

Banned! Celebrity spoof artist Alison Jackson's royal book launch is shelved

Photographer Alison Jackson's latest book 'Up the Aisle' is published this Friday – a coffee table tome of carefully staged photographs imagining intimate moments between "William and Kate" as they prepare for their April wedding. But the controversial photographer tells me that she has had to abandon her book launch as planned and hunt out another location.



Jackson, 50, was ready to erect a royal wedding themed pop up shop in the centre of the market square in London's Covent Garden but at the last moment has been thwarted by "busy-bodies" who have banned the celebrity snapper from erecting her stand.

"I'm just devastated. I only got the phone call today. I couldn't believe my ears – they thought it would lower the tone or some

nonsense," Jackson told me at the ICA gallery's Psychedelic themed annual fundraising gala party last night.

"It was going to be for the launch party of my book on Friday and I was so excited about being in the Covent Garden. We had the green light from the managers of the market but this second committee who were all too concerned about getting their MBE or Knighthood or whatever put a stop to it"



"We were going to be selling the most wonderful memorabilia - things like royal wedding plates. There were going to be crowns for sale too! Now I don't know what's going to happen," she continued.

Snapper Jackson, who made the headlines in the late Nineties after she staged a photograph that apparently showed Princess Diana and Dodi Al Fayed with a mixed-race child, joined the crème de la crème of high society on Tuesday evening at a fundraising auction party thrown by Lady Alison Myners, Chairwoman of London's Institute of Contemporary Arts gallery. Guests including Alan Yentob and Mollie Dent Brocklehurst joined 150 diners at the psychedelic-themed surrealist bash to raise money for the modern art space.

"I'm not going to speculate how much money we may raise, but my idea was not

to ask artists' to donate work because we understand these are straightened times and some people are reticent to give away their works," Lady Myners told me over a glass of punch.

"So instead we teamed up with Made.com who donated Piggy Bag beanbags, Hollander bikes, Champion Pro football tables and Arche lamps for the artists' to customize," she told me. "We had Damian Hirst make a bike and Ai Weiwei (the controversial artist whose turbine hall exhibition at the Tate Modern was forced to close after health and safety concerns last year) who rather fabulously steamrollered his bike entirely flat!"

All the items will be on display at the ICA from 23 to 27 March in a preview exhibition and visitors are invited to make online pre-bids on the items. *Auction details can be found at www.ica.org.uk/gala*