

# Artist draws from Hollywood's golden age

## Nina Mae Fowler launches book and exhibition portraying stars of the past

**Miranda Bryant**

Arts and Showbusiness Reporter

AN ARTIST who has dedicated her career to depicting the stars of Hollywood's golden age today said public "lust" for celebrities was as strong then as it is now – but technology has made them more accessible.

Nina Mae Fowler's drawings and sculptures have attracted a fanbase that includes Sienna Miller and Jude Law, filmmaker John Maybury, and singer Shaheen Spiro. Her subjects have included Clark Gable, Marlene Dietrich, Jean Harlow, Marilyn Monroe and Edie Sedgwick.

Today the London-based artist is launching a book, *Measuring Elvis*, accompanied by an exhibition at The Cob Gallery in Camden.

She said that since the Twenties, "I don't think anything's changed in terms of the public's insatiable desire to see behind the scenes. What's changed is access. Social media, the internet, it can spread so easily."

Current celebrities do not hold the same allure and mystery: "I don't think the public's lust has changed. That's what interests me about that [earlier] era – the smokescreen."

Fowler, 34, grew up in Hampstead and studied sculpture in Brighton. She became friends with Miller after they met in Venice while the actress was filming *Casanova*.

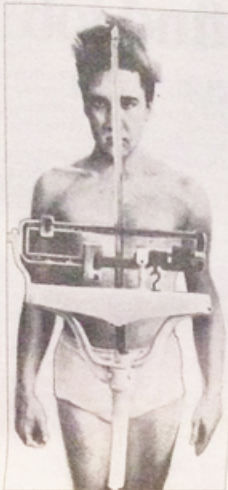
As well as her art, the 200-page work features writing by contributors including Miller, Maybury, playwright Polly Stenham, former National Portrait Gallery director Sandy Nairne, historians Barry Miles and Margherita Spiro and performance artist Eloise Formieles.

Fowler has also created etchings of tabloid images of Britney Spears and Amy Winehouse. But she said: "My drawings are responsive of what's going on now but I'm not that interested in current celebrities – for me they don't have the mystery."

"I don't want to make a drawing that's about Leonardo DiCaprio and that's it. If you draw [golden age US actress] Tal-

ulah Bankhead, who's not so recognised now, she still has the intrigue and aura. Clark Gable: what is it about him that made hundreds of thousands venerate him? Can I capture that?"

"The Hollywood thing is a passion – the end of the silent era, the Twenties going into the Fifties going to colour." *Measuring Elvis* is being published by The Cob Gallery after a crowdfunding campaign. @mirandee



**Exposure:** Fowler's portraits of Elvis and Amy Winehouse. Her show will be at The Cob Gallery in Camden



**Passion:** Nina Mae Fowler and her portrait of Jean Harlow