

*Artist Focus:*

# NICK VEASEY

Nick is a British artist whose work is currently showing at REDSEA Gallery. We find out a bit more about his approach and inspirations – and how he uses x-rays to create his art.





**Can you share with us your major likes and dislikes? How do these preferences affect your art and your process?**

I like quality, simplicity and integrity. I dislike bureaucracy, incompetence and smelly cheese. My process is far from simple, so when we get to the end of making a piece I try to look at it with a fresh simple perspective – does it work? Personally, I think my best work has a purity and simplicity. It's an x-ray of a car and you can see the engine... No degree in art history required to get where I'm coming from.

**What do you enjoy surrounding yourself with?**

Music, music and more music. I get lost in music and can really cut out all the (bad) noise and concentrate.

**When we can't find you in your art studio, where are you most likely to be?**

Walking the dogs, being with my kids, avoiding the wife...

**Who is your biggest supporter in life?**

My wife! I owe her everything. She gave me faith in my own ability. Before I met my wife, I was just a chancer really; now I'm a married chancer.

**Who is the person you admire the most, and what is the defining human trait that they possess that makes you admire them so?**

Muhammad Ali. He was an example of a man with integrity. He stood by his beliefs, a black man in a white world, a pacifist in a time of war, and supremely talented and entertaining. The word "inspiring" was made for Ali.

**What has been the proudest moment in your artistic career? What about the biggest disappointment?**

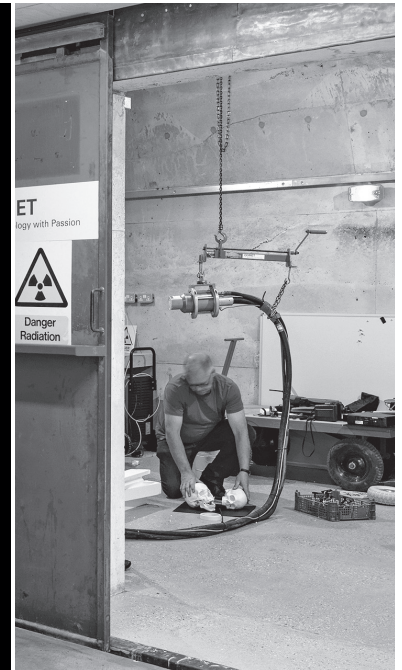
My proudest moment was my retrospective exhibition at Fotografiska Stockholm, the world's largest photography museum – 120,000 visitors in eight weeks, and they all paid to get in! It was the real deal. I even got to show Kate and Wills around.

My biggest disappointment is really the limitations that present themselves when using x-ray machines to make art. They are dangerous.

**If you were to introduce yourself as an artist to someone who wasn't familiar with your portfolio, what artwork or series would you show them? Why?**

Land Rover Surfer. It's an example of what we do that really connects with people. I think it has wit and irony and people relate to it. Technically, I'm proud of it too. Land Rover Surfer defines me, as we use death to bring life to inanimate objects. Let me explain a little: all the "people" in my x-ray artworks are in fact x-rays of a single (female) skeleton. So working with a dead body to make the pictures have life is ironic. There's that word again... irony. The works all have the same message, they are a statement against society's obsession with superficial appearance. It's what is on the inside that counts. And to use a dead person to convey that message is ironic.





**Part of your creative process is taking things apart and seeing the cross-sections of the objects you're x-raying. Have you ever come across anything unexpected or amusing while going through this process?**

Many times. A good x-ray can tell the story of how the object came to exist. We once x-rayed a few watches for a watch collector. He wasn't too pleased to see batteries rather than finely tuned cogs and workings in some of the luxury names. Turns out even the experts can be fooled...

**Is there anything new you'd like to explore in your upcoming works? What plans do you have for your artworks in the rest of 2022?**

Not surprisingly, I continue to explore music. We are working on an x-ray of a drum set. As for recent new discoveries, I'm in negotiation to get access to some space travel items – looking forward to x-raying something that has been to the moon.

**Are there any advancements in x-ray technology that you hope to see?**

I still use film and a fairly old x-ray machine. Things are getting better, but nothing fundamental yet. A portable x-ray

machine would be good, but those that exist have limitations.

**How do you think you've grown as a person and artist since your first x-ray series?**

That's a good question. I have learnt the importance of looking and listening to my audience. A lot of people say to me that I'm "amazing" or "awesome" and all that crap. Then they say the exact same thing to the next person they meet. I've learnt not to believe the hype. I'm getting better at what I do. I wish I had learnt to have patience, but that still eludes me.

**How do you envision yourself growing as an artist in the next five years?**

I'm really going for it now. I'm 60 this year so I am going to create more waves, be a little more subversive. Is that growth though?

**Who are some peers in the industry that you are excited to follow and watch grow?**

I like Ron English. He makes me smile. Nick Knight is someone I respect enormously. Jeff Robb is also an artist I admire – he's the best at holographic imaging.

**What's the best piece of advice you've been given, not just in art but in life?**

Anyone can make a mistake. Only an idiot makes the same mistake twice.

**What advice would you give to somebody who wants to make a living from art?**

You have to really, really want it and to live it. You have to go through that obsessive phase. Remember, it is called The Art Business. The business side has to be embraced at some stage. Apart from that, do something different, not derivative and be as good as you can at it.

**Lastly, if you were deserted on an island, what would be your top three albums and books you would bring along with you?**

Albums: *Exodus* by Bob Marley, *Rumours* by Fleetwood Mac, and *Ladies and Gentlemen We Are Floating in Space* by Spiritualized. Books: *The Great Gatsby* by F. Scott Fitzgerald, *The Blue Afternoon* by William Boyd, and *The Wasp Factory* by Iain Banks. *æ*

Contact REDSEA Gallery to view Nick's work - email [info@redseagallery.com](mailto:info@redseagallery.com) or call 6732 6711. [redseagallery.com](http://redseagallery.com)