



Feldmann has been making art from ordinary items he has collected or photographed for almost 50 years. The Serpentine show includes a wall of seascapes, six photographs of car radios "while good music is playing", images of a bath before and after use, and eight drawings of Feldmann himself made by street caricaturists while he was in Madrid two years ago. All visitors to the show will receive a gift in the shape of an "unlimited edition" photograph of the Queen as a child.

His work is playful and funny but Feldmann concedes not everybody would call it art. "In Cologne, they are a very polite people but some visitors came to the show and said 'we want to have our money back'. I don't think they got it."

There will be no such demands at the Serpentine as the show is free and the gallery hopes it will introduce Feldmann – who was a key figure in the Dusseldorf art scene and a contemporary of Joseph Beuys, Gerhard Richter and Sigmar Polke – to a much wider British audience.

"There are still pockets of artists – and Hans-Peter is one – who have this astonishing reputation internationally but really his work is not known here," said Peyton-Jones. "So it is a great pleasure to do this survey here at the Serpentine."

She added: "I find him incredibly fascinating as an artist. It is how he re-presents the everyday. For me, one of the things that is absolutely fantastic about Hans-Peter Feldmann is his humour. He tells stories with such a light hand."

The show is the first in a public gallery in London for Feldmann and represents a pleasing circularity for Obrist in that the first show he curated at the Serpentine was a group show called Take Me I'm Yours which included Feldmann back in 1995.

The artist arrived in London on Monday and to make minor changes to the show preparations for visitors in a room in which he has constructed an elaborate and mesmerising shadow play. "Can we have some chairs or a bench?" he asked Peyton-Jones. "So people can sit and contemplate and maybe have a nap?"