

Art Review:

Issue 30 £

'Sometimes I'm surprised at how good I can paint and at other times I'm surprised at my ineptness' Alex Katz

MARCH
2009

**Matthew
Collings**

Finds out what
makes icons
so, um... iconic

Evan Holloway

Intelligent
punk art
from LA

Emma Rendel

Art's a dog -
a brand new
comic strip

Scotland

Is this where
we'll find
the next YBAs?

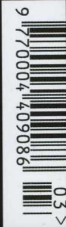
*'I like the thing of
dominating
people's minds'*

ALEX KATZ ON GREATNESS

FUTURE GREATS

PRETENDERS TO THE THRONE:
30 ARTISTS FOR TOMORROW
SELECTED BY

ALLORA & CALZADILLA / MICHAEL BRACEWELL
THOMAS DEMAND / LAURI FIRSTENBERG /
LIAM GILICK / MATTHEW HIGGS /
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HANS ULRICH OBRIST / ARTREVIEW'S CRITICS



12 BERKELEY STREET
LONDON W1J 8DT
T +44 (0) 20 7491 0100
F +44 (0) 20 7491 0200
INFO@SIMONLEEGALLERY.COM

SIMON LEE GALLERY LTD
REGISTERED IN ENGLAND 4316341
GB 788 061 692

REVIEWS: UK



Art Exhibition, 2008
(installation view).
Courtesy Simon Lee, London

Hans-Peter Feldmann
Art Exhibition

Simon Lee, London
27 November – 31 January

Although the surrealists have rather cornered the market on dramatic discordance and bizarre contiguity, there is still conceptual mileage in less divisively odd recontextualisations. While Hans-Peter Feldmann's method of collation, as exercised in his undated *Wunderkammer*, is rather less wilfully perverse than the sewing machine/umbrella/operating table approach, the casual meeting of, say, a stylish 1950s metronome, a turn-of-the-twenty-first-century Zip disk, an old-school rollerskate and a Holiday Inn keycard hints at the deep-rooted absurdity of technology and lifestyle choices dominated by transient design. Nostalgia rises from these vitrines of cultural marginalia like steam from a fissure, marking paradigmatic discontinuities among generational tastes, priorities and problem-solving. From laces to Velcro, metal to plastic, robustness to ephemerality: beyond the evolution of design, we can also trace developments in what we require of material goods, both instrumentally and psychologically.

I've always felt that rearranging stuff in the world was a deeply creative, even potentially radical act, and Feldmann repeatedly demonstrates categorical irreverence to almost existential ends. Carpets framed and placed on the wall, statuettes of Venus and David painted in trashy felt-tip colours, portraits of gangsters proudly displayed, a pound of strawberries photographed individually like specimens: all suggest the contingency of the value we usually ascribe to objects and images. Commercial photographs of flowers, often scorned or, more usually, overlooked as anodyne, become a laudatory study of the vernacular of the genre, while a lifesize photographic panorama of bookshelves becomes a composite portrait of the reader, or perhaps more accurately, the assumptions we make about the reader. Knowledge, identity, gestalt, ideology and so on, Feldmann seems to suggest, are products of association and contiguity. Switch things around, put them in the wrong place, and underlying structures start to wobble.

Art history too becomes a malleable plaything in Feldmann's hands. Besides the obvious reference to Michelangelo in his garish *David* (undated), and parity with Gerhard Richter's *Atlas* (1961-) in his many publications of found photographs arranged typologically, the show seems to count off on its fingers the various methodologies for making art, from the appropriationist tactics of the gangster portraits to the completist strategies of the photographic project *All the Clothes of a Woman* (1970). The show's saucily deadpan title, *Art Exhibition*, is an indication of how this selection of works performs a similar function to the *Wunderkammer* within it: dashing between categories and genres of twentieth-century art production, critical theory and viewing sensibilities, Feldmann accentuates the nomadic nature of art's relationship to the world at large. Far from looking like a bleak lack of ideology, though, the effect is to establish roaming curiosity and stylistic versatility in the stable of traditional values, alongside academic rigour and technical virtuosity. *Sally O'Reilly*

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