

# Converse / Dazed 2010 Emerging Artists Award



Steve Bishop, 'My Work Here Is Done'

★★★★★

**Stephen Friedman**

Mayfair to Sloane Square

Some good things about this new award (qualified by some not so good things): it's aimed at artists under 35 who are without gallery representation, thus it seems designed to champion those struggling in what are often the post-college wilderness years (why draw the

line at 35, though?); there are some big hitters among the judges, including Sadie Coles and Tim Marlow (yet with more people on the selection panel than the shortlist a sense of art by committee pervades); the five finalists get to show in a serious West End gallery (in sleepy old August... okay, I'm being a grouch).

Winner of the £6,000 first prize is Peter Ainsworth, whose large-scale images tap into the gentle surrealism of Paul Nash. The shrouded forms Ainsworth photographs in 'Covered' are eminently anthropomorphic, vaguely fetishistic and a bit troubling, though gardeners will instantly recognise them as being plants swaddled in fleece to protect them from winter weather. Working in series gives Ainsworth an edge over the other contenders (which isn't to say that he is a better artist); it is less easy, for instance, to get the measure of Jess Flood-

Paddock from the painted, unfired clay spheres she shows here ('Shellsuit', pictured below). Ditto Francesca Anfossi, whose video of geometric shapes superimposed over retro Alpine footage is charming but gives only momentary amusement. Steve Bishop's arrangements of glass and lighting gels have a nicely improvisatory feel to them but occupy a very familiar corner of contemporary art.

I would have given the prize to Laura Buckley, not for her Perspex trinket on show in the window, but for her installation 'KZN - Suspended

Hexagon', which, thanks to said

mirrored hexagon, bounces sequences of film around a darkened space. The gulf between the banality of the imagery (trees, a road) and the trippyness of the treatment lends the piece a keen sense of the absurd that should be encouraged. With cash. *Martin Coomer*

