

An abstract painting with a rich, textured surface. The background is a mix of warm colors like red, orange, and yellow, with cooler tones of blue and green. Overlaid on this are several large, overlapping geometric shapes in shades of purple and magenta. The overall effect is dynamic and layered.

BANKERS

LINCOLN TOWNLEY

10 YEAR ANNIVERSARY COLLECTION



“Townley’s works make audiences consider the unrelenting mentality of those people who are driven to the pursuit of wealth and power above all else.”

About Lincoln Townley

Lincoln Townley was born in Hertfordshire, England. He lives in and works in London and Cheshire (England) and in Los Angeles (USA).

Collections and exhibitions include:

BANKER COLLECTION

Venice Biennale (2019, 2022, 2024)
Art Miami (2022)
Sotheby's London (2022)
Sotheby's New York (2022)

ENERGY COLLECTION

Saatchi Gallery, London (2022)

UNIVERSE COLLECTION

Saatchi Gallery, London (2021)

GREED COLLECTION

Saatchi Gallery, London (2019)

SURPRISE COLLECTION

Powerhouse, Brisbane (2017)

W1 COLLECTION

The Royal Academy, London (2015)

FURIES COLLECTION

Freud Museum, London (2015)

DISAPPEARING SOHO COLLECTION

The National Gallery, London (2014)

About the Studio

The Lincoln Townley Studio team is led by David Klein who has been working with internationally-known artists since 2005 in the release of original artworks, giclée prints, exhibitions and online portfolios and marketing.

The Lincoln Townley Studio has pioneered its own methods of photographing and cataloguing Lincoln's original oil paintings, building virtual online galleries, and creating new ways for collectors to connect and interact with Lincoln's artworks.

The team is now focused on connecting the studio **directly** with collectors to provide opportunities to acquire works from the new collection with **zero** gallery or commission fees.

Get in touch with the team to ask about how we can help reserve your Lincoln Townley collectible BANKER painting.

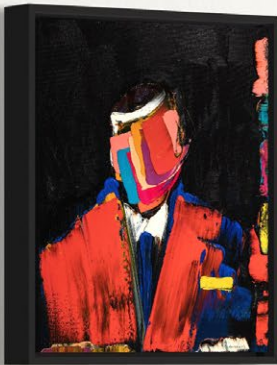
Sotheby's

EST.
1744

Townley's series of Bankers: head and shoulders portraits of be-suited businessmen sporting viscerally painted faces which loom out of abyssal backdrops and emerge directly into our own space.

In these works, Townley combines the horror and distortion of Bacon with the thick and sculptural paint application synonymous with Frank Auerbach's best portraits of the 1950s.

Indeed, Townley's work is strongly affined with this particular moment and milieu in post-war British art history: the gilded-gutter life of Soho during the 1950s, 60s and 70s oozes off the surface of Townley's art. Having spent his earlier career as a West End nightclub promoter, Townley's paintings are infused with the same gritty yet bohemian atmosphere of Soho – a Soho that today, sanitised and commercialised, no longer exists. The commercialisation of this part of bohemian London speaks to the interesting power dichotomy at work in Townley's series of portraits: that of art and money.



"Lincoln Townley is my favourite contemporary artist and a very close friend, every piece he paints seems to become more powerful. I have followed Lincoln's career for over ten years and I have watched him grow and develop as a world class artist. I was so pleased to hear that he sold out his show, I like to think of it that he arrived at the palazzo in Italy for the Venice Biennale and blew the bloody doors off! I always say to him 'the best is yet to come'. I myself have a valued selection of his works including some from his private collection."



Sir Michael Caine - Collector

Sir Michael Caine and Lincoln Townley, London

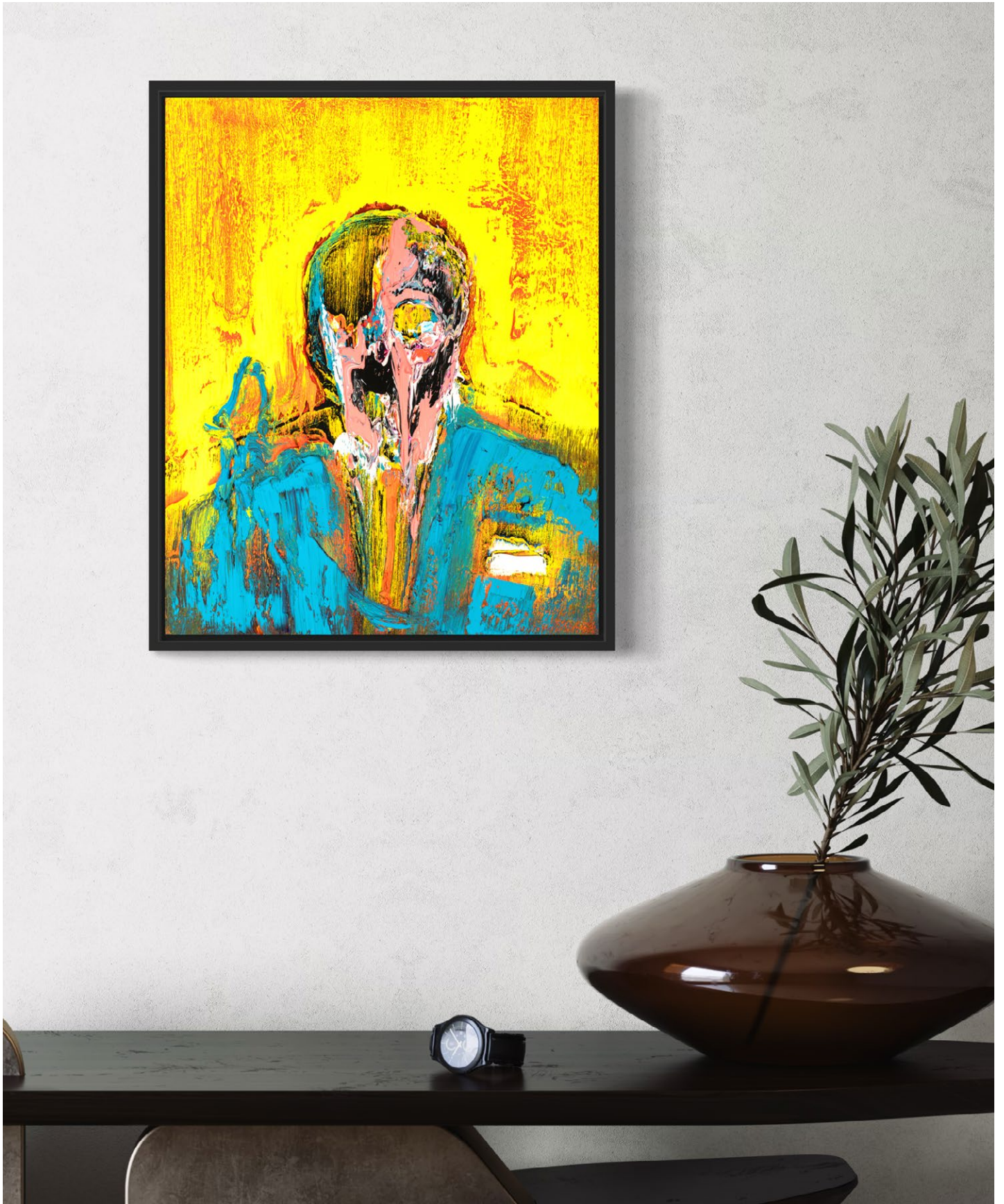


BANKER STRIKES LUCKY

16 x 20"; oil on canvas.

CATALOGUE REF: BNK24-16x20-009





BANKER'S DECISION

16 x 20"; oil on canvas.

CATALOGUE REF: BNK24-16x20-010

Contemporary Art Online | New York

96

Lincoln Townley

Banker in Soho

Estimate: 10,000 - 15,000 USD

Lot sold: **151,200 USD**



CONTEMPORARY ART ONLINE | NEW YORK

Sotheby's EST. 1744

Banker achieves 6 figures in latest Sotheby's NY result.

40 x 50cm oil on canvas



BANKER'S WORLD

180 x 180cm; oil on board.

CATALOGUE REF: BNK24-180x180-001



BANKER'S PARADISE

16 x 20"; oil on canvas.

CATALOGUE REF: BNK24-16x20-011



BANKER'S FIRE

16 x 20"; oil on canvas.

CATALOGUE REF: BNK24-16x20-012



BANKER'S FUEL

16 x 20"; oil on canvas.

CATALOGUE REF: BNK24-16x20-013



All works in the Lincoln Townley Banker Collection are authenticated by BANK VAULT,
the sole point of contact for the authentication of artworks created by the British artist
Lincoln Townley.

BANK VAULT holds records of all works created by Lincoln Townley since 2012.



HE NEVER WENT TO ART SCHOOL. HE USED TO WORK AT STRINGFELLOWS. NOW HIS PAINTINGS SELL FOR £1 MILLION

Lincoln Townley was a club promoter before his appetite for drugs and sex took over. Michael Odell finds out what happened next

Just over a decade ago, Lincoln Townley would spend his evenings cruising round Canary Wharf in London in a car full of lapdancers. He was looking for men in their fifties working in banking – men seeking an evening's entertainment. When he found them, Townley would drive them back to the West End, install them in a booth at Stringfellows nightclub, where he was the head of PR and marketing, and the night would begin.

"A bottle of champagne for anything between £500 and £5,000 and a beautiful girl sitting next to you at £400 an hour," he recalls. "Then of course there were the tricks of the trade. 'Would you like to meet my friend Shirley?' As soon as Shirley sits down, that's another £400 an hour."

Townley, now 51, was good at bringing in the punters. A wealthy clique of bankers might spend £100,000 in a single evening. But there were strict rules for club staff. No drink. No drugs. No touching the girls.

"Inevitably you reach a point where the big bananas from finance are your mates. They're saying, 'Linc, have a drink or a line with us.' And I'm bringing in so much money I think, 'Why not? The rules don't apply to me. I do what I f***ing want.'"

If Lincoln Townley were a corporation with a website, I think you'd find "I do what I f***ing want" under the tab marked "Our Values". It's all there in his 2014 memoir, *The Hunger*, which describes his high-rolling years working for the impresario Peter Stringfellow at his eponymous club and his subsequent descent into addiction. Townley would drink two bottles of rioja, three chocolate martinis, four bottles of Stella Artois, a bottle of beaulois, nine vodka and tonics and snort a gram of coke by 3pm each day. Sometimes he'd throw a Viagra into the mix and recounts having sex in a disabled toilet and breaking the ceramic bowl.

"I am a greedy man and greed can be a good energy if you channel it properly. Back then I couldn't," he says.

"Think what you could achieve in life if you were sober," Peter Stringfellow advised Townley before firing him. That was 2012, but Townley wasn't done yet. The same year he met the former *Coronation Street* actress and *Loose Women* panellist Denise Welch at a London nightclub. It was 6am. They were both off their heads.

"She couldn't see the red flags because she was in that world herself," he says. "To be honest, the omens weren't great."

Welch has had well-publicised issues with depression, alcohol and cocaine. She had only recently split from her husband, the actor Tim Healy, and she and Townley initially proved an explosive combination.

They drank. They fought. Welch could be found pole-dancing in a London club at

5am and attempting to get through a live *Loose Women* broadcast a few hours later.

"It was unsustainable for her and for me," Townley says.

He became sober first. His best friend, the actor Marc Warren (*Hustle*), tried to get him to go to Alcoholics Anonymous but Townley simply went cold turkey. "Marc wanted me to believe in AA and the 'higher power' but to me there is no higher power, just me, so I just stopped."

After he showed Welch a video recorded on his phone of her smashing up his flat in a drunken rage (she had no memory of it), she followed suit. "That day was the start of us channelling that dark energy into good things," he says. "And look at the life we have now."

The new life looks good. I am in Welch and Townley's apartment in what used to be BBC Television Centre in west London. Davina McCall is a neighbour and Welch, 65, can walk to the *Loose Women* studio nearby. She's not in – she is preparing to play Queen Elizabeth II in a one-off performance of a musical about the former Princess of Wales called *Diana*.

But Townley is here, all stocky, beady charisma. His look is *EastEnders*' Phil Mitchell smartened up to face court charges relating to an unlicensed roadside burger van. His energy is: chastened multi-hyphenate Soho wildman (his memoir records him as a boozier, snorter, shagger and street fighter).

"This captures the energy that nearly finished me," he says, indicating a large canvas on an easel. It depicts a demonic skeleton languishing amid the red fires of hell and is called *Banker in Soho*. On the walls are three smaller portraits of men in suits and ties with ghoulish melted faces. Clearly influenced by Francis Bacon, they are powerful and haunting grotesques.

"I like painting bankers and financiers because I admire greed and ambition," Townley confides, as casually as someone explaining why they like painting tulips. "I watched the guy who bought this park his brand new Rolls-Royce Wraith on double yellow lines outside the gallery and I totally get that 'I will do whatever is necessary to get what I want' mindset."

Townley's grandfather taught him to paint and, even at the height of his addiction, he dabbled, though he hid these efforts under his bed. But as his relationship with Welch developed, she saw them and encouraged him. Even so their relationship and Townley's new career did not meet universal approval.

"A lot of people were suspicious. They'd say, 'Denise is a celebrity and here she is hooking up with this drinker from a lapdancing club.'"

Welch's son, Matty Healy, is the frontman for the hugely successful band the 1975. When Townley announced his plan to quit strip clubs and make a



With Kenneth Branagh

living as a painter, Healy wasn't impressed.

"You should have seen Matty's face. He looked stunned and then laughed. And I get it. People would think, 'Of course Denise's new bloke is going to be a painter; he can do what he wants because she's loaded.' First, that wasn't true. Second, I understand that when a celebrity starts dating someone not from that realm everyone thinks, 'What are they after?' But I also thrive on being an outsider. I never doubted I could sell my work. Even after 93 rejections from galleries, I felt each 'no' was getting me nearer to hearing a 'yes.'"

His stepson is a superstar but has also struggled with heroin addiction. That must make family get-togethers pretty intense. Everyone is in recovery.

"If we have one thing in common it's that we are all trying to control our dark energy," he says. "We all know the consequences if we don't."

Townley no longer has to prove himself. He has just sold *Banker in Soho* to a banker in Soho for £350,000. The smaller triptych titled *Greed* has sold for £450,000. But these Baconesque works are just one side of his output. He has also enjoyed extraordinary success with celebrity portraits. These are different, more straightforwardly representational "pop art" works. The first person to agree to a sitting? Russell Brand.

In 2013, Brand's portrait was sold in aid of the charity ABRT (Abstinence Based Recovery Trust) for £20,000. Brand put Townley in touch with his contacts in Los Angeles.

Townley promptly flew to California and the first person to take his call was the actor and recovering addict Charlie Sheen. Townley met him, then went back to his room at the Standard hotel to paint his portrait. Sheen loved it so much he called his friend Nick Nolte. Same thing. Townley met Nolte, then painted him.

"Nick was very supportive. He rang the British boxer Gary Stretch, who trains with Mickey Rourke. I met Mickey in a bar and painted him next."

By the end of the trip he had added Harry Dean Stanton and Al Pacino.

Townley and Welch at a charity ball in 2012



'IT IS DANGEROUS TO HAVE THOSE APPETITES. IT'S HARD TO SAY WHAT MIGHT HAVE HAPPENED'

Meanwhile back in the UK, Denise Welch's godfather, the writer Ian La Frenais (*Porridge, Auf Wiedersehen, Pet*), put him in touch with his friend Michael Caine. After being painted by him the actor declared Townley "the next Andy Warhol". Bafta commissioned him to paint portraits of everyone from Kenneth Branagh and Matt Damon to Cate Blanchett and Phoebe Waller-Bridge.

It's incredible, I say. In 2012 he was drunk, broke, finished. Now his work sells for £1 million a pop (a New York collector paid that price for his portrait of Diana, Princess of Wales) and he will shortly be exhibiting at the Venice Biennale.

"From the outside it looks incredible, but coming from nothing is actually the thing that a lot of my subjects respond to," he says. "I've talked to Sam Jackson [the actor] and Jackie Chan about this [both are Townley subjects]. Hollywood is an incredibly hard place to make it. I paint the hell I went through and that reflects the hell these guys experienced."

Nolte, Sheen, Rourke: he has painted a lot of recovering addicts. But post-#MeToo, people are more vigilant about policing the line between hedonism and abuse. His first client, Russell Brand, is now a disgraced figure. Did Townley ever fear his own appetite for sex, drugs and booze might get him into trouble?

"It is dangerous to have those appetites," he says. "But it's hard to say what might have happened. I had to change, but I can't speak for anyone else."

Townley's story is compelling, but is the art any good? A London gallerist I speak to says, "It's not very original. It reminds me of when Damien Hirst tried to paint like Francis Bacon, with a bit of Basquiat thrown in. It's not groundbreaking, but people often respond to artists' stories as much as the actual work."

Townley had an unpromising start in life. He was born in Hackney, east London, where his dad was a double-glazing salesman and his mum a housewife. When Townley was 14, his father died of a heart attack in front of him. Thereafter his mother told him he couldn't go to art school. She needed him to help pay bills.

Townley made doughnuts at a bakery and then worked at a garden centre. By 19 he was a married father of one (his son Lewis is now 31), and by his late twenties the head of sales for a van rental company. Of course, a van is just a van. But give Townley a fleet of Transits and it becomes an extension of his personality.

"I was a f***ing good salesman," he asserts. "I had that hunger to succeed. Van rentals is the kind of world where you apply for a job and they want to know why you haven't got points on your driving licence. No points means you're not driving fast enough, not taking enough risks to get the deal over the line."

It's how he came to work for Peter Stringfellow. As a sales director, Townley became a master at incentivising clients.

"Most sales managers would send out a £200 Christmas hamper. I would take my clients for a night at Stringfellows. These guys haven't lived the good life. They could not believe what I was showing them."

First just a handful came, but after a few years Townley would hire out the whole place.

"The money they spent was incredible. Peter [Stringfellow] would sit on his throne at the end of the table and the girls, the booze – it was like ancient f***ing Rome."

Stringfellow hired Townley because of his ability to sell. As Townley says in his book, "It's no different from selling vans."

So, he admires risk-takers and greed. But his attitude to sex is jaw-dropping. I'd say Townley had a caveman mentality if I didn't think the National Union of Knuckle-Draggers and Neanderthals would write a stiff letter of complaint. "If it was there to take, I'd take everything," he says. "I wanted to be remembered by women. I wanted them to come back."

I need a beta blocker to get through a chapter in his memoir titled *Nutella Nights*, and try my best to empathise with Townley's personal brand of regret ("No amount of anal sex could raise my spirits"). I also decide that, as an addict, Townley was Martin Amis's antihero John Self from the novel *Money* made flesh. But other aspects of his sexual appetite are truly baffling. A night of passion with a lady called Fay gives a new meaning to *Fifty Shades of Grey*.

Townley was in his mid-thirties. Fay was "north of 75" when he met her while she was enjoying a night out in Soho with her daughter. But Fay's daughter needed to go home to her children, so Townley

offered to take Fay out for a drink. He describes them kissing in a taxi back to "her place". However, Townley blacked out before they could have sex and woke up disorientated in Fay's bed the following morning.

"That's when I see those mobility railings everywhere and that red emergency cord you pull to raise the alarm after a fall. I realise I'm in a care home, so I grab my stuff, push my way past all those giant armchairs they have in the day room and run for it."

It sounds like a terrible Christmas cracker joke: why does a man running a lapdancing club pick up an 80-year-old?

"You can have fun with young women, but you can't have a deep conversation because they don't have life experience," he explains. "The truth is, you're never lonely with a granny. They know a lot."

Denise Welch is 14 years older than Townley. When they began dating the tabloids called him her "alcoholic toy boy". Yet their relationship has survived against the odds (they married in 2013, on the anniversary of one year's sobriety) and these days they appear cosy. Like a normal middle-aged couple.

Welch has spoken out about how the hormonal changes of the menopause have alleviated the acute depression that once plagued her life. Being in a sober postmenopausal relationship, has he had to calm down a bit?

"No. We are very sexual and my sexual energy hasn't changed. We are still in that marketplace. Sex is extremely important to both of us. We're not hanging off the chandeliers, but it's still there big time. I cannot live without sex."

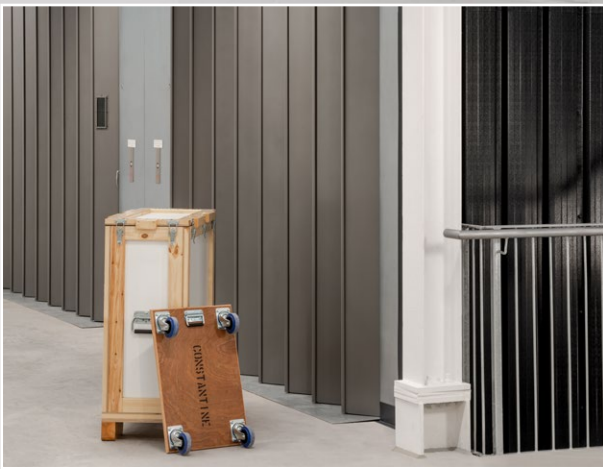
Theirs is an extraordinary post-addiction survival story, but is Welch really OK? I ask because we are talking the day after she was quoted in a newspaper reporting an incident in New York – the sort of incident one associates with people struggling, in this case literally, to hold their shit together.

Last year she and Townley were in New York to see the 1975 play at Madison Square Garden. Before the gig Welch noticed people in the street looking at her. She thought it was because Matty is such a huge star. "So she gets back to the hotel and is telling me she's getting loads of attention," Townley relates. "But then she bent over and I said to her, 'You do realise you've shat yourself, don't you?' Den was wearing cream trousers. But so what? It happens. We laugh about things going wrong. Because once you've been to the dark side, nothing can really hurt you." ■

Lincoln Townley will be showing his "ten-year celebration" Banker collection in the Palazzo Bembo for the 60th Venice Biennale from April 20–November 24, 2024 (labiennale.org/en/art/2024)

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The Lincoln Townley Studio is proud to partner with **Constantine**, providing bespoke storage for your valuable Lincoln Townley investment pieces in a secure facility in London, UK.

Access your works at any time, utilise private viewing rooms, and organise global transportation of artworks, whilst being reassured at **all times** that your investment is in the safest of hands.



LINCOLN TOWNLEY

THE ARTIST'S PRIVATE COLLECTION

Direct Sales

David Klein, Sales Director

david@lincolntownley.com

Photography & Catalogue Design
David Klein

Research & Development
Mia Chan

Artwork Authentication
Bank Vault

Terms & Conditions

CONFIDENTIALITY

The record of sales regarding original oil works and prints sold by the studio are handled with the strictest confidentiality, we do not share collector information under any circumstances.

EXTERNAL CONTENT

We are not responsible for the content of any off-website pages or any other websites linked to or from websites belonging to the Lincoln Townley Studio Group.

Links appearing on the website are for convenience only and are not an endorsement by us, our affiliates, our partners or our dealer network of the referenced content, product, service, or supplier. Your linking to or from any off-website pages or other websites is at your own risk.

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VALUATIONS

The value of artworks supplied by The Lincoln Townley Studio Group can fall as well as rise. Collectors may not get back the amount initially spent on the artworks.

COMMISSIONS

The Lincoln Townley Studio Group pays a 20% commission to galleries, art agents and introducers for completed artwork sales. Commission payments are made by bank transfer once the Lincoln Townley Studio Group has been paid in full. Packing and transportation is organised by the Lincoln Townley Studio Group.

FRAMING

Original artworks and prints supplied from the studio are not supplied framed unless by prior arrangement.

COVID-19

The outbreak of coronavirus/COVID-19 has caused numerous companies and art event organisers to postpone, reschedule or even cancel public events. Due to regulations and advisories from governments and public health organisations banning large gatherings of people, various local, national and international art events, will not take place as scheduled, if at all. Please be aware this notice covers The Lincoln Townley Studio Group to postpone or cancel any art event or exhibition locally or internationally without notice. Any artworks being shown or associated with an event for resale are void of reimbursement. Money taken before, during or after a scheduled art exhibition will not be refunded.

SECONDARY MARKET

The re-sale of Lincoln Townley artworks through art agents, galleries and auction houses must first go through an authentication process before they are deemed clear for the secondary market. This process is undertaken by BANK VAULT (www.bank-vault.com) which acts as the authenticator of artworks by the British artist Lincoln Townley.

Should the work be verified as authentic BANK VAULT will issue you with a certificate of authenticity clearly stamped BANK VAULT approved. Once approved BANK VAULT will store the information provided to record you as the rightful owner of the work.

At this point the approved artwork can enter the secondary market through art agent, galleries or auction houses globally. We ask for your patience as this process can take time.