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# NEWS



Installation view, 'Bone Idle: The Shop', London, 2005. Courtesy: Showroom Dummies, London. Photo: Coco Amardell



## LONDON

RICHARD DYER

Rachel Whiteread's plastic sugar cube installation in Tate Modern's Turbine Hall (*Embankment* (2005), the latest in the Unilever sponsored series, until 2 April) may have been making allusions to the founding sponsor's questionable history in the sugar trade, but somehow this seemed less important than the monumental failure of the project. Wavering between 'community arts' and sheer bombast, the 'installation', (read 'pile it high and spread it thin'), failed on two counts at least: firstly, in contrast to her earlier work such as *Ghost* (1990), *House* (1993) and the recent *Holocaust Memorial* (2000) in Vienna, the endless piles of precarious – but carefully glued together – cardboard box casts evoked not so much secrecy, absence and the aching poignancy of lost space and time, as an art world Disneyland vision of a saccharine Antarctica. Secondly, and it is a tough challenge for any artwork, despite its vast physical scale – like Kapoor's topological condom – Whiteread's boxy mountains failed to articulate the cavernous interior of the Turbine Hall in any way, either aesthetically or architecturally, and ended up as recreationally decorative, as in the interior design of a stateside theme park. Perhaps after the psychological burden of the Vienna project Whiteread needed some lighter engagement.

What really worked at Tate Modern this season was the excellent, and surprisingly under-attended, Jeff Wall exhibition ('Photographs 1978–2004', until 8 January 2006). Superbly hung, and selected, this exhibition served to demonstrate what a powerful artist Wall is, and how far away he is from the realist or naturalist traditions of photography, and in fact just how close he is to the tradition of painting, particularly that of the now discredited genre of history painting.

Looking back to last year, Abigail Lane and the *Showroom Dummies* took over the top floor of Charing X gallery and converted it into a 'shop', ('Bone Idle', 31 October – 16 December, 121–125 Charing Cross Rd, WC2) displaying all manner of interior accessories, from coffee tables and wallpaper to leather jackets and upholstered chairs, not to mention a suite of commissioned skulls from several leading



Above, from left: Simon Starling, *Tabernas Desert Run*, 2004. *Shedboatshed* (Mobile Architecture No.2), 2005. Below: Jeff Wall *A Sudden Gust of Wind* (after Hokusai), 1993. All courtesy: Tate, London

contemporary artists, Damien Hirst, Sarah Lucas, Tim Noble and Sue Webster, etc. All items bore her now signature skull and skeleton motif, lending an air of luxuriant foreboding to the domestic and quotidian. Coinciding nicely with All Saints Day on the 1 November, this was an interesting take on the growing genre of 'Shop Art', which I suspect began with Claes Oldenburg's *Store* back in the 1960s. Downstairs Cathy de Monchaux showed a selection of her new work, fetishistic, 'feminine/feminist' and rather queasy in a lacy, gothic, stage-prop sort of way. I have to admit I was more drawn to her earlier work when it exhibited less of the showroom and window display aesthetic and more of a robust – if rather science-fiction orientated – contemporary sculptural concern.

Richard Deacon (Lisson, 'Range', until 28 January) showed his new tubular clay structures glazed with a rather globular and suggestively milky-white glaze which sat atop unglazed, brick-red plinths. All added up to the same height,

whether short plinths and tall structures or the converse. It is this sort of attention to spatial detail, surface and material that makes Deacon's work so enduring, even after his 20 seconds on the clock of recognition has long passed. The accompanying photographs of the American plains, disrupted by drawn collaged 'ufos' floating in the clouded sky, complete a very successful show, although I couldn't help thinking that the grand machine in stainless steel in the front window, completely filling the space, and more resonant with 'classic' Deacon, was somewhat unnecessary.

Mali Morris ('Paintings from Four Decades', 17 November – 10 December) showed at the new and rather idiosyncratic gallery, Poussin ([www.poussin-gallery.com](http://www.poussin-gallery.com)) in Bermondsey. It has a very specific and uncompromising remit to showcase mainly British 'mainstream' abstract painting from the 1960s to the 1980s, an often neglected sector. Morris's paintings are sumptuous without being baroque and subtle in touch in a way that

paintings can only be when issuing from the hand of such an experienced practitioner. I like this gallery, and look forward to its future irrigation of this hitherto fallow field of practice.

This year's Turner Prize had a fresh but light feel to it, with Darren Almond, Jim Lambie and Simon Starling. However, the presence of the much talked about Gillian Carnegie's brooding and dark hued paintings gave some degree of weight to the proceedings. Carnegie, despite the inverted hype, is in fact a very good painter, and quite apart from all the fuss, deserved to be this year's winner. However, it was Simon Starling's 'research-based art practice' – as his conceptual DIY puzzles are ponderously called – which won the prize.

**Tate Modern, Martin Eppendörfer (1953–1997), 8 February – 7 May**  
[www.tate.org.uk/modern/](http://www.tate.org.uk/modern/)  
**Progresso Continua**  
**'Self Portraits', Capsonic Gallery, 6 December 2005 – 28 January**  
[www.galsonic.com](http://www.galsonic.com)



## PRESS RELEASES



MOSCOW: STELLA ART GALLERY

VADIM ZAKHAROV

1 February – 5 March

[www.stellaartgallery.com](http://www.stellaartgallery.com)

The State Tretyakov Gallery and Stella Art Gallery, are presenting a retrospective of Vadim Zakharov, one of the leading artists of the Moscow Conceptual School, which will include installations, painted works, videos, and photography, and is accompanied by a monograph of the artist's work to date.

Image: Vadim Zakharov, *Lessons in the Boudoir*, 2006. Courtesy: Stella Art Gallery



QUIMPER (FRANCE): LE QUARTIER

CONTEMPORARY ART CENTER

MIGRATIONS AREAS, EDITION LE

QUARTIER, 2005

[www.lequartier.net](http://www.lequartier.net)

French and English, interview with: Chantal Boulanger, 140 pages, 366 color and 147 b&w illustrations, 1 DVD

*Migrations Areas* presents a travelling exhibition of works by Raymonde April and Michèle Waquart. The exhibition of the two artists, who have been friends for 30 years and work in photography and video, explores the roots of their work in their family history and their photography from 1980 to 2004.

Image: Michèle Waquart, *Mère et fille*, 1954



LONDON: ALEXANDRE POLIAZZON (TD)

ANDREAS DOBLER

11 February – 18 March

[www.alexpollazzon.com](http://www.alexpollazzon.com)

The solo show of Swiss artist Andreas Dobler will be the inaugural exhibition of this new London gallery and will feature a selection of his paintings of futuristic landscapes.

Image: Andreas Dobler



CAPE TOWN: JOAO FERREIRA GALLERY

BRIDGET BAKER

8 – 28 February

[www.joaoferreiragallery.com](http://www.joaoferreiragallery.com)

'But being a sensible woman, she subdued her temors and turned over and went to sleep again' will be Baker's first solo show at the gallery and will feature a selection of photographic projects.

Image: Bridget Baker, *Blue Collar Girl*, 2004