martins (entitled *Flawed Masculinities: "Rupturing" 1950s/60s/70s British Sitcom via a Performance-led Interdisciplinary Arts Practice*) and has taught Fine Art for over twenty-five years. [deankelland.com](http://deankelland.com)
2. **About Art at HMP Grendon** - The Marie-Louise von Motesiczky Charitable Trust has funded Art at HMP Grendon since 2010. During this period, Ikon has managed two artist residencies – Edmund Clark (2014 – 2018) and Dean Kelland (2019 – 2023) – resulting in major exhibitions at Ikon Gallery and HMP Grendon. The residency runs alongside a public programme of research symposia and events at Ikon, allowing a platform for public discourse on the role of art in criminal justice. With a focus on the development of the prisoners' artistic practice, Ikon has opened the Marie-Louise von Motesiczky Studio at HMP Grendon – a dedicated space for workshops, in printing and painting, and a changing programme of exhibitions, art historical and contemporary. This space was made possible with the support of the Trust and the senior team at HMP Grendon. [ikon-gallery.org/art-at-hmp-grendon](http://ikon-gallery.org/art-at-hmp-grendon)
3. Alongside his exhibition at Ikon Gallery, Dean Kelland also presents *Imposter Syndrome* at the Marie-Louise von Motesiczky Studio at HMP Grendon in November 2023. A selection of prints and moving image works are exhibited for prison communities, staff and project stakeholders.
4. Opened in Buckinghamshire in 1962, **HMP Grendon** adopted a psychiatric model of practice, developed in the aftermath of the Second World War, to treat post-traumatic stress disorder. It later became a therapeutic community; notably the only one of its kind in Europe. A Category B prison, community members undertake daily therapy, including art therapy and psychodrama, towards their rehabilitation. Each of its five wings operate as autonomous therapeutic communities, working and making decisions on behalf of each other.

5. The **Marie-Louise von Motesiczky Charitable Trust** was set up in 1992 by the Austrian émigré artist Marie-Louise von Motesiczky (1906-1996) for the promotion of her work, the charitable support of the arts and other charitable objects as stated on the charity's website. Dean Kelland's term at HMP Grendon is the third residency supported by the Trust following Edmund Clark (2014-19) and Lorna Giezot (2010-14). [motesiczky.org](http://motesiczky.org)
6. **Victim Support** is an independent charity dedicated to supporting people affected by crime and traumatic incidents in England and Wales. Their services help people affected by all types of crime. Victim Support provides free confidential support 24 hours a day, 365 days a year - regardless of whether they have reported the crime to the police or when it occurred. Anyone who has experienced crime can contact Victim Support via the charity's free, 24/7 Support Line or by using Live Chat on their website [victimsupport.org.uk](http://victimsupport.org.uk)
7. **Ikon** is an internationally acclaimed contemporary art venue situated in central Birmingham. Established in 1964 by a group of artists, Ikon is an educational charity and works to encourage public engagement with contemporary art through exhibiting new work in a context of debate and participation. The gallery programme features artists from around the world and a variety of media is represented, including sound, film, mixed media, photography, painting, sculpture and installation. Ikon's off-site programme develops dynamic relationships between art, artists and audiences outside the gallery. Projects vary enormously in scale, duration and location, challenging expectations of where art can be seen and by whom. Education is at the heart of Ikon's activities, stimulating public interest in and understanding of contemporary visual art. Through a variety of talks, tours, workshops and seminars, Ikon's Learning Team aims to build dynamic relationships with audiences, enabling visitors to engage with, discuss and reflect on contemporary art. [ikon-gallery.org](http://ikon-gallery.org)
8. **Ikon** is open Wednesday – Sunday and Bank Holiday Mondays, 11am-5pm. Free entry, donations welcome. Ikon is supported using public funding by the National Lottery through Arts Council England, and Birmingham City Council.
9. **Arts Council England** is the national development agency for creativity and culture. We have set out our strategic vision in Let's Create that by 2030 we want England to be a country in which the creativity of each of us is valued and given the chance to flourish and where every one of us has access to a remarkable range of high-quality cultural experiences. From 2023 to 2026 we will invest over £440 million of public money from Government and an estimated £93 million from The National Lottery each year to help support the sector and to deliver this vision. [artscouncil.org.uk](http://artscouncil.org.uk) Following the Covid-19 crisis, the Arts Council developed a £160 million Emergency Response Package, with nearly 90% coming from the National Lottery, for organisations and individuals needing support. We are also one of the bodies responsible for administering the Government's unprecedented Culture Recovery Fund of which we delivered over £1 billion to the sector in grants and loans. Find out more at [www.artscouncil.org.uk/covid19](http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/covid19).
10. **Birmingham City Council** is the local government body responsible for the governance of the City of Birmingham, UK. It is the most populated local council area in the United Kingdom (excluding counties) with 101 elected councillors representing over one million people, in 69 wards. The council headquarters are at the Council House, Victoria Square in the heart of the city centre. The council is responsible for running nearly all local services, with the exception of those run by joint boards. For more information visit [www.birmingham.gov.uk](http://www.birmingham.gov.uk)