

Four Decades into Their Collaboration, Gilbert & George Are as Sharp as Ever

In over 40 years of creating their at times abrasive, most-always colorful multimedia “photo-pieces,” the artists [Gilbert & George](#) have made a point to feature themselves prominently. As they’ve aged—both members of the duo are now in their 70s—the associations suggested by their bodies have changed, though their tactics and subjects have remained consistent.

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Gilbert & George
VOMIT, 2014
ARNDT



Gilbert & George
PISS OFF!, 2014
ARNDT

A conceptual project as much as a team, Gilbert & George consider themselves “two people, one artist” and have throughout the course of their career created accessible, graphic work that draws on the languages and slogans that appear in everyday life—advertising, graffiti, political posters. In their work, the artists’ own bodies and the instantly recognizable, fantastically potent language of mass media become the raw materials out of which the grandest of political questions are posed. For their most recent show, “[Utopian Pictures](#),” they’ve created 26 large-scale works inspired by the area surrounding their studio in East London, loud collages drawn in primary colors that incorporate street signs, bold lettering, and hooded figures. The duo, who strive to create “art for all,” say they’re tackling universal and controversial subjects with these new works, questioning among others the roles of death, sex, money, race, and religion in everyday life.



Gilbert & George
BEHAVE, 2014
 ARNDT



Gilbert & George
G VI R RUFFKID, 2014
 ARNDT

Unsettling and deeply influenced by authoritarian language, works like *BEHAVE* and *G VI R RUFFKID* (both 2014) rework the regulations of the state as it dominates urban life, playing with overwrought directives and hyperbolic language against a backdrop of images that are at times sinister, at times darkly funny. And as is appropriate for their populist appeal, the artists—even as they age—create every work themselves, refusing to outsource their labor and take on assistants as many other internationally renowned artists do.



Gilbert & George
HOMO RIOT HOMO, 2014
 ARNDT



Gilbert & George
GOD GUIDES US, 2014
 ARNDT

One of Gilbert & George's focal points has been the interaction between their own bodies—both sculptural and performative entities—and the larger context of urban life, the subject of most of their work. In this newest series, the artists appear as demonic and repressive figures, in one image in surgical masks, in another looming Big Brother-style over a peppering of signage—an effective and startling effect that indicates a nuanced understanding of their own position in the world they reflect.

—Molly Osberg

"Gilbert & George: Utopian Pictures" is on view at ARNDT, Singapore, Jan. 19–April 5, 2015.