

# ANDIPA GALLERY

## PRESS RELEASE

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## BANKSY | WAR BOUTIQUE

Exhibition Dates: Thursday 9 June to Saturday 9 July 2011

Private View: 6.00pm to 9.00pm Wednesday 8 June 2011



From a rebellious youth growing up in Glasgow to the fractious student captured in the BBC 4 documentary: *Goldsmiths: But Is It Art?* to a ballistics expert with government security clearance but most importantly an artist, War Boutique's work is as much about transformation as his life. Re-modeling the fabrics of war into installations for peace, the artist's passion for textiles took him beyond his everyday work and into the realms of wearable art... with a cause.

War Boutique's textiles of choice are Kevlar and Dyneema designed to resist bullets; his form is the flak jacket emblazoned with *Metropolitan Peace* or the fully armoured chalk-stripe suit for the *City Gent Soldier*.

The artist known as War Boutique has provided his work for photo-shoots with the late Alexander McQueen CBE as well as collaborating with the royal and military tailor, Gieves & Hawkes, to create *City Gent Soldier*. He has also provided work for some of the most renowned contemporary artists including the infamous street artist Banksy for his controversial *Banksy Versus Bristol Museum* show and YBA Sarah Lucas.

Working for a body armour company on obtaining his degree in Textiles and Fashion Design, he has designed armour and uniforms from fabrics specially formulated for military use or the British, Egyptian, Indian, Pakistani and Algerian armies, as well as the Metropolitan Police, Italian Carabinieri and Mexico City Police.

The arresting symbolic potential of these textiles led War Boutique to requisition and recycle uniforms, military and ballistic materials and use them in his art, to alert us to the creeping militarisation of our society, encourage us to work towards peace and remind us of our duty to realise this.

The *Peace Pods*, which have hung from trees and rafters from Tate Modern, Tate Britain, British Museum and Regent's Park are places of respite for people to enter and feel and make peace. Designed so that its essential for the individuals inside to cooperate peacefully to avoid the destabilisation of the pod and inspired by the form of crinoline (a skirt stiffened with hoops used by courtly ladies) these works provoke us to question the necessity of war and to explore ways of experiencing peace.

Commissioned by Gieves & Hawkes, *City Gent Soldier* (2005) wears a perfectly tailored suit using the finest Gieves & Hawkes cloth cut and sewn by their finest military tailors which functions as a fully protective bullet proof garment. It is the contemporary embodiment of the metaphorical 'armour of God' needed to stand firm against the villainous violence of today's world. The City Gent's accoutrements are the breastplate of righteousness: a ballistic chest plate; the shield of faith: a ballistic briefcase; the sword of the spirit: an umbrella sword and the shoes for the gospel of peace: Special Forces boots.

He has also produced child sized stab vests, for the *Bak 2 Skool* project – a reaction to child stabbings in Peckham - that when displayed in his carefully created mock-up of a Peckham shop front attracted swarms of parents from the local area requesting anti-stab vests to protect their children for the new school term. A sign of the times.

Using textiles bullet proof ceramics, shells and bomb blankets as the conduit to express his ideas, "*War Boutique symbolically transforms instruments of war and destruction into constructive items embodying creativity, peace and critical social commentary.*" Society for Contemporary Craft.

#### **Notes to the Editors:**

War Boutique's work will be on show from 9 June to 9 July 2011 at Andipa Gallery, a leading London dealer of modern and contemporary art, as part of the upcoming exhibition: *BANKSY | WAR BOUTIQUE*. A show that will bring together some of the most iconic original works by these two mavericks of urban art, War Boutique in the gallery's lower ground floor space and original paintings by Banksy in the ground floor gallery.

For further press information and images please contact Rosa Attwood by email at [press@andipa.com](mailto:press@andipa.com) or by telephone +44 (0)20 7589 2371.

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#### **Notes to Editors**

#### **War Boutique | Lower Ground Floor Gallery**

Selected Exhibitions and Collaborations:

2010 'DIY: A Revolution in Handicrafts' Society for Contemporary Craft, Pittsburgh (touring USA 2011)

2009 'The Treehouse Gallery' Regents Park, London

2006 'Noosphere', as part of 'Mount London', Tate Britain & Tate Modern

2006 'Peace-Pod' installation, Save the Children, The British Museum

2005 'The Jacket', costume design for Warner Bros with art house director John Maybury & actor Adrien Brody, Glasgow & London

2005 'Army Dreamers' photographic shoot of wearable artworks, featuring Alexander McQueen, I-D Magazine

2004 'Peace Not War' ballistic vest collaborations with Maharishi and Sarah Lucas

2002 'Ballistic Sporrán', with Maharishi, for Harvey Nichols store launch, Edinburgh



'Metropolitan Peace' badge



'Beasts of England'



City Gent Soldier, Gieves & Hawkes



Peace Pods Regents Park, London



## Banksy | Ground Floor Gallery

Andipa Gallery was the first gallery to put on a major exhibition of Banksy's work in the secondary market, which included the largest Banksy canvas ever to come onto the market, and which attracted an astonishing 25,000 visitors. Banksy and War Boutique will show a selection of the most iconic original works by Banksy.

No gallery represents Banksy and the works on show during this exhibition are from the collection of Andipa Gallery, one of the largest collections of works by the artist in the UK.



Girl with Balloon, Double Canvas



Custardized Oil



Laugh Now

## Exhibition information

Exhibition Dates: 9 June – 9 July 2011

Andipa Gallery, 162 Walton Street, London, SW3 2JL

Tel: 020 7589 2371 / [www.andipa.com](http://www.andipa.com)

Opening times: Monday to Friday 9:30am – 6pm, Saturday 11am – 6pm

Closest tube stations: Knightsbridge and South Kensington

The artist War Boutique, Claire Mander, Head of Contemporary and Acoris Andipa, Director of Andipa Gallery, are available for interviews.

### **About Andipa Gallery**

Andipa Gallery is a specialist dealer in modern and contemporary masters ranging from Matisse, Picasso and Warhol, through to Damien Hirst and Banksy. Based in Knightsbridge for over 40 years, the gallery has a long-established reputation of providing clients with a high level of service in a relaxed, welcoming environment.

Following extensive refurbishment of the premises, Andipa Gallery launched Andipa Contemporary in late 2010 as a platform to show fresh, innovative and aesthetically stimulating work by new contemporaries from around the world.

Andipa Contemporary draws on the knowledge, experience and resources of Andipa Gallery to provide an exciting programme of exhibitions and events. Collecting contemporary art is a very unique experience and we welcome both those new to contemporary art and existing collectors to come into the gallery to discuss their preferences in a warm and open atmosphere.

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