

Paul's Art World

The former Editor at Large of Art World magazine, sets out ten recommended contemporary art shows in London now. He currently writes freelance, including for Art Monthly, The Art Newspaper, Photomonitor, STATE and Border Crossings, and has a quirky weekly online column at FAD Art News - see www.fadwebsite.com/?s=carey-kent+.

Saturday, 14 February 2015

CHOICES UP NOW

**The latest in my rolling top ten, together with previous choices
which you can still see...**

There's no doubt that the heavy hitters are hitting heavy just now (Marclay at White Cube, Tuymans at David Zwirner, Sarah Sze double at Victoria Miro, Rashid Johnson at Hauser & Wirth, Tony Oursler at Lisson etc). Yet that's not so hard to work out: here are some less obvious picks, including a bumper crop of Italians...

Sebastian Helling & Richard Schur: Verve @ Kristin Hjellegjerde Gallery, 533 Old York Road - Wandsworth

To 21 March: kristinhjellegjerde.com



Richard Schur, *Bridges, from the Manhattan Series*, 2015

This pairing of painters seems at first like order and chaos: a welcome return to London for Munich-based Richard Schur's layered refractions of geometry and place versus Norwegian Sebastian Helling's mash-ups of Ab Ex and streetishly sprayed marks inspired, he says, by his musical icons of the 70's, notably Led Zeppelin. Look more closely, though, and you'll see dynamising little accidentals in Schur and a fair amount of structure behind Helling: a seducively colour-filled combination, but also a meditation on how much of its apparent opposite so many

conditions actually contain.



Rare self-appearance with Richard Schur!

Mimmo Rotella @ Robilant + Voena, 38 Dover St – Central

To 24 March: www.robilantvoena.com



Materia 5, 1956, retro d'affiche on cardboard, 32 x 50 cm

This revelatory show is the first London survey of the breadth of Mimmo Rotella's practice. The Italian artist (1918-2006) is known for his often cinematic torn poster *décollages*, but actually worked in several other ways linked to advertising posters. Here are his *retros*, the backs of posters with look of peeling walls; the *blanks* in which he shows posters almost wholly obliterated by a monochrome cover prior to the next layer being applied; the *artypos*, taken from found poster proofs used to test out colours, often with superimposed images; and the *sovrappittura*, in which torn posters are overpainted.



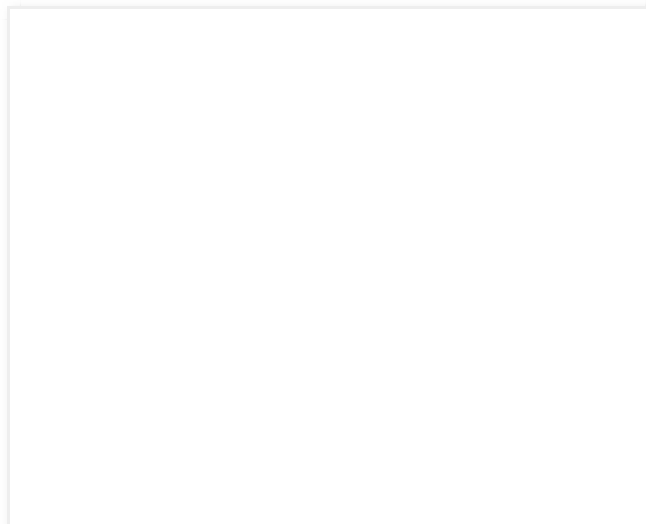
Agostino Bonalumi - Sculptures @ Mazzoleni, 27 Albemarle St - Central

To April 4: www.mazzoleniart.com



Rapporti, 1978 - glass, resin and marble

Two years ago Francesca Pola curated a magisterial survey of Agostino Bonalumi's earlier decades at Robilant + Voena. Now she's back at a new Italian gallery with a chronologically fuller sample from the estate, concentrating on Bonalumi (1935-2013) as a sculptor - which is after all only one step out from his constructed paintings. The later years contain such underappreciated experiments as enamelled metal sheets; relational pieces (here one in which a resin formation takes flight over marble); and extravagantly shaped self-standing canvases along with bronze, ceramic and fibreglass variants.

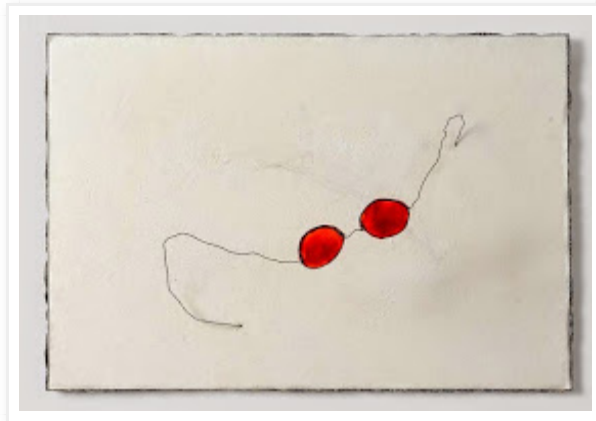




Francesca Pola explains Giallo, 1969 - vinyl tempera and shaped canvas

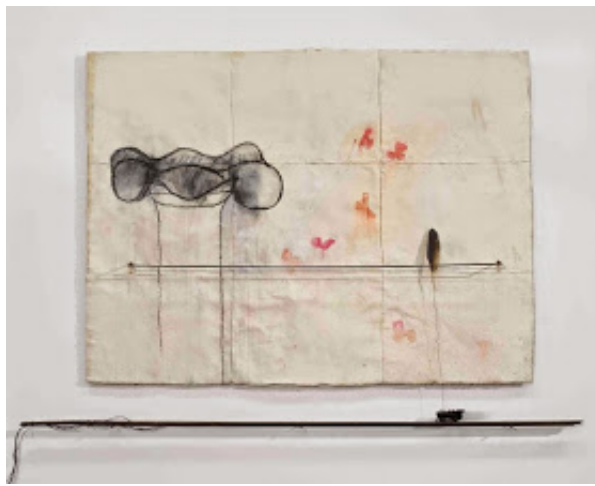
Pier Paolo Calzolari @ Ronchini Gallery, 22 Dering St – Bond St

To 7 March: www.ronchinigallery.com



Untitled [collage], 2012 - Graphite, talc, iron, rose petals, lead Photo: Michele Alberto Sereni

One could lose track of how many Italian artists of the 1960s have been presented as discoveries in London over the past few years. Though pleased to see Pascali, Bonalumi, Dadamaino, Paolini, Schifano, Scheggi and Zorio, we might reasonably have been asking: why not Pier Paolo Calzolari? And here he is, not with the signature frosted works (which hum with refrigeration to produce delicate surface whites) but with a good cross-section of his classically-tinged take on *Arte Povera*. Calzolari sets up, one might say, delicate pseudo-alchemical processes in search of the absolute: a toy train pushes a feather; flames illumine salt; and the septuagenarian seems to take a literally rose-tinted view of failing sight through a pair of glasses in which the lenses are petals.



Little Trains (Large Paper), 1972 - Paper glued on wood, wax pastel, oil pastel, tempera, iron, tracks, electric wire, feather, transformer Photo: Paolo Semprucci

Güler Ates: Stilled @ Art First Project Space, 21 Eastcastle St - Fitzrovia

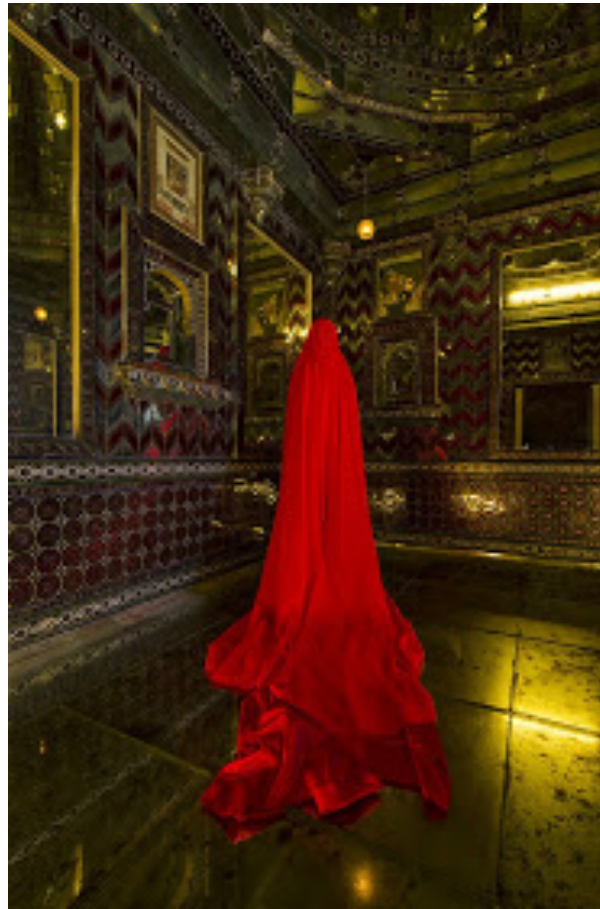
To 7 March: www.artfirst.co.uk



Magic Lights, 2013

This show brings together 10 of the 16 photographs result from London-based Turkish artist Güler Ates (say 'Gooler Artes') 2012 residency at the City Palace Museum in Udaipur. That provides a particularly rich background for her photographs of a classical Indian dancer wholly covered by a sari in local textile - a set up which presents the figure colourfully and sculpturally and might be seen as an empowering of female privacy in an environment with male authoritarian traditions behind it, rather than more restrictive interpretation of the placed on the burka

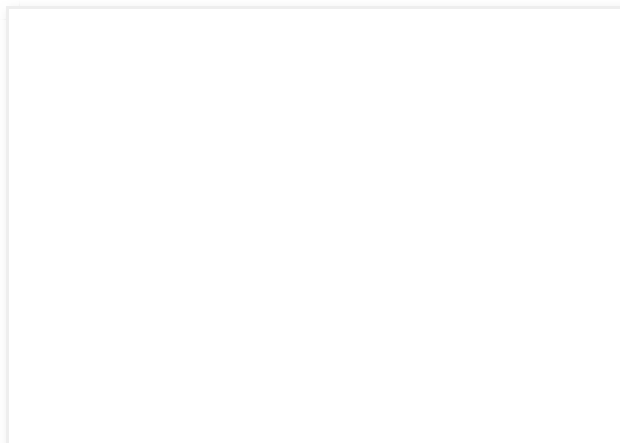
(see www.bbc.co.uk/newsround/24118241 for a neat summary of head coverings: the sari's never worn as Ates shows it). 'Magic Lights' is especially striking: look like a disco lights are in fact naturally lit 16th century stained glass. Since then, Ates has been working in a contrasting locations of Brazil and Eton College.

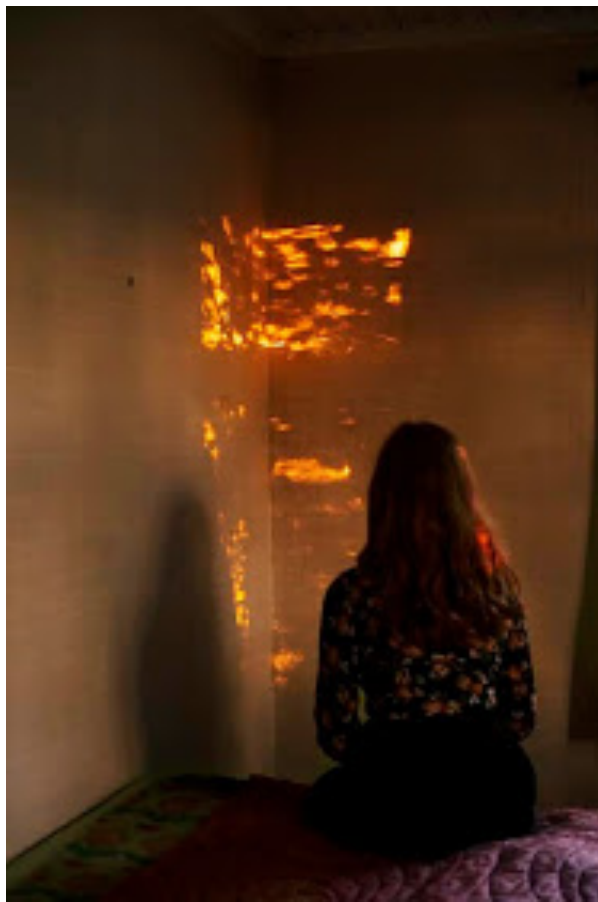


Flames, 2013

The Presence of Absence @ Berloni, 63 Margaret Street - Fitzrovia

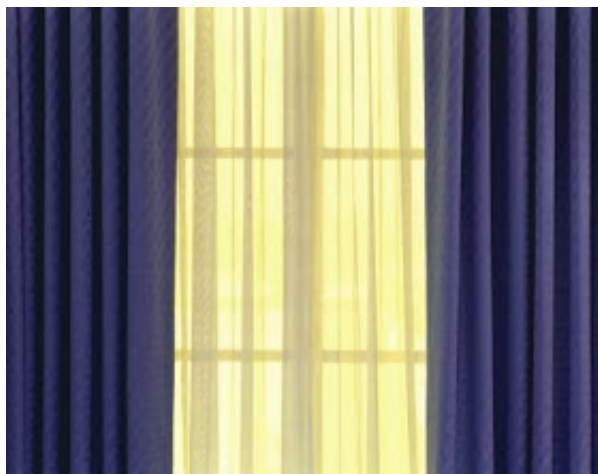
To 14 March - curator's tours 2 pm on Sat 21 Feb & 2 pm on Sat 7 March: www.berlonigallery.com





Anni Leppälä: *Evening (Embers)*, 2013

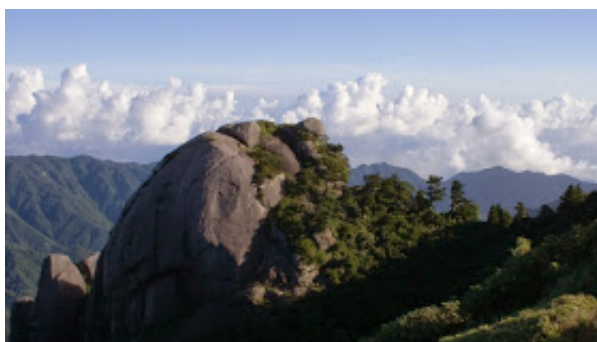
The last place I look to describe a show is the gallery's press release, lazily compliant trend as that is. Yet, having written this one, I shall claim with it that 'it's often said that negative space is as important as positive shapes in a composition. The works in this show turn around a parallel feature of content, as opposed to form: namely, what is not present is at least as important as what is present – and so it is that a key role is played by the paradoxical sounding 'presence of absence' in work by fourteen artists across a wide range of media'. And having chosen such artists as John Smith, Nika Neelova, Giorgio Sadotti and Anni Leppälä, what can I do but recommend it?



Jason Oddy: *The Pentagon, Washington D.C., USA*, 2003

Kirk Palmer: Remembering Absence @ the Daiwa Foundation Japan House, 13-14 Cornwall Terrace – Baker Street

To 26 Feb: www.dajf.org.uk/events/current-exhibition



Still from *War's End: An Island of Remembrance*, 2012

A 'sister show' for *The Presence of Absence* might be Kirk Palmer recurrent meditations on what we can and cannot now reach of the nuclear calamity which befell Japan in 1945. The photographs and two of the films in this unhurriable show do that at one remove, by concentrating on the landscape of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. *War's End: An Island of Remembrance* proposes, in effect, that the mountainous Yakushima, in the Ryuku Archipelago, be seen as a memorial garden as the mission planes used it as a reference point and circled overhead for 40 minutes before proceeding, due to changing weather conditions, to bomb Nagasaki rather than the original target of Kokura. Primeval views of nature are accompanied by a deep rumbling. That proves to be a recording of the bell from Nagasaki's destroyed cathedral, but slowed down to last the 40 minutes of the film.



Still from *Hiroshima*, 2007

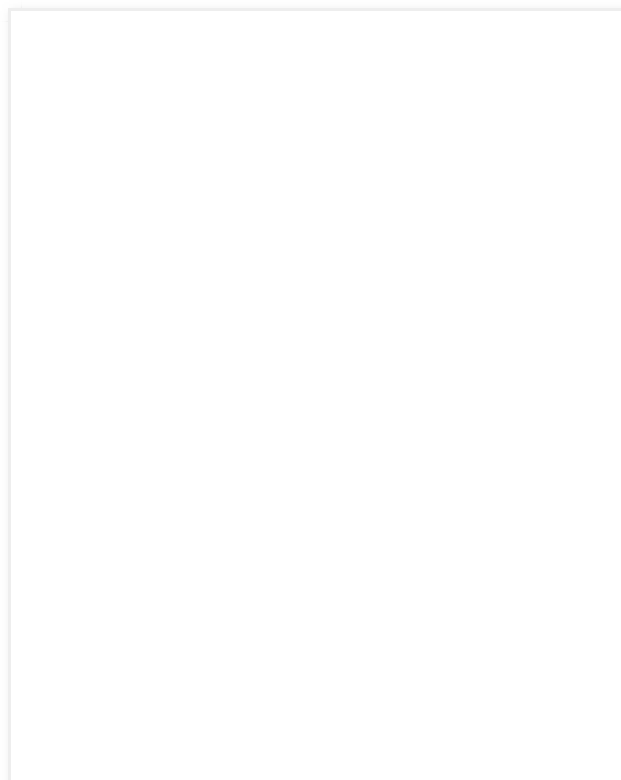
Oscar Holloway: Diorama @ Divus (to 21 Feb); **Maria Jose Arjonas** @]performance space[(to March) and **Wolfgang Berkowski** @ Lubomirov-Easton (to 21 Feb)

All at 50 Resolution Way - Deptford



Oscar Holloway from 'Dioramas'

Counting three neighbouring small galleries as one makes for a powerful international combination of male posturing rendered absurd either side of female self-realisation. Oscar Holloway shows photographs of hunters holding up their trophy deer - but with the killers edited out so that their victims look at ease in a way which isn't quite right. Leading Colombian performance artist Maria Jose Arjonas straps microphones to her body in three short films: she rubs herself with increasing speed to generate a sound like an accelerating train; acts as drum skin for an accomplice; and lies among radios which feed into her and then back with added bodily noises. Italian-based German Wolfgang Berkowski has blown up a model made of drinking straws into a laboriously made and comically phallic room-high inflatable cage which toys with the constraints of minimalism.





Wolfgang Berkowski:

Caroline Mesquita: Camping @ Union Pacific, 17 Goulston St – Whitechapel

To 20 Feb: www.unionpacific.co.uk



Installation view with Football Table, 2015

Young French artist Caroline Mesquita, in the third show at this new space, makes effective use of unusual materials to propose what comes across as an account of the social rituals of an alternative society – either that, or she's been to an unusual camp site. Entertainment centres on brass table top games, and gatherings of figures scratched into and painted onto chemically-treated brass plaques with allusive straightforwardness, or more evanescently washed onto paper with the metallic patina; the space is aerated by seductive music which rises through a brass fitting and

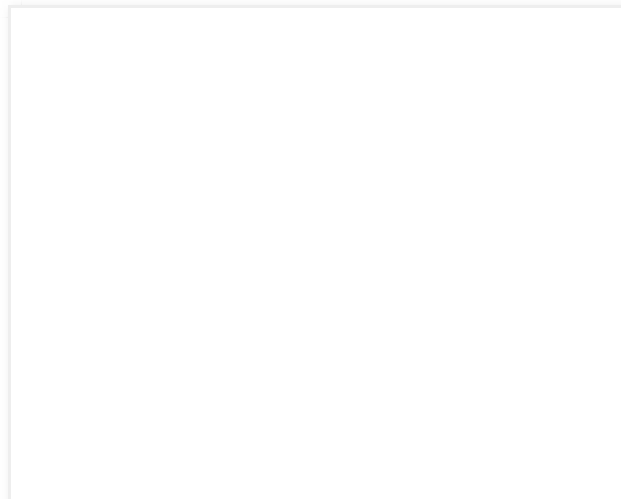
sounds as if it's played by striking and blowing through the mystery civilisation's objects – too gently, I'd say, to be dance music, though there's a lot of dancing going on...



Dance Floor, 2015 - chemically treated brass

Gideon Rubin: Delivering Newspapers @ Rokeby Gallery, 16 Roseberry Avenue – Clerkenwell

To 26 March: www.rokebygallery.com





Untitled, 2012

Gideon Rubin has such a penchant for blank faces we'll probably never know if he can paint them in full. The effect is to anonymise, ambiguate and universalise the place and time of his sources. Here he dances around modes of representing people culled from 1950's magazines hunted down during his recent residencies in Israel and China. Sometimes he paints over the page, sometimes relocates a figure to an independent canvas or transfers it to a different news context. Enough clues remain for us to puzzle out what comes from where, but without the potentially lazy short cut which facial features can provide.



PREVIOUS CHOICES STILL ON

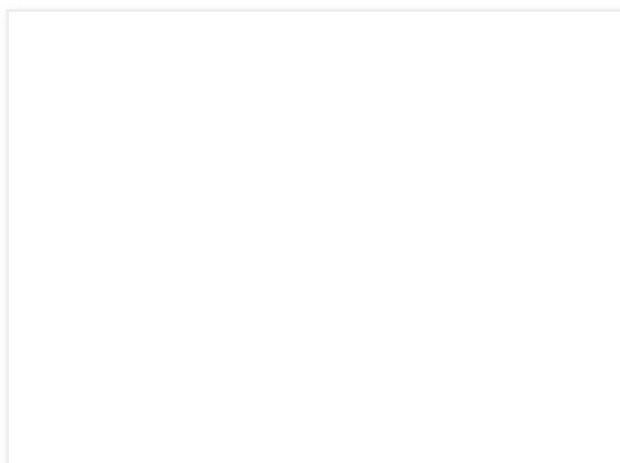
Margo Trushina: Borderlines @ Erarta Galleries, 8 Berkeley St – Central

To 14 March: www.erartagalleries.com



Margo Trushina with her heartbeat in *Waves*, 2014

London-based Russian Margo Trushina explores a plethora of borders in the elegant flow between works here, all rooted in the landscape, even – unusually – when they use neon. The boundaries range from the political to the personal. An irregularly descending line of red light, which could be the falling oil price or rouble, turns out to be the border which the Russians authorities draw within the Ukraine as their claim on its land. That's in dialogue with a Trushina's own heartbeat set in neon against the more outward waves of the sea. The wave form is then picked up more abstractly in stainless steel, while sculptural combinations play on the borders between natural and man-made, posing stone against metal, glass against wood.





Borderline Series, Untitled 4, 2104

Katy Moran @ Parasol unit, 14 Wharf Rd – Old Street

To 8 March: www.parasol-unit.org



Rock Face with a Face, 2013 - collage and acrylic on canvas

Katy Moran's approach to figurative painting is sufficiently un-illustrative she's often taken to be an abstract artist. Maybe that's why, over the decade spanned by this 51 work spread, bits of reality are increasingly collaged in directly, and her titles have become more descriptive of what you can see. Moran doesn't vary colour and scale drastically, and most of the paintings arrive at a comparable way of balancing their accidents, energies and incidents – yet there's a freshening sense that they might not have done, that they're rediscoveries rather than applications of a formula. All of which reminds me of Morandi. That said, there are curveballs: *Panther Cat* is on glass, the ursine presences of *bear fun* almost varnish into its board, *Travelling Mercy* is a triptych on found canvasses, and *Slide out*

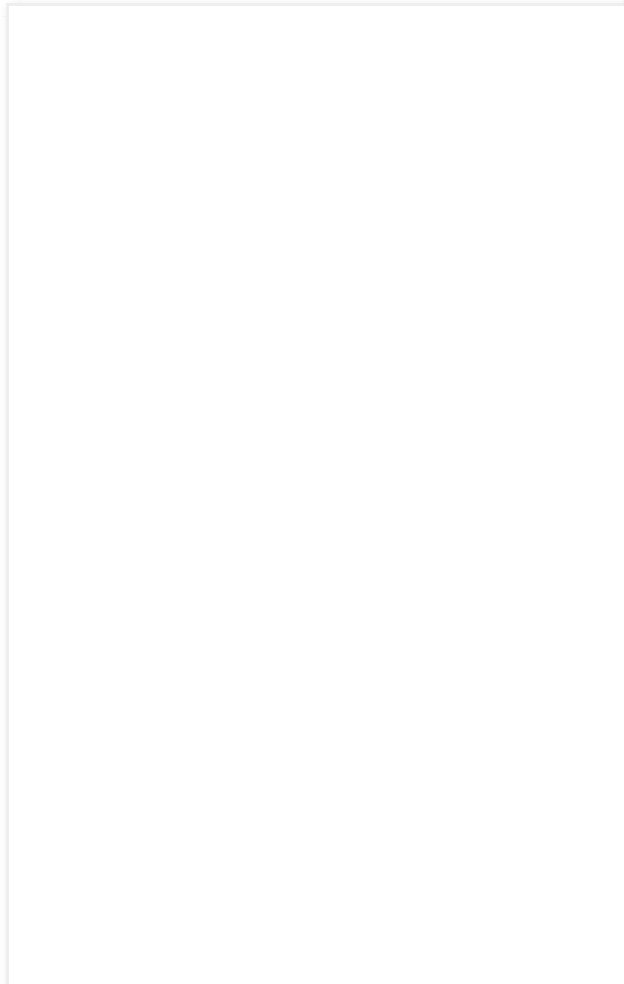
of View feels like Howard Hodgkin on the moon.



bear fun, 2010 - acrylic and varnish on board

Vicky Wright: Poor Joys Asylum Level 71 @ Josh Lilley Gallery, 44 – 46 Riding House Street - Fitzrovia

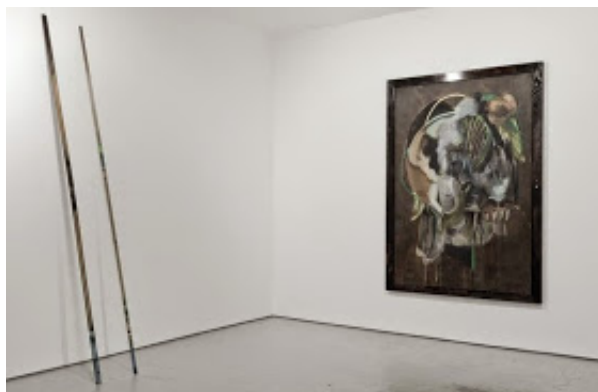
To 12 March: www.joshlilleygallery.com





A Silver Branch Can Drop Without Seeds I, 2014

Vicky Wright, like Moran, is a non-illustrative figurative painter with a distinctive language, but to such different effect that I was reminded of Polke. Wright emphasises her supports by painting on what look like the backs of panels. That suggests a subversive take on more conventional images on the unseen side, and here that's a feminist agenda linked to a 19th century practice of confining women on the grounds of 'hysterical' tendencies. The paintings mash up witch lore, video games and degradations of classic male modernist forms to haunting post-Gothic effect, complemented by painted sticks referencing the geological (and implied psychological) taking of core samples. Perhaps the witch, standing for positive female energies historically repressed, is also the magical mixer of paints. Whatever, the spell is strong.



Installation view with *Path of Exile: Poor joys Aylum IV* (the sticks) and *Path of Exile: Poor joys Aylum II*

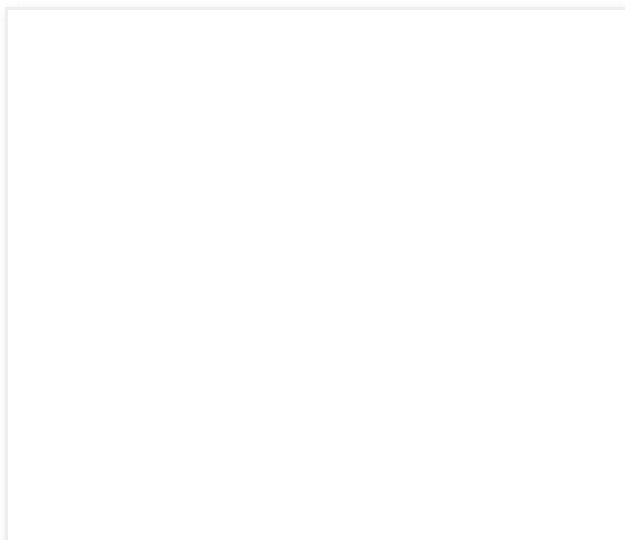
Richard Serra: Backdoor Pipeline, Ramble, Dead Load and London Cross @ Gagosian Britannia St - Kings Cross

To March 5: www.gagosian.com



Ramble, 2014

It's easy to forget that the Richard Serra show still looms at Gagosian - fair enough, perhaps, given the effort required to install it. Yes, five uniformed guards continue their arduous business of making sure that no one walks off one of the smallest parts, which are mere five tonnes of steel. That said, the combination of weight making space with the seductive surface bloom of the Corten is a winner in each of the four formats adopted: vast walk-through curve; cemetery of super slabs; dangerously balanced overhead cross; and the ultimately heavy sarcophagus. It's as if the Britannia Street Gallery was built for it - and in fact, it was, being engineered with Serra's equally imposing show 2008 show in mind. Catch it (and I don't quite mean as in Serra's seminal 1968 video 'Hand Catching Lead') in these last two months.

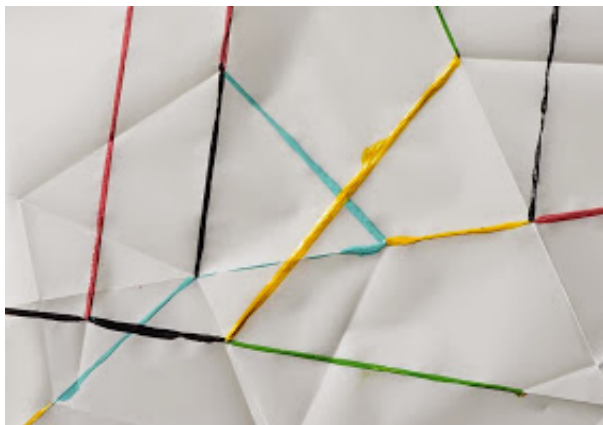




Dead Load, 2014

Beat Zoderer: Fold & Dip and Other Incidents @ Bartha Contemporary, 25 Margaret St – Fitzrovia

To 28 Feb: www.barthacontemporary.com



Dip and Fold (detail), 2014

Swiss artist Beat Zoderer has the happy knack of achieving a distinctive aesthetic through an ever-changing variety of methods and a characteristic way of using not-quite primary colours as if they were primaries. This survey includes two of his long-running steel band series together with three main new streams, focused on folding (a circle is squared by that means, and vellum is successively folded and dipped into paint to make chance concatenations with a structural logic); the castings of balls in a range of sculptural ways; and multiple watercolour applications of a templating process which yields intricately colourful results in on Japanese paper, including as the fold-out book shown.



Leporello, 2012

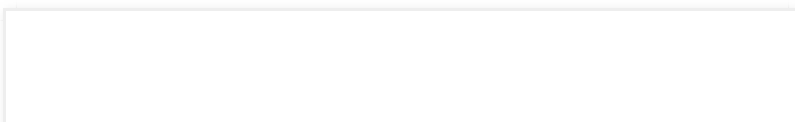
Indeterminacy @ large Glass, 392 Caledonian Road – Barnsbury

To 27 Feb: www.largeglass.co.uk



Window with Kathy Prendergast: *Mt Fuji (2)*, 2014

John Cage is an empathetic figure for many artists, and Charlotte Schepke is a sensitive curator, so there was paradoxically little chance that 'Indeterminacy' wouldn't be an interesting show. Cage's spirit is present in the sound of his short stories and invoked by such as Ana Prada's happy conjunction of plastic spoons; the unknowable time of Roger Hiorns' crystal-covered clock; John Smith's film combining cityscapes with lost sounds on the now-lost medium of cassette tape, drifts of which are filmed where it snagged around the streets of London; and the beautiful Penone-echo of Kathy Prendergast's conversion of the contour map of Mount Fuji into the rings on a tree and a fingerprint, which she's blown up into a big painting for the gallery's - large glass - window.





John Smith & Graeme Miller: still from *Lost Sound*, 1998-2001



Images courtesy / copyright the relevant artists and galleries + Mike Bruce (Serra)

[Paul Carey-Kent](#) at 08:01



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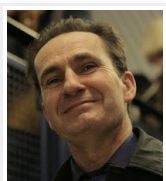


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About Me



[Paul Carey-Kent](#)

Southampton, Hampshire, United Kingdom

I was in my leisure time Editor at Large of Art World magazine (which ran 2007-09) and now write freelance. I visit many art galleries and write widely on contemporary art. My tastes are fairly broad: to illustrate, I have written catalogue essays on Joseph Beuys, German abstractionist Richard Schur, Spanish figurative painter Chema Cobo and London-based New Zealander David Rickard and . My interview features have included Arte Povera sculptor Giuseppe Penone, my favourite video

artists Anri Sala and Aernout Mik and the multimedia Mexico-based Belgian Francis Alÿs. Among British-based artists I have interviewed such as Boo Ritson, Jemima Stehli, Nogah Engler, Roger Hiorns and Phyllida Barlow. I also favour 'picture essays', for example on destroying the gallery and on the upsidedown in art, and enjoy setting quizzes. Going back a bit my main writing background is poetry. My day job is the financial management of social care for Surrey County Council.

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