

*** PRESS RELEASE ***

The Cost of Love

A Fine Art exhibition by Charlie Kirkham and Robert Walker
Rugby Art Museum and Gallery
Tuesday 19 May - Saturday 30 May

This May, Rugby Art Museum and Gallery presents a compelling joint exhibition by artists Charlie Kirkham and Robert Walker. Bringing together a body of work that reimagines mythological narratives through a contemporary lens, the exhibition moves between classical reference and modern sensibility to explore enduring themes of desire, transformation, beauty, and loss.

Drawing on figures such as Narcissus, Apollo and Daphne, Adonis and Aphrodite, and Saint George and the Dragon, the works do not seek to retell familiar stories, but rather to inhabit the psychological and emotional spaces they suggest. Here, myth becomes a framework through which to consider the tensions of the present: the pull between self and other, the fragility of beauty, and the consequences of longing.

Kirkham and Walker approach the figure with a shared commitment to technical rigour and compositional clarity, yet each brings a distinct voice. The paintings are at once restrained and charged - figures suspended in moments of quiet intensity, where gesture and gaze carry narrative weight. The classical body is not presented as an ideal, but as a site of vulnerability, transformation, and ambiguity.

Across the exhibition, a subtle dialogue emerges between intimacy and distance, control and surrender. Moments of stillness hint at unseen forces—emotional, mythic, or symbolic—just beneath the surface. The works invite viewers not simply to recognise the stories, but to reflect on their continued resonance: how these ancient archetypes persist, shift, and reappear within contemporary life.

Rather than offering resolution, the exhibition holds these tensions open. Beauty is revealed as both seductive and unsettling. In this space of attraction and repulsion, the paintings ask what remains of myth today—and what it continues to reveal about us.

*** CHARLIE KIRKHAM ***

Artist Statement

My work begins with myth and folklore, using figures such as Saint George and the Dragon as potent symbols to explore the tensions between hero and monster, desire and destruction, beauty and violence. Through free association and automatic drawing, I blend classical narratives with personal symbolism and autobiography, creating fractured, looping stories that blur the lines between self and other.

Recurring motifs of dragons, monsters and humans serve as mirrors for the multi-faceted self. Playful yet melancholic, the paintings act as visual confessions where the classical body becomes a site of vulnerability and transformation. In this exhibition, these ancient archetypes are reimagined to reflect contemporary experiences of longing, control, surrender, and the cost of love.

Charlie Kirkham is a Passion for Freedom Nominated Visual Artist 2024, Visions of Science award recipient 2018, BEEP Painting Prize longlist 2024, Arts Council England Supported Artist 2025, STEAMhouse funded artist 2023–24, and an elected member of the Society of Graphic Fine Art (SGFA).

You can follow what I'm up to via [Instagram](#), or learn more about the making of each piece via [my monthly blog](#). If you want to be the first to hear about exhibitions, new works and studio visits join [mailing list here](#).

*** ROBERT WALKER aka theartistrobert ***

Artist Statement

Shortlisted VAA Artist of the Year & Verified Saatchi, Singulart & Beautiful Bizarre Artist

theartistrobert is the moniker of Robert Walker a Suffolk-based fine art painter best known for his 'geo-figurative' works and quirky still lifes. He mainly paints in oils enjoying its multiple technique uses and is currently experimenting in mixed media as he further develops his practice.

With many works sold including within the US, Europe and Asia Robert has recently moved to working full time at his practice. He is primarily self-taught and has studied part-time at Barnes Atelier, London and together online with Scott Eaton, Scott Waddell and Dorian Iten who are respected tutors based on their own rigorous atelier-based training.

He is also active supporting charity organisations and is currently supporting HeartCharged, a female defibrillation awareness project; aspacebetween, a cancer art therapy organisation providing solace and connection through art in difficult times and worked with The Bow Arts Trust to create the Mick Bateman Award to support artists whose discipline is metal-based sculpture.

When he's away from his easel he's most likely to be found with his guitar, reading or travelling and always learning.

You can follow what Robert is up to via his [Instagram](#).

Further Contact Information

RUGBY

Art Gallery
& Museum

Rugby Art Gallery & Museum, Little Elborow Street, Rugby, CV21 3BZ

www.ragm.co.uk

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Opening hours Tues-Friday 10-5, Sat 10-4, bank holiday 10-4

Exhibition Curator and Artist Exhibitor



Charlie Kirkham

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Co-Exhibitor Artist

Robert Walker



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*** Selected Example Paintings ***



'The Final Fight'

Charlie Kirkham @charliekirkhamart



'For Icarus'

Robert Walker @theartistrobert