



SPINE TINGLING

Conceptual photographer **MARK VESSEY** has been credited with spearheading a Brit art revival thanks to this picture – a visual chronicle of *Attitude's* history



What better way to celebrate our fifteenth birthday than this? Standing tall and proud at 1.5m, pictured above are the spines that mark the 15 years of *Attitude's* prolific existence. The image is brought to you by British photographer Mark Vessey. The 26-year-old first started taking snaps of everything and anything that interested him; he visited bars, saunas and cruising grounds clicking away like a happy tourist. Each frame immortalised a lifestyle that fascinated him. He says: "I was inspired when I was at art college by American pop art. Keith Herring is my hero." But then five years ago he decided to take

a picture of his beloved pile of *Attitude's*. "I loved the result, so I decided to develop the idea," says Vessey. "I've always been obsessed with the magazine, but I didn't have every single issue. I had to scour second-hand shops, eBay and friends' collections in order to complete the collection." Vessey carefully compiled every copy of his chosen Scripture over the handful of years after moving from Essex to Brighton to study art. He batted the idea around for a while before taking it into the studio and playing around with the image, which he named after its subject. The photo began to plough its way through the art scene until it made its way into the 2006 summer show at the Royal Academy of Art where it sat in state surrounded by the crème de la crème of Brit Art. "When it was going up people were saying 'Brit Art is back'," says Vessey, who continues to update the piece with each new addition of *Attitude*. "I would like to cap it off at 15 years and just have the 15 years of *Attitude* magazine

because I think it's just a nice set. The full picture is 5m by 1.5m – you walk along a timeline of gay history. It's really big and you can't just put it on someone's wall, it needs to go somewhere impressive. I've just done a presentation to get it put in the ICA. I want it to go somewhere where it's in the right sort of atmosphere." The *Attitude* photograph was recently donated to

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raise money at the 2009 Stonewall Equality Dinner. He also recently collaborated with graffiti artist Stika mixing the mediums of graffiti and photographs to create an installation promotion of safe sex messages. It was also to celebrate the launch of 10,000 condom packets distributed by the Terrence Higgins Trust with Mark's *Condom Stack* image on each pack. Next up on his schedule? He's currently hard at work on *Collections*, an "exciting sequence that reflects personal histories, which shows individual collections are also a component part of the culture we belong to". Stay tuned. For a special anniversary treat, Mark is giving one reader the '*Attitude*' photograph – an archival 40cm x 109cm Fuji crystal print signed and numbered from a limited edition of 300 copies. Send a postcard with your email address to Mark Vessey print, *Attitude*, Trojan Publishing, 211 Old Street, London EC1V 9NR and check out his website at www.pointandsnap.com