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This week's new exhibitions

Robert Clark & Skye SherwinThe Guardian, Saturday 11 December 2010



Work by Laura Buckley from the SLIP Sensor: Part 2 exhibition running in London

SLIP Sensor: Part 2, London

This is the final instalment of a two-part show built around a curious conceit, the Esper Machine of the film *Blade Runner*, which navigated a photograph as if it was 3D. The slippage it suggested between object and idea frames the work of three artists: Laura Buckley, Maria Taniguchi and Adam Thompson. Taniguchi's new video of slides depicts the artist roaming Mies van der Rohe's Barcelona Pavilion, with camera in hand. Salvaged Mylar – delicate, space age, foil-lined plastic – is turned into a two-metre high structure by Thompson, creating a deceptively fragile mirror. Most beautiful are Buckley's video projections, which fashion lushly coloured sculptures from light. It's all delightfully elusive stuff, questioning how ideas, images and things take shape.

Cell Project Space, E2, to 23 Jan

Skye Sherwin

Susan Derges & Garry Fabian Miller, Edinburgh

As a parallel show to the V&A's *Shadowcatchers* exhibition of "camera-less photography", the constantly spirited Ingleby Gallery focuses further on the work of two of its star artists. The show's title, *A Little Bit Of Magic Realised*, is taken from a 1839 text by the photography pioneer William Henry Fox Talbot and the scene is here beautifully set with a rare copy of his 1845 *Sun Pictures In Scotland*, the first book of "photographic" images published in the world. But the main focus of the show is experiments with light on light-sensitive paper by Susan Derges and Garry Fabian Miller. In these days of digital image manipulations, the results are somehow restful and at times quite beautiful.

Ingleby Gallery, to 29 Jan

Robert Clark

Martin Parr, West Bromwich

Perhaps only Martin Parr could get all excited about a year-long commission to photographically document everyday life in the Black Country. Perhaps only Parr could take such an apparently deprived and depressed social landscape and reveal empathic glimpses of a defiant humanity surviving and even thriving amid the backwater landscape of shops, markets, nightclubs, temples, mosques and churches. There are some remarkable images among the resulting 650 photographs. The one of a line of men manufacturing sausages has all the drama of a religious painting. Perhaps only Parr can bring this off: recognise the banalities as banal but also profound.

The Public, to 23 Jan

RC

Tim Davies, Cardiff

Cultural memory, mourning and how newspapers present tragedy are just some of the big issues tackled in the prints, films and installations in this survey of Tim Davies's serious-minded art. Remembrance Day, for instance, is the focus of one of the show's key works, the film series Cadet. Yet for all the weighty subject matter, Davies has a remarkable deftness of touch, making arresting work from the simplest materials. A recreation of one of his earliest pieces is striking: a delicate graphite wall drawing composed from thousands of burned matches.

Chapter Gallery, to 16 Jan

SS

Chicks On Speed, London

Stage show becomes gallery show with Chicks On Speed. When the German band and art collective aren't belting out ironic art shtick and feminist polemics, they're showing their homemade instruments-cum-sculptures in galleries. The DIY delights here include cigar boxes transformed into synthesizers and E Shoes, killer heels that wouldn't look out of place in a Soho fetish shop except that they're disco purple and strung to produce chords so they can double up as guitars. Seemingly spoofing the idea of feminist punk crafts, a huge tapestry woven with a pattern based on a speaker system was made on a loom built into the stage at a recent show in Dundee. As ever, the chicks pull off being anarchic and knowing at the same time.

Kate MacGarry, E2, to 30 Jan

SS

TJ Wilcox, London

TJ Wilcox's fantastic film collages have long addressed those women and men whose histories are deliriously overshadowed by their own mythology, including Marie Antoinette, Marlene Dietrich, Jerry Hall and Emperor Hadrian. Typically, these are silent and short, if layered sketches, made of movie clips, artworks and the artist's own footage and animation, with the stories held together by sparse subtitles. The angle Wilcox favours is eccentric and personal: the tragic tale of the ill-fated pet dog of the murdered Romanov princesses was a memorable highlight. For his latest show he's introducing music for an homage to Patsy Cline with a choir of internet covers of her tracks. Showgirl Adele Astaire's risqué marriage to Lord Charles Cavendish is the subject of a further work, promising a decadent brew of high living and heartache from the jazz age.

Sadie Coles HQ, W1, to 22 Jan

SS

John Tenniel, Leamington Spa

Throughout the many decades of modernism's insistence on pure form for form's own pure sake, any inclination towards narrative in visual art was dismissed as illustration, and in fine art circles illustration was wielded as a very, very derogatory term indeed. Nowadays, however, narrative has been rediscovered by fine artists to such an extent that it might just be time for an undeniably great illustrator such as John Tenniel to be recognised as a great artist. When the painter Francis Bacon stated that the aim of his work was to present the Cheshire Cat's grin without the cat, he hinted at Tenniel's ability to evoke whole dream worlds within the most deceptively simple of images. The wood-engraved drawings for Lewis Carroll's Alice books presented here demonstrate Tenniel at his most weirdly haunting best. Once seen, no matter whether in childhood or adulthood, never ever forgotten.

Leamington Spa Art Gallery, to 6 Feb

RC

Dirk Bell, Gateshead

It's hard to think of Dirk Bell as not being just a bit ironic. His drawings and paintings feature mystic symbols and mythical beasts, shrouded shadows and correspondences between the forces of nature (conch shell) and human passion (vagina), all presented in pallid tones of gothic moodiness. But once it sinks in that there is no irony, the sheer cheek of Bell's persistent clichés begins to convince. It's a little reminiscent of the awkwardness of William Blake's visionary figures. This stuff shouldn't come off but somehow does, and it's accompanied here by Revelation Night Sun, a spaced-out installation of 64 pulsating fluorescent tubes.

BALTIC, to 16 Jan

RC

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