

## Juergen Teller: Woo! ICA - review

His surprising and mature new work shows there's no need for him to expose himself through nakedness, says Sue Steward



Seductive: Vivienne Westwood, No 3, on a Louis XIV-style sofa © Juergen Teller

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Sue Steward



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A fluffy kitten staring into a camera is a surprising greeting by a photographer known for his challenging fashion shoots and erotic portraits of models, actors, artists and designers. The cat draws the eye but the focus in this first of three galleries becomes a triptych of large portraits of Vivienne Westwood lying naked and luxuriating on a Louis XIV-style sofa.

Having posed on both sides of her body, she sits up, laughing, and parts her legs.

Teller's fascination with nudity reveals an intimate trust between subject and photographer. Growing up in Germany, where nudism and naturism are popular, could explain his profusion of naked self-portraits; an

erotic twist is never far away in his work. Perhaps best-known is the intimate scene involving Charlotte Rampling and Teller in a naked embrace on a bed, a surprisingly touching image reminiscent of Annie Leibovitz's Yoko and John, mother and child portrait. Interestingly, Kate Moss, crammed inside a wheelbarrow like a beautiful doll, is fully clothed.

"Self i-phone, 2012" is one of many self-portraits, including one of his huge belly (now shrunk). It hangs in the second gallery and also in the ICA's Reading Room whose walls are papered like a teenager's bedroom.

Covered with small prints holding memories of his life, private and commercial, they include a portrait of Teller's close friend, the late Richard Hamilton — a poignant presence alongside many scenes with his family.

The processes involved in commercial fashion shoots spill into his family's reality: his son's skin tone is blended with his father's, and his creepy Midwich Cuckoo stare was clearly calculated; his teenaged daughter standing in deep pond water and holding a rifle, introduces a rare cinematic quality but maintains her father's dedication to suggesting a narrative. In contrast, Björk and Son, Iceland presents a tranquil scene in tones and mood.

The most surprising and mature work on show is a series of small prints arranged like a storyboard. Text and images document the photographer's childhood and his relationships with his parents, particularly his mother, Irene. Irene im Wald (Irene in the Wood) reveals many details of her life and her son unfolds stories as she walks through the woods. This revealing new work has no need for exposing himself through nakedness and now reveals a serious, emotional character.

Until March 17 ([ica.org.uk](http://ica.org.uk), 020 7930 3647).