



Fiona Banner aka The Vanity Press, 'VULVA VOLVO (2021-now)' (2025). Installation view, 1301PE, Los Angeles. Photo: Fredrik Nilsen. Courtesy of the artist and Frith Street Gallery, London.

MEDIA RELEASE /

Studies

Fiona Banner aka The Vanity Press

'ISBN 978-1-913983-97-0 (EVERY WORD UNMADE)'

21 March – 25 April 2026

Exhibition Preview and Artist Talk, Saturday 21 March, 3–6pm

The Common Guild presents the work of renowned artist Fiona Banner aka The Vanity Press in a new exhibition.

The Common Guild's opening exhibition of 2026 is the first in a new, annual series, entitled 'Studies', developed in conjunction with the Roberts Institute of Art. Each exhibition will draw from the collection to present key works by major artists. 'Studies' centres upon well-established artistic practices and works made in the 1990s – 2000s that particularly connect with now. The first exhibition in the series is focussed on a work by Fiona Banner aka The Vanity Press.

'ISBN 978-1-913983-97-0 (EVERY WORD UNMADE)' is an exhibition in the form of a poem and it is Banner's most recent publication. Incorporating works from 1996 to 2026, it embodies a span of time and at the same time it is an anti-chronological, momentary, present-tense reading. Working with a range of media, including drawing, sculpture and performance, Banner reflects with and through the malleable flexibility of language and its seductive, coercive limits, in order to explore conflict and gender. Registering this exhibition as a publication typifies her iconoclastic attitude to publishing.

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'Every Word Unmade' (2006–2007) is a neon alphabet hand-blown by the artist, who bent hot glass into the 26 letterforms of the alphabet. The struggle against and with the medium, and with language itself is evident. As Banner has said, "words are extensions of our physical selves, so I started to explore the physicality of words".

It is a work, like many of Banner's, about communication and the building blocks of language: here fragile and faltering, combined, in its use of neon, with the seductive language of the street and commerce. When it was first made, 'Every Word Unmade' represented a pause in Banner's densely verbal work that addressed the myths and narratives of conflict – a spirited attempt to denude language of its manipulative power and start again.

'THE NAM' (1997), a monumental compendium of Vietnam war films, narrated in Banner's own words to form an expansive textual wordscape is also shown here, revisited in today's context. It is presented alongside 'VULVA VOLVO (1930-2021)' (2025), a concise text sculpture cast from the aluminium of a melted down Tornado ZE728 warplane. Together with other works, from 'Mortal Coil' (2026) published in conjunction with this exhibition, to 'Disarm' (2024-2026), they demonstrate the coherence and consistency of Banner's engagement with linguistic power structures, physical bodies, temporality, conflict and hubris.

'Every Word Unmade' is courtesy of the David and Indre Roberts Collection.

NOTES /

1. Press Contact /

For more information, images or to arrange interviews please contact Joe Robins,
joe@thecommonguild.org.uk.

2. About The Common Guild /

The Common Guild is a visual arts organisation based in Glasgow, with a varied public programme of exhibitions, projects and events, based in a former school building on the south bank of the River Clyde. We are committed to presenting artists' work in interesting and engaging ways and aim to create world-class contemporary art experiences and discussions.

With a focus on accessibility, equality, and supporting artists, we are a registered charity, supported by Creative Scotland and through a range of grants and donations.

thecommonguild.org.uk
[@thecommonguild](https://www.instagram.com/thecommonguild)

3. About the Artist /

Fiona Banner aka The Vanity Press explores gender, language, interpretation and publishing through a range of media, including drawing, sculpture, performance and moving image. The struggle between language and its limitations is central to Banner's conceptual approach. With an interest in how conflict is mythologised and enabled through popular culture, her early work took the form of 'wordscapes' or 'still films', blow-by-blow accounts in her own words of feature films, from war movies to porn, from intimate scenes to historical events. These works evolved into solid single blocks of text, often the same shape and size as a cinema screen.

In 1997 Banner started her own publishing imprint The Vanity Press, with her monumental 'THE NAM'.

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She has since published many works, as books, sculptural objects or performances. In 2009 she issued herself an ISBN number and registered herself as a publication under her own name.

4. About the Roberts Institute of Art /

The Roberts Institute of Art (RIA) is a non-profit contemporary arts organisation. They commission pioneering performance art, run a residency programme in Scotland, collaborate with national partners on exhibitions and work to research and share the David and Indre Roberts Collection.

The David and Indre Roberts Collection features nearly 2,500 works by over 900 artists, dating from the mid-20th century to today. The collection is rooted in a passion for contemporary art and an ambition to share extraordinary work by some of the world's most influential artists and to support artists at different stages of their careers.

5. Events /

Artist Talk

Saturday 21 March, 3–4.30pm

The exhibition kicks off with an informal artist's talk in our Library with Fiona Banner aka The Vanity Press, joined in conversation by TCG's outgoing Director, Katrina Brown, who curated Banner's major 2002 exhibition at Dundee Contemporary Arts.

Exhibition Preview

Saturday 21 March, 4.30–6pm

All welcome.

6. List of works /

Coffee Table Book (upended), 2016

Birch plywood, paint

Disarm, 2024-2026

Sunburnt Paper, Perspex frame

Disarm at Eros, 2025

Graphite on paper, glass, aluminium from Tornado ZE728

Every Word Unmade, 2006-2007

26 Neon parts bent by the artist, paper templates, clamps, wire, and transformers

Mallarmé, 2024-2026

Glass jars, printed label, marmalade

Mortal Coil, 2026 with Ariana Reines,

ISBN 978-1-913983-36-9, Newsprint, cardboard Published in 2026 by The Vanity Press

Portrait of the Artist as a Publication (ISBN 0-9548366-7-7), 2009

Photograph, Letraset, mount board, Perspex frame

SUMMER 2009 (ISBN 978-1-907118-88-3), 2009 Sunburnt paper, Perspex frame

THE NAM Fade in, 1997-2026

17 paperback books

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Vulva Volvo (1930-2021), 2025
Graphite on paper, glass, aluminium from Tornado ZE728

Vulva Volvo (1959-1970), 2025
Graphite on paper, glass, aluminium from Tornado ZE728

VULVA VOLVO (1930-2021), 2025 Aluminium from Tornado ZE728

Zero Poem, 2026
ISBN 978-1-913983-42-0 Printed fabric, stitching

7. Location and Opening Hours /

The Common Guild
5 Florence Street
Glasgow, G5 0YX

Thursday – Saturday, 12–5pm and by appointment.

8. Access /

5 Florence Street has step-free access from the street and an internal lift. For any questions on access, please contact; info@thecommonguild.org.uk.

9. Support /

All works by Fiona Banner aka The Vanity Press.
Every Word Unmade, 2007 courtesy of the David and Indre Roberts Collection. All other works courtesy of the artist and Frith Street Gallery, London.

The Common Guild is supported by Creative Scotland.

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