

Time Out

London's living guide

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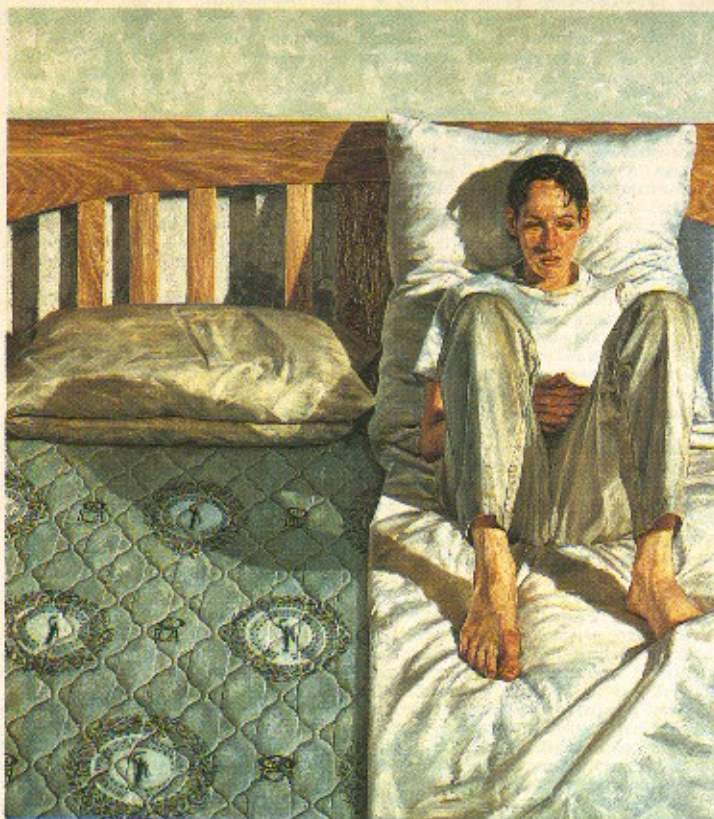
Unlocked

The city's private
spaces revealed for
Open House



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The winning entry: 'Double Single' by Clive Smith



BP Portrait Award

National Portrait Gallery
(Museums)

For once, the winning painting is noticeably superior. In Clive Smith's 'Double Single', a pensive youth lies on one side of a double bed, one foot covered by a fold in the blanket. Sickly light filters through a window and the sheets are folded back to reveal a monogrammed mattress belonging to the International Association of Chiropractors. Details like these suggest a low-key, Raymond Carver-like storyline to which the offhand but weighty paint quality is well suited.

Several other paintings also tell half a tale. Mark Roscoe's 'Mother in Room Six' mutely positions a woman in a cell-like space. Lewis Chamberlain's 'Night Painting' depicts an androgynous figure

collapsed on a sofa, while open doors lead to a sodium-lit balcony. Recalling Hopper, these pictures contrast with portraits in which the face must say everything. But facial expression may be a function of the imprecise motion of the paint; one artist who equates gesture with psychological acuity has created a portrait resembling bean stew with eyes in it.

Perhaps unintentionally, the freshest-looking image reflects a recent vogue for emblems of warped childhood. Peter Monkman's 'Joe-Boy' – an orange baby with an old man's face, painted blurrily as if speeding through time – is petite, astute and darkly amusing. There's a lot of fastidious illustration, grey backgrounds and minimal-chic. The exhibition is not impressive, but it's not hurting anyone; just remember to recalibrate your expectations before you go. *Martin Herbert*



Simon Callery

Tate (Museums)

Simon Callery's paintings have always maintained a fragile balance between seductive mark making and resonances of the urban landscape; concrete and drizzle are two associations that spring to mind. The new paintings seem less evocative – more to do with the making of art. Drawn in oil pastel and disturbed with a scalpel,

the lines are now solely vertical. Callery says that 'the horizontal line always creates a desire to find depth... the vertical line draws attention to what is happening on the surface.'

Before, one could focus on the miriads of small marks and accretions before standing back to see unfurling vistas; now one is faced only with rather overworked surfaces. Callery cuts into his paintings, scraping and sanding back to the tooth of the canvas. Off-whites and greys are scumbled over dark grounds, then topped off with dabs of opaque white. Although one is constantly reminded of his sensitivity with paint, the effect is one of congestion – every inch of the painting is tweaked and teased to a similar state and only where lines of red or dark green weave in and out of the fug is there any sense of depth.

Hung low in the Tate's bunkerish Art Now room, the paintings seem less luminous and more object-like than in the past. One painting has a rounded corner and rests on a large wooden frame. It looks out of place, but seems to be the key piece in a transitional show. *Martin Coomer*

Henry Moore

Pump House (Photography)

From the 1920s until his death in 1986, Henry Moore photographed his work in progress and in situ. The Pump House in Battersea Park is close to his 'Three Standing Figures', which have been renamed by locals as 'the three ladies of Battersea'. This small sample from the estimated 100,000 surviving negatives is arranged over four floors. Beginning with intimate studies of early figures it rises to shots of later, loftier public works.

Moore considered photography an essential tool, a sculptural device; but taking myriad pictures of the same sculpture from different angles, he comes across more as a fastidious cataloguer, unconcerned with photography per se. Except for two photographs of collages – consisting of photographs of pieces of flint cut and arranged as figures – the pictures are

relatively small scale, black and white and fairly conventional. Cropping and playing with scale – photographing maquettes against the skyline so that they appear huge – were devices he used only later in his career. Most are intimate views of works in progress; blocks of Darley Dale stone arriving at the studio marked ready for carving are seen later as three emerging figures peeking over a fence.

The pervading atmosphere is domestic – no bad thing. Best are the shots of sculptures placed in his garden at Perry Green, Hertfordshire; the head of a 'Draped Reclining Figure' is crowned with cherry blossom and his 'Standing Figure' is more affecting in the backyard than in its final resting place on a precipice at the Glenkiln estate, Dumfries. Whether these homely shots were of practical help to the artist is debatable but, for those who equate Moore with all things ponderous, they afford an unexpected and engaging view. *Martin Coomer*



Benedict Carpenter

Mallow Birds (Upcoming)

Benedict Carpenter's sculptures begin as less-than-drawings – as doodles and Rorschach blots that form the basis for wall-mounted objects. Covered in inky green or blue flock, these are the most satisfactory elements in a modest show. Realised in three dimensions, the blots assume an alien air, but their inky origins are never completely lost, especially as the opaque flock sucks in the light, so flattening the forms and reinforcing the link. Carpenter's shapes never complete the desired transformation into recognisable entities and, propped at the junction of floor and wall, a red form is the only one to assert its physicality.

A series of turned plaster objects was derived from a single profile line. Resting on the floor these bulbous shapes are the colour of soap. The circular grooves imply movement but, like leftovers from a long-forgotten industrial process, they have no identity or place. Carpenter's laissez-faire attitude to form is most clearly revealed in objects that project upwards or are mounted on top of poles. Tubes made of hessian sacking were filled with expanding foam; forced through the mesh, it solidifies into unpleasant swellings and callouses. Handfuls of green gunk are stuck onto poles; a moulded frog perched on one such gloop of slime is a half-hearted attempt to articulate the mess. Carpenter's work is competent, but still in thrall to his mentors; the forms are familiar. *Mark Corrah*

