Deborah Frances-White on Guanyin, Chinese goddess of mercy

I love Guanyin because she has so many arms, and I think that speaks to how many different things women are expected to do in a day and be to other people. Guanyin, depending on the time in history and the geography, can appear as a masculine figure or a feminine figure. But in fact, transcending everything, including gender, is the ultimate meditative place where we can be beyond all of those binaries and restrictions. So, I think of Guanyin as a ‘they’ rather than a ‘he’ or a ‘she’.

I hope that people take away from this exhibition a profound sense of their own power and find within them that little bit of the divine, because anyone who's alive has the divinity of the spark of life within them. I hope women take away from this exhibition a sense of the power and the action of women throughout history and those who've been venerated. I hope that we leave here feeling much less passive, much less like objects, much less like plus-ones, much less like those who need to be included in the diversity and inclusion targets. Why would we need to be included? We belong. We are central. We are divine. We have many arms.