

# 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 /  
GLENN LIGON / STEPHANIE MOISDON /  
SHAMIM M. MOMIN / JESSICA MORGAN /  
HANS ULRICH OBRIST / ARTREVIEW'S CRITICS



## 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*