



**Perejaume: 'Landscapes and Long Distances'**

ANDERSON O'DAY

Perejaume's life-size photo of a train track disappears into a roll of paper hung on the wall: as if he had photographed the entire track, from above, in a continuous strip. It suggests several things, among them Gabriel Garcia Marquez's idea of a map as big as the territory it depicts. It would surely have pleased Marcel Broodthaers. So would 'Pintura II', a plaque from a gilt picture frame which holds aloft a tiny mountain of blobby oil paint. References to picture frames are frequent. 'Rambala 61' consists of an opera-house seat on wheels. Wrapped round it is a wooden screen containing a gilt-edged viewing hole: as

if, for the artistically inclined, the whole world were a picture.

The difference between Perejaume and most other 'poetic' artists is that his work *is* poetic. A single one of his ideas would be enough to launch many people on an entire career. By any standards, the Catalan would have made a good abstractionist: his paintings are beautiful. But he is an intellectual in the line of artists and writers of 'pure imagination': Mallarmé, André Breton, Magritte or Wallace Stevens. Every painting is an object, every object a vista. There is a magician's hatful of tricks — from a painted sea with painting-shaped holes cut in it, to a door-framed photo of a mirror (which made me look behind me), to the woman who gazes across an abstract ocean. None of them ever degenerates into mere riddles. Magnificent.

David Lillington.



**'Imitation Goods'**

GILMOUR GALLERY

A new gallery opens in the space once occupied by the Association of Illustrators with 'Imitation Goods', a mixed show of people doing a typically '80s thing — making art that incorporates or mimics mass-produced objects. Jeff Koons made his name by chrome-plating an inflatable bunny and a Jim Beam train. Did he steal the idea from Clive Barker, the British pop artist, who startled the 1960s artworld with a chrome-plated sofa and Coke bottles? A bottle from '68 is on display beside a recent, gold-plated bronze version that kills the original idea with its convolutions. Does he not realise that the brilliance of the idea lies in its directness and simplicity? Tony Carter's chosen objects are made of shining pewter. A hip flask and map cylinder are paired on a heart-shaped shelf. He suggests an absurd bond by

sharing one screw top between both vessels.

Cecile Johnson's coffee pots contrast the values of art and mass production. It took two days to shape a 'perfect' pot in clay, complete with lid and spout. Thirty seconds produced a useless, but interesting, pot-shaped lump. In functional terms perfection means the elimination of the personal and idiosyncratic: the very qualities valued according to artistic criteria. Alexander Guy fails to function like a machine. Having painted a leopard-skin coat Lisa Milroy-style, he attempts unsuccessfully to copy his brushmarks in the flanking images. The markings of a fake fur influence the stripes that Eric Bainbridge paints down the fabric. The clash of textures is cringe-making, but his sculptures raise more interesting issues about taste and identity than these 'canvases'. There is still plenty of mileage in the interchange between objects and art objects.

Sarah Kent

**Peter Griffin**

MAAK

With the Bosnian war still raging on Europe's doorstep, newspaper photographs of gaunt refugees are a tragically familiar sight. But few media images overcome compassion fatigue to the extent of Peter Griffin's profoundly moving paintings. They speak of exile, loss and bereavement with a brooding intensity that is universal and timeless.

By skilfully manoeuvring in the interstices between abstraction and figuration, he avoids treading clichéd territory. Ambiguous motifs recur like bad dreams. Some suggesting body bags reveal glimpses of the visceral fluids con-

tained within. Or the bundled possessions of those with nowhere to go. 'Fearful Road' is painted with a sombre, murky palette that bristles with solemnity. Its asymmetrical composition charges the empty space with a disquieting edginess. Less convincing is 'Inside Out', which gives the show its title. This patchwork of small canvases incorporates poetic contributions on the theme of displacement. The text struck me as superfluous — by inviting literal readings of his allusive symbols, Griffin shows a needless lack of confidence in the eloquence of his paintings. Though not quite in the same heavy-weight league as Kiefer, with this show Griffin firmly establishes himself as a mover and shaker. Tania Guha



**'Crosscurrents: Artists from the Netherlands'**

CUBITT STREET

A curiosity of a show. Of the three artists exhibiting, I most liked Petra Van Harte and Rien Monshouwer. Monshouwer makes blackboard-style paintings (white writing on grey; pale mauve writing on light olive) which list all the significant spots between 'the station and the beach', or give artist's-presence messages. One reads (in Dutch), 'Gone out back in a minute'. Although they handle similar themes as their British counterparts — the media, relations between art, artist and audience and other such socio-aesthetic matters — and they do so with the same deliberate quirk-

ness as the Brits, theirs is a different type of warped vision: a Dutch form of dry wit. Van Harte's paintings seem part computer-generated (it's merely an effect) and part old-fashioned kaleidoscope effects with a touch of David Salle. Basically, they're magazine images intelligently chopped about: holiday brochures, business mags and scientific journals seem to be favourite sources.

Urs Pflannemuller's painting of junk in the undergrowth is a little too Summer Exhibition for comfort, although sheer oddness saves it. His farmyard paintings have bulky metal containers nailed to them, so they have to be shown on the floor. Ah, reality and illusion . . . Or something. This is not an exciting show, but an interesting diversion down the byways of European art.

David Lillington

**Elisabeth Frink**

BEAUX ARTS

I don't think Elisabeth Frink believed in 'new men'. Hers are always 'other', archetypal: a race apart. Creatures that fell from the sky, like meteorites or Icarus. Sometimes they are more bird than man. The early sculptures owe much to Giacommetti in their raw edginess, their rough, apparently unworked surfaces. Her bronze 'Birdman' (1962) stands vulnerable, exposed: unable to soar into flight or engage with humanity. His genitals and the face behind his flying helmet are concealed. Her famous 'Goggle Heads' of the late 1960s were inspired by newspaper photographs of Algerian torturers. Existential anxiety gives way to monumentality in the manner of Picasso, mid-career. These huge, smooth-domed heads are blinded by goggles. They are both torturers and victims, brutalised and exposed. Yet Frink never offers their essence, their selfhood. Her males are always Men or Manhood — the embodiment of virility, cruelty, fragility or fear. We perceive the chinks in their armour, but not their soft undersides: never what they actually feel. They remain enigmatic, another species. Later in her career Frink painted her bronzes in the manner



of the ancients. 'Riace II' contains classical echoes. It is chocolate brown with a face white like terrible war-paint or a tragic mask. Frink also made animal sculptures, though few are on view, and statues of men riding horseback. She rarely made women. It was the mystery of 'the other' that seduced her. It is hard, so soon after her death, to label her as 'great', 'possibly great' or 'not quite-great'. What is indisputable is that she changed the way that women make sculpture. One cannot deny the 'virility' and force of her work. Sue Hubbard.

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