

PRESS RELEASE

The Studio of Felicity Powell

24 July – 3 October 2026



Richard Saltoun Gallery presents a major survey of British artist Felicity Powell, the first exhibition dedicated to her work since her untimely death in 2015. Curated in close collaboration with Powell's widower, artist Ansel Krut, the show brings together key pieces from three decades, including previously unseen material, and offers a comprehensive overview of her practice across sculpture, drawing, photography and video. Building on significant institutional presentations including *Drawn from the Well* at the Victoria and Albert Museum (2002–04), *Medals of Dishonour* at the British Museum (2009), co-curated with Philip Attwood, and *Charmed Life: The Solace of Object* at the Wellcome Collection (2011), curated by Powell, the exhibition brings into focus the potency and enduring resonance of Powell's creative vision across her career.

Powell's works invite intimate acts of encounter. Embedded within her exploration of material are deeply personal reflections on selfhood, motherhood, corporeality, and, towards the end of her life, illness and mortality. Working between the kitchen table and the studio, she approached her practice as a process of continual experimentation. With sculpture at the centre of her practice, Powell explored the material capabilities of wax, bronze, and glass, creating works that range from intimate objects to monumental forms. Her exceptional sensitivity to materials and

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remarkable skill as a modeller marked her out as a singular sculptural voice, with even her largest works retaining the concentrated presence of forms first imagined through the hand.



This sustained engagement with materiality found a particularly significant expression in her exploration of medal making. In 2000, she won the competition to design the Millennium Medal for the Royal Mint, a commission that opened a new and influential direction within her practice. Drawing inspiration from intaglios, coins, and Renaissance relief sculpture by artists such as Pisanello, Donatello, and Arnolfo di Cambio, she approached the medal not simply as a commemorative object but as a sculptural form in its own right. Intimate in scale, weighted in the hand, and experienced through touch as much as sight, the medallic form reflected many of the concerns that had long animated her work.

Powell also drew prolifically, with more than 300 works on paper produced across a wide range of materials. Rendered in delicate lines and mostly small, their emphasis is on intimacy: the line, sometimes smudged, the suggestions of form and mass, the areas of incompleteness, all sustain the air of introspection that characterises these works. Many feature single female figures, all nude or nearly-nude, they are sensual but self-contained, mysterious, playful and somehow simultaneously both archetypal and highly individual.

Powell's ability to align her disparate themes and unify them through her making processes is evident in the seven short videos that she compiled as *Sleight of Hand*. The videos are each one minute long and accompanied by music by the composer William Basinski. The compilation is itself an act of *leger-de-main*; by revealing the "how" of making, the process itself becomes the magic trick and the source of wonder. It shows Powell at her most mischievous and comedic.

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Showcasing works from across her career, the exhibition reveals the remarkable coherence of Powell's artistic vision. Recurring motifs, hands, eyes, tears, trees, run throughout her work, as do the themes of doubling and mirroring. Across diverse media and scales, she consistently returned to questions of shifting embodiments, to metamorphosis and to transubstantiation. Powell's work has the archetypal qualities usually associated with timeless artefacts, but its haptic immediacy addresses us entirely in the present.

Notes for Editors

Felicity Powell

Felicity Powell was born in 1961 in London and died in 2015. Her work has been exhibited at State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg (2013); The Wellcome Trust, London (2011); British Museum, London (2009); V&A Museum, London (2002-04; 2005); Monnaie de Paris, Paris (2002); Norwich Castle Museum, Norwich; British Museum, London (2001) and Goethe-Nationalmuseum, Weimar, (2000). Her selected medal commissions include Department of Coins and Medals, British Museum, London (2010; 2000); Linnean Society, London (2010; 2007); Mo Ibrahim Foundation, London (2008; 2007); Sculpture Department, V&A Museum, London (2001); Sammy Lee Medal; and the Millennium Medal Competition by The Royal Mint and The British Art Medal Society (2000).

Richard Saltoun Gallery

Founded in 2012, Richard Saltoun Gallery is based in Mayfair, London. The gallery specialises in contemporary art, with an emphasis on Feminist, Conceptual and Performance art from the 1960s onwards. It is guided by a strong focus on rediscovering the work of important yet under-recognised artists through presentations at its locations in London's Mayfair and Rome, extensive research, partnerships, online shows, publishing, events and participation in art fairs around the world.

Since its inception, Richard Saltoun Gallery has been driven by an interest in serving a wider purpose and is now widely recognised for its critically and socially- engaged programme. In 2019, the gallery launched a year-long initiative titled *100% Women* that aimed to address gender inequality in the art world, and it's now considered a leader in the representation of female artists.

Images:

1. Felicity Powell, *New Shoes Doubled*, c. 1985, Photo print, 15 x 20 cm. © The Estate Felicity Powell. Courtesy of Richard Saltoun Gallery.
2. Felicity Powell, *Eye*, c. 2005, Glass, bronze, and stone base, 10 x 13 cm. © The Estate Felicity Powell. Courtesy of Richard Saltoun Gallery.
3. Felicity Powell, *Genie*, 1990s, Chalk on paper, 25 x 20 cm. © The Estate Felicity Powell. Courtesy of Richard Saltoun Gallery.

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