

COLLAGE BY GRACIA HABY & BOUND BY LOUISE JENNISON

Salvaged Relatives

SALVAGED RELATIVES, EDITION I (RED)

2014-2015

ARTISTS' BOOK, UNIQUE STATE, FEATURING 21 INDIVIDUAL COLLAGES
ON CABINET CARDS WITH PENCIL AND PAINT ADDITIONS
HOUSED IN A THREE-COLOUR LINEN SOLANDER BOX WITH INLAID COLLAGE,
IN THE BORROWED HEADDRESS OF A SEAHORSE FROM SADKO (C. 1916)

SALVAGED RELATIVES, EDITION II (YELLOW)

2014-2015

ARTISTS' BOOK, UNIQUE STATE, FEATURING 21 INDIVIDUAL COLLAGES
ON CABINET CARDS WITH PENCIL AND PAINT ADDITIONS
HOUSED IN A THREE-COLOUR LINEN SOLANDER BOX WITH INLAID COLLAGE,
IN THE BORROWED COSTUME FOR DR ROMUALDO WITH AN ANGOLIAN TALAPOIN (MIOPITHECUS TALAPOIN)

SALVAGED RELATIVES, EDITION III (BLUE)

2014-2015

ARTISTS' BOOK, UNIQUE STATE, FEATURING 21 INDIVIDUAL COLLAGES
ON CABINET CARDS WITH PENCIL AND PAINT ADDITIONS
HOUSED IN A THREE-COLOUR LINEN SOLANDER BOX WITH INLAID COLLAGE,
IN THE BORROWED COSTUME OF A POLOVTSIAN WARRIOR (PRINCE IGOR C. 1909-37)

A ONE NIGHT ONLY VIEWING AT MILLY SLEEPING, 157 ELGIN STREET, CARLTON
5 - 7:30PM, WEDNESDAY THE 11TH OF FEBRUARY, 2015

“For in and out, above, about, below,
’Tis nothing but a Magic Shadow-show,
Play’d in a Box whose Candle is the Sun,
Round which we Phantom Figures come and go.”
—Omar Khayyám¹

There you were, in an open shoebox beneath the radio. Some eighty-odd cabinet cards that to my ego called out for salvation. Those of you less marked by age and warped by moisture, I took to the counter. A handsome, if motley, selection of sixty-three men and women, young and old, purchased as a plan for restoration formed.

Placed one atop the other and wrapped in a plastic bag, your muffled conversations hugged the corner whereas I went straight ahead and so I have no idea as to what was actually said. In the space of rustled make-believe, perhaps collectively you said you longed to take to the stage, to be part of Sergei Diaghilev’s “restless, physical slideshow”² steeped in the exotic, flanked by nymphs darned and patched. In the chatter, I calculated the spectacular effect. Léon Bakst was right: “People Just Want to Look!”³

To be reimagined as Jean Cocteau’s poster of Tamara Karsavina in profile and en pointe in *Le Spectre de la rose*⁴ — was that one of your requests or did I project my own desire? Was it for Giorgio de Chirico’s blue hearts and yellow sleeves you pined or *Cleopatra*’s malachite green and flesh-toned silk, all tatty, tawdry, and crude up close? Perhaps for one of you, your hands longed to be encased in Petrouchka’s black mittens. With a ruff around your neck and pants chequered yellow, pink, and perspiration, you’d be ready for dance’s ephemerality. Perhaps it was Igor Stravinsky’s pictorial image that drew you in or the hallucinogenic qualities of Claude Debussy. Satin, paint, and tinsel, with underskirts a mass of froth! The effect, kaleidoscopic!

Shod in birch slippers, together we would become our own troupe of Natalia Goncharova’s dancing peasants, beasts, and birds. With grafted elements of ragtime and *danse plastique* (free dance), we needed no longer resist that “almost irresistible urge to jump up on the stage and become at one with the performance.”⁵ In my hands was a deck of cards and “innumerable combinations.”⁶ In my grasp, the chance to revel in Bakst’s palette of “lugubrious green [alongside] a blue full of despair.”⁷

But before the front cloth can be raised, let the highly contrived exercise begin! To beauty and tension between what is seen and what remains hidden. Yes! Here’s to that.

On the table before me, a host of characters to be dressed and belted and covered in zigzag patterns. In painted silk and felted wool dyed, stenciled, painted, and printed, you would hit no false notes. If I squinted, you were capable of constant movement. An idyll of fluid pattern! A faint line of rust upon your shoulders (from a “newly invented wire coathanger”⁸) disappeared, and the painted scallops of your skirts ruched without bulk (*La Boutique fantasque*). I became Maria Stepanova removing and redistributing the petals on Nijinsky still-in-costume (*Le Spectre de la rose*), as Picasso painted the stars on *Parade*’s Acrobats. In the wings, Georges Braque painted flowers on the bodice (*Zéphire et Flore*).

You, take these fake pearl stud earrings so heavy you can hardly hear the music.

And you, bitten by a poisonous serpent, in a costume traced with blue makeup and made of watered silk and satin, return to your celestial abode wrapped in rays of gold thread and pressed by metallic stud (The blue god).

Retire to your couch like Thamar, Queen of Georgia, waving your cerise silk scarf. Hapless suitors, be mindful of trapdoors. In the lining, I added your name below the previous entries (in the costume for a Lezghin). Clearly visible under the overhead lamp were traces of Queen Thamar's peach-toned makeup and rotting fabric under the arms. With scissors in hand, costumes were taken in, hems shortened and side panels inserted. A miniaturized amalgam of Persian exoticism and folkloric tales unfolded before my eyes. "Majestic Shahs, kohl-eyed houris, Servile eunuchs and fierce warriors, the symbols of the seven deadly sins."⁹

Mind your butterfly wings are not crushed (Papillons).

A battery of percussion, your soundscape: to my fickle Columbine. Upon your shoulder and at your heel, I placed the "seismographs of movement and sensitive satellites,"¹⁰ your animal companions. A Pentailed tree shrew (*Ptilocercus lowii*) and a Water opossum (*Chironectes minimus*), together proved a bundle of instincts to help you navigate the wild, uncharted dream (*Carnival*).

To you, I give the iridescence of a marine creature, with monsters and squids in attendance (Sadko—in the underwater kingdom).

Extend your shoulders and grow your frame with stiffened buckram, felt, rubberized cloth and heavy cane you say? Of course, and in echo of the Cubist scenery, I'll leave in my place a goat (Chout).

In your chosen attire, dragging your crinoline skirt, can you still dance the syncopated tarantella with the necessary speed?

Snip—snip—snip.

You, over there, in the stuccoed wig, your jacket and vest have become a column from the classical order. Why, you've become moveable architecture, an exaggerated cornice in a ballroom (Le Bal).

And you, to my right, woven tight in ikat textiles from Uzbekistan, whether your headdress slips or not, you perfectly embody the energy and new freedom of Mikhail Fokine's choreography (The Polovtsian dances from Prince Igor).

*I've a jumble of costumes in stock. Come as a Bluebird or a Hummingbird Fairy (The Sleeping Princess) or as a lady in waiting encased in 20 metres of dyed silk in the skirt and bodice. To Aurora's Wedding, come as Pierrot (Women's wiles) or oversized as Dr Romualdo. In de Chirico's overdrawn stereotypes from traditional Italian commedia dell'arte (Pulcinella), with Stravinsky echoing Giovanni Battista Pergolesi, should you want a Gabon talapoin (*Miopithecus ogouensis*) as a brooch, I'm in no position to refuse.*

Though, in principle, I oppose the use of animals as decoration. Gold braid and ermine tails! Run, Mustela erminea! I'll swathe King Dodon in eight layers of fabric to make good your escape (Le Coq d'or).

Take your cue from Léonide Massine's Les Presages and be not anchored to a particular time and place. Become a singular organism of bitter colour orchestration constructed in Diaghilev's legacy. Or fall back to Vienna's formal elegance in the height of summer, 1860, in Le Beau Danube dressed as the Hussar. Let's!

Or perhaps you prefer the idea of weaving yourself into the fabric of a park at dusk, your coin purse stolen as you reminisce about a love affair (Jardin public). Okay.

Snip—snip—snip.

Will you take your tragedy from Canto V of Dante's Inferno (Francesca da Rimini), throwing yourself onto your husband's sword?

Will you be held in place by Henri Matisse's chevrons of navy blue velvet, an exotic bird from his own collection perhaps (The song of the nightingale)?

Will, like Vaslav Nijinsky, you take your choreography from a toy duck with its "weighty, angular, downward thrust"¹¹ (The Rite of Spring)?

Become stateless, travelling on Nansen passports, my troupe. Become Irina Baronova advertised on a De Reszke cigarette card. Or slink into an Æsop's fable and become the cat-woman in pursuit of a mouse. "Mrkgnao! the cat cried"¹² (La Chatte). Perhaps the magically feathered half-woman and half-bird of Slavic folklore born aloft not by strings but by music¹³ feels your path. Mind there's a soul hidden in that egg (The firebird).

Grow larger still. Spring from cabinet card to a gelatin silver photograph. Be Icarus as he falls to the ground (Icare¹⁴). I'll cushion your knees.

A backdrop for your enchantment has been provided. Be lined with vermillion. Be weighted with gold acorns (Narcissus). With its chronological assortment of stains, let us reduce that skirt and remove that trimming. With white spots on the backcloth to echo Fokine's choreographic floor patterns repeatedly layered, not for you the painful misfortune of falling through a rotting floorboard and tearing an Achilles tendon like Alexander Gavrilov.

My Salvaged Relatives, tucked inside a fairy tale inside a Solander box-nest where old age and weary muscles will not find you.

Snip—snip.

"The curtain falls."¹⁵

Endnotes

- 1 Khayyám, Omar, poem in Beaumont, Cyril, decorated by Sevier, Michel, *Impressions of the Russian Ballet 1919: Petrouchka*, edition 38/40, London: C. W. Beaumont, 1919, p.5.
- 2 Goodall, Howard, 'Music and the Ballets Russes' in Pritchard, Jane (Ed.), *Diaghilev and the Golden Age of the Ballets Russes 1909–1929*, London: V&A Publishing, 2010, p.176.
- 3 Bakst, Léon, 'O sovremennom teatre. "Nikto v teatre bol'she ne khochet slushat, a khochet videt!"', *Petersburgskaia gazeta [The Petersburg Gazette]*, 21st of January 1914, no.20, p.5., referenced by Bowlt, John, E., 'Léon Bakst, Natalia Goncharova and Pablo Picasso: "Call Forth Emotions by Captivating the Eye"' in *Diaghilev and the Golden Age of the Ballets Russes 1909–1929*, p.105.
- 4 One of two large-scale, colour lithographic posters for the opening season of the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées, Paris, 1913, originally created by Jean Cocteau for the 1911 season at Monte Carlo. The other was of Vaslav Nijinsky, who Cocteau described as having a "slender young torso contrasting with overdeveloped thighs, ... like some Florentine, vigorous beyond anything human, and feline to a disquieting degree." V&A Theatre and Performance Collection accessed online, <http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O75904/ballets-russes-poster-cocteau-jean/>
- 5 Bowlt, John, E., 'Léon Bakst, Natalia Goncharova and Pablo Picasso: "Call Forth Emotions by Captivating the Eye"' in *Diaghilev and the Golden Age of the Ballets Russes 1909–1929*, p.103.
- 6 "The costumes might intervene with each other mutually or come forth one from the other. One costume, put next to another might hardly be noticed... This [process] can be compared to a game of cards with its rigid and complex rules and innumerable combinations." Goncharova, Natalia, *Le Costume Théâtral* (1930), in *Diaghilev and the Golden Age of the Ballets Russes 1909–1929*, p.108.
- 7 Léon Bakst discussing his "paradoxical" colour palette for *Schéhérazade*, *Diaghilev and the Golden Age of the Ballets Russes 1909–1929*, p.104.
- 8 Ward, Debbie, 'Sights Unseen: Tags, Stamps and Stains', in Bell, Robert, *Ballet Russes: The Art of Costume*, Canberra: National Gallery of Australia, 2010, p.199.
- 9 Beaumont, Cyril, decorated by White, Ethelbert, *Impressions of the Russian Ballet 1919: Thamar*, edition 30/40, London: C. W. Beaumont, 1919, p.5.
- 10 Luc Van Den Dries discussing animals in a conversation with Jan Fabre, 2004/2003, in Lepecki, André (Ed.), *Dance: Documents of Contemporary Art*, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 2012, p.123.
- 11 Edwin Evans recalls of Vaslav Nijinsky: "Like many artists he had a weakness for clever toys. I discovered in Chelsea a jointed wooden duck which was capable of assuming extraordinary expressive angular attitudes. I procured one for him, and he was delighted with it. The following year, after *The Rite of Spring* had been produced with his angular choreography, one of his first questions to me was: 'Well, did you recognize it?' — 'What?' — 'Why, the duck, of course', and he told me that some of the most effective angular poses in the ballet had originated with the duck." Pritchard, Jane, 'Creative Productions', in *Diaghilev and the Golden Age of the Ballets Russes 1909–1929*, p.81.
- 12 Joyce, James, *Ulysses*, Gabler, Hans Walter (Ed.), with Steppe, Wolfhard, & Melchior, Claus, London: The Bodley Head, 2008, p.45.
- 13 "It is easily possible to hear the flight of the bird, its approach and play among the branches of the magic tree, and capture by the prince.... an atmosphere of witchcraft, goblins, and attendant magic." Beaumont, Cyril, decorated by White, Ethelbert, *Impressions of the Russian Ballet 1919: L'Oiseau de Feu*, edition 10/46, London: C. W. Beaumont, 1919, p.6.
- 14 Beck, Vene, *Stage performance of Icare (Icarus falls to the ground)*, 1940, gelatin silver photograph, 16.6 X 24.6 cm, National Gallery of Australia
- 15 Beaumont, Cyril, decorated by Allison, Adrian, P., *Impressions of the Russian Ballet 1919: Schéhérazade*, edition 18/40, London: C. W. Beaumont, 1919, p.13.



2015

SALVAGED RELATIVES, EDITION I (RED)

- Cover *In the borrowed headdress of a Seahorse from Sadko (c. 1916)*
- 1 *In the borrowed costume for a lady-in-waiting, c. 1921, designed by Léon Bakst, with a Piapiac (*Ptilostomus afer*)*
 - 2 *In the borrowed costume for a squid from Sadko, designed by Natalia Goncharova, c. 1916*
 - 3 *In the headdress of Shah Shahriar from Shéhérazade, 1910–30s, with a Jungle runner (*Ameiva ameiva*)*
 - 4 *Fashioned as a necktie, a modified costume for a slave or dancing girl from Cleopatra, 1909, with a Rainbow trout (*Salmo gairdneri*)*
 - 5 *In the borrowed costume for an Ivan, c. 1922, designed by Natalia Goncharova, from Aurora's Wedding, with a Golden cat (*Felis aurata*)*
 - 6 *In the borrowed costume for Queen Thamar, c. 1912, with a House mouse (*Mus musculus*) and a Marsupial mole (*Notoryctes typhlops*) tucked under the arm*
 - 7 *In the headdress of a Maiden from The Rite of Spring, 1913, with an Okapi (*Okapia johnstoni*)*
 - 8 *In the borrowed costume for a Court Lady in Francesca da Rimini, c. 1937, with an Alewife (*Alosa pseudoharengus*)*
 - 9 *In the borrowed costume for a Coronation Scene from Boris Godunov for Diaghilev's Saison Russes, c. 1908, with a three-toed sloth (*Bradypus variegatus*)*
 - 10 *In the borrowed costume of Prince Charming from The Sleeping Princess, c. 1921, with a Black-bearded saki (*Chiropotes satanas*)*
 - 11 *In the borrowed costume for a Prince, with 'essence d'orient pearls' from Sadko, c. 1916, with a Red fish (*Sebastes marinus*)*
 - 12 *In the borrowed costume worn by Doris Faithful as the Sea Princess from Sadko, after Natalia Goncharova, 1916*
 - 13 *In the borrowed costume for a slave or dancing girl, designed by Sonia Delaunay, 1918, with a Chaffinch (*Fringilla coelebes*)*
 - 14 *In the modified headdress for the Mandarin from The song of the nightingale, after Henri Matisse, 1920, with an aardvark (*Orycteropus afer*)*
 - 15 *In the borrowed costume for a Polovtsian Warrior from Prince Igor, c. 1909, with a Leopard gecko (*Eublepharis macularius*)*

- 16 *In the borrowed costume for a spirit of the hours from Le Pavillon d'Armide, c. 1909, designed by Alexandre Benois, with a Flying fish (Exocoetus volitans)*
- 17 *In the borrowed costume of a Polovtsian Warrior, 1909–37, designed by Nicholas Roerich, with an Australian rainbowfish (Melanotaenia fluviatilis) and a Ballan wrasse (Labrus bergylta)*
- 18 *In the borrowed costume for a peasant woman from Le Coq d'or, c. 1937, with a Red-legged partridge (Alectoris rufa)*
- 19 *In the borrowed costume of the Chief Eunuch from Schéhérazade, designed by Léon Bakst, c. 1910, with a Red spurfowl (Galloperdix spadicea)*
- 20 *In the borrowed costume for the Huzzar, c. 1933, from Massine's Le Beau Danube, with a Himalayan snowcock (Tetraogallus himalayensis)*

SALVAGED RELATIVES, EDITION II (YELLOW)

- Cover *In the borrowed costume for Dr Romualdo with an Angolian talapoin (Miopithecus talapoin)*
- 1 *In the modified costume for the Prince in L'Oiseau d'Or, c. 1909, with its red raspberry temptation*
- 2 *In the stained costume of a Young Man from The Rite of Spring, c. 1913, with a Bornean smooth-tailed tree shrew (Dendrogale melanura)*
- 3 *In the borrowed costume for the Buffoon's Wife from Chout, with cane-stiffened felt and cotton, c. 1921, and a Toco toucan (Ramphastos toco)*
- 4 *In the borrowed costume of a Polovtsian Warrior, 1909–37, designed by Nicholas Roerich, with a Blue-winged parrot (Neophema chrysostoma)*
- 5 *In a modified headdress from a Mourner from The song of the nightingale, c.1920, designed by Henri Matisse, with an Emerald toucanet (Aulacorhynchus prasinus)*
- 6 *In the borrowed costume for a friend of Queen Thamar, designed by Léon Bakst, with a Large ground finch (Geospiza magnirostris) hovering in attendance*
- 7 *In the borrowed skirt of Columbine, c. 1942, with a Pen-tailed tree shrew (Ptilocercus lowii) and a Water opossum (Chironectes minimus)*
- 8 *In the headdress of a Seahorse, taking dictation from a Madras tree shrew (Anathana ellioti)*
- 9 *In the borrowed costume for a chamberlain from The song of the nightingale, c. 1920, with a Grey parrot (Psittacus erithacus)*

- 10 *In the borrowed costume for a court lady from The sleeping princess, c. 1921, designed by Léon Bakst, with an Emperor penguin (Aptenodytes forsteri)*
- 11 *In a borrowed tunic from Pulcinella, 1932, designed by Giorgio de Chirico, 1932, with a Pinecone fish (Monocentris japonicas) and an Emperor penguin (Aptenodytes forsteri)*
- 12 *A family portrait in the borrowed mantle from King Dodon, c. 1937, designed by Natalia Goncharova*
- 13 *In the borrowed costume for a Squid from Sadko, designed by Natalia Goncharova, c. 1916, with a Queen triggerfish (Balistes vetula)*
- 14 *In the borrowed costume of a Prince for Vaslav Nijinsky, 1914*
- 15 *In the borrowed costume for a guest from Balanchine's Le Bal, c. 1929, with a Crossbill (Loxia curvirostra)*
- 16 *In a borrowed costume from Carnival, designed by Léon Bakst, c. 1920, with a Lumholtz's tree-kangaroo (Dendrolagus lumholtzi)*
- 17 *In the borrowed headdress worn by Adolph Bolm as the Prince from Sadko, 1916, with a Golden mouse (Ochrotomys nuttalli)*
- 18 *In the borrowed costume for Pierrot, 1920–24, cradling an Atlantic flyingfish (Cheilopogon melanurus)*
- 19 *In a borrowed costume from Scene II of Massine's Les Présages, c. 1933*
- 20 *In borrowed costume for a soldier from Chout, c. 1921, designed by Mikhail Larinov*

SALVAGED RELATIVES, EDITION III (BLUE)

- Cover *In the borrowed costume of a Polovtsian Warrior (Prince Igor c. 1909–37)*
- 1 *In a borrowed cape, designed by Léon Bakst from Papillions, c. 1914*
 - 2 *In the modified tunic of the Blue God, c. 1912, designed by Léon Bakst, with a Monk saki (Pithecia monachus)*
 - 3 *In the borrowed costume for Lezghin, c. 1912, from Thamar*
 - 4 *In the borrowed costume worn by Alice Nikitina as Flore from Zéphire et Flore, after Georges Braque, 1925, with a Cream-coloured courser (Cursorius cursor)*

- 5 *In a borrowed costume from The Firebird, designed by Natalia Goncharova, c. 1926, with an endangered Peralta giraffe (Giraffa camelopardalis peralta)*
- 6 *In the borrowed costume of an unspecified character from Pulcinella, 1932, designed by Giorgio de Chirico, with a Rufous-tailed plantcutter (Phytotoma rara)*
- 7 *In a modified costume from a Maiden from Vaslav Nijinsky's The Rite of Spring, c. 1913, with a Plate-billed mountain toucan (Andigena laminirostris)*
- 8 *In the borrowed costume for a Coronation Scene from Boris Godunov for Diaghilev's Saison Russes, c. 1908, with an Eastern barred bandicoot (Perameles gunni)*
- 9 *In the headdress of a Maiden from The Rite of Spring, 1913, with a Greater bilby (Macrotis lagotis) and a pair of Star finches (Neochmia ruficauda)*
- 10 *In a borrowed crown from Sadko, with a Grey treefrog (Hyla versicolor)*
- 11 *In the backwards costume for the Buffoon, 1921, after Mikhail Larinov, with a Curl-crested aracari (Pteroglossus beauharnaesii)*
- 12 *In the modified costume for the Prince in L'Oiseau d'Or from Le Festin, c. 1909, with a Numbat (Myrmecobius fasciatus) and a North African gerbil (Dipodillus campestris)*
- 13 *In the modified costume for a Little God from Le Dieu bleu with a brass headdress, 1912, with an Indri (Indri indri)*
- 14 *In the borrowed costume for Petrouchka, designed by Alexandre Benois, c. 1911, with a Mountain tree shrew (Tupaia montana) and a Flap-necked chameleon (Chamaeleo dilepis)*
- 15 *In the modified robe (no longer with ermine tails as decoration) for King Dodon from Le Coq d'or, c. 1937, designed by Natalia Goncharova*
- 16 *In the modified costume for a Young Man, designed by Giorgio de Chirico, c. 1929, with a Harpy fruit bat (Harpyionycteris whiteheadi)*
- 17 *After Henri Matisse, in the borrowed costume for a Courtier from The song of the nightingale, 1920, with gold studs, paint, satin, and braid*
- 18 *After David Hockney, in the borrowed costume for the Bonze from The Nightingale, 1982, with crêpe, lamé, a Greater glider (Petauroides volans) and a Blue parrotfish (Scarus coeruleus)*
- 19 *In the borrowed costume for an attendant of Köstchei from The firebird, 1910, designed by Aleksandr Golovin and Léon Bakst, with a Short-tailed opossum (Monodelphis domestica)*
- 20 *In the borrowed costume for Shah Zeman from Schéhérazade, 1910–30s, with a Swallow-tanager (Tersina viridis)*

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