

Art

MONTHLY

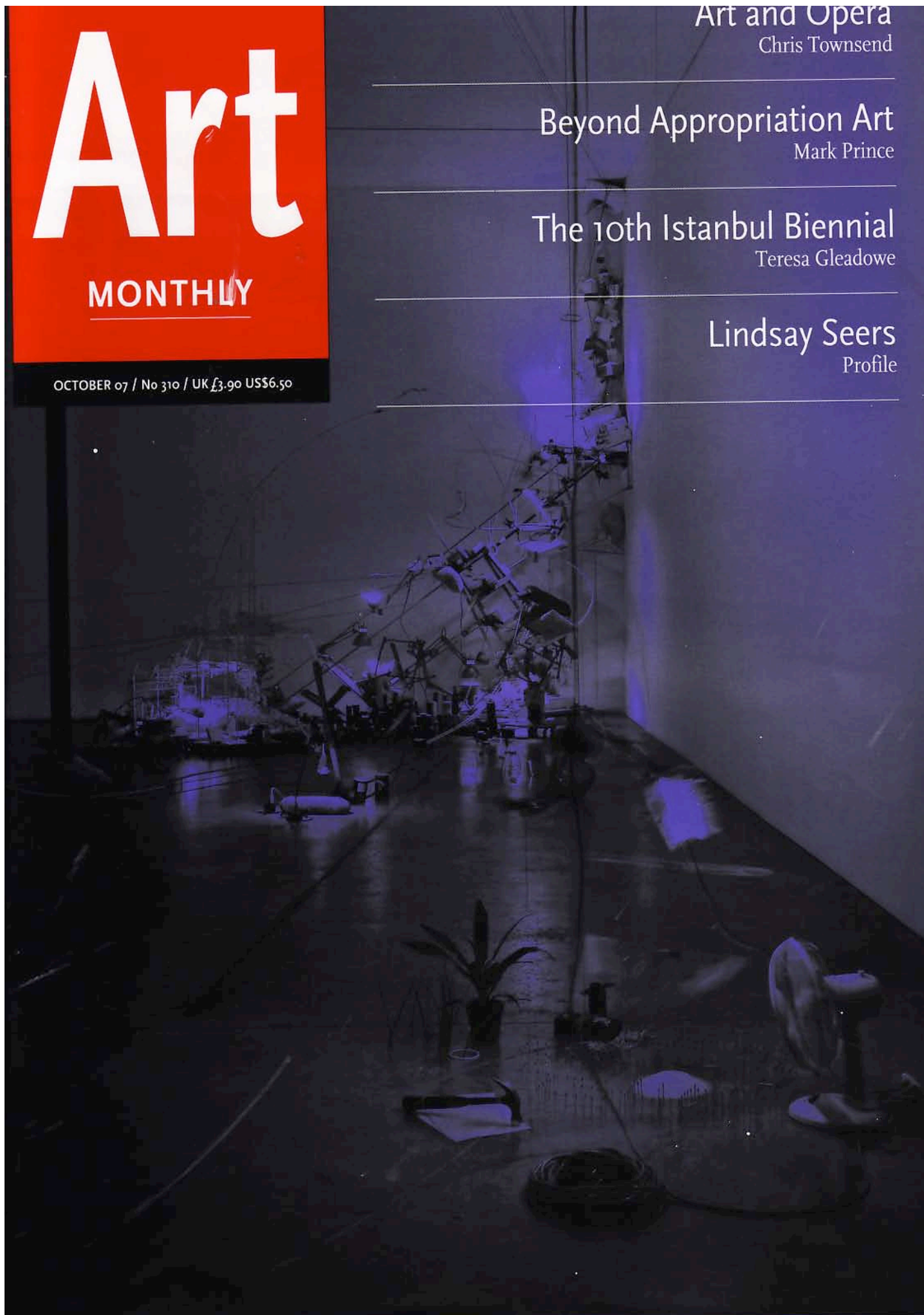
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Art and Opera
Chris Townsend

Beyond Appropriation Art
Mark Prince

The 10th Istanbul Biennial
Teresa Gleadowe

Lindsay Seers
Profile



shapes that is impossible to absorb at a glance. It is easier therefore to begin by addressing the details of the work, before perceiving how they come together to form one dizzying yet coherent piece. And, despite the complexity of the works, there are still moments within that appear almost minimalist: neat geometric lines and blocks of colour recur throughout the chaos, as if a Piet Mondrian homage has been injected with a dose of commercialism and excess and spun wildly out of control. Elsewhere Sze also acts the amateur scientist, creating bubbling cups of water and small kinetic experiments that add both wit and a rhythmic soundtrack to the installations.

Sze's art draws comparisons with Tomoko Takahashi, who also creates epic installations from the material excess of our lives. Yet Takahashi's work lacks the delicacy of Sze's, whose sculptures appear to be formed almost as if she is drawing or doodling with her materials, each segment of the work inspiring and incorporating the next. It is art that speaks of obsession. Or perhaps simply procrastination, as there is little darkness here. The work demonstrates instead a charmingly childish fascination with the objects that make up our world. ■

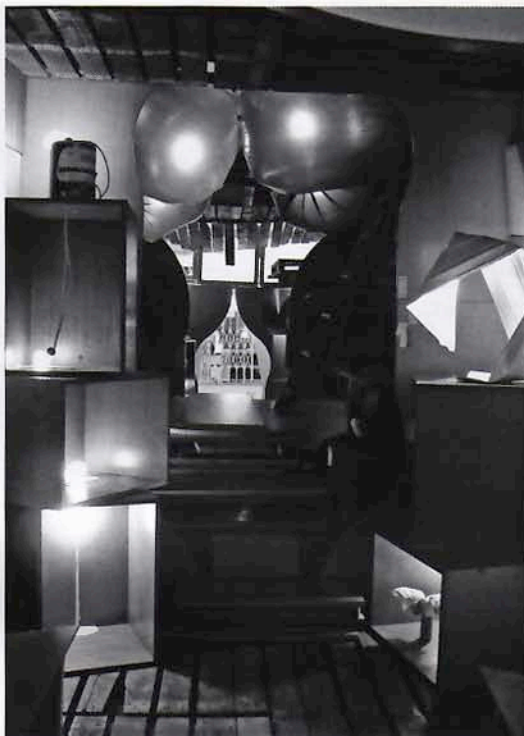
ELIZA WILLIAMS is a freelance writer based in London.

■ Graham Hudson

Rokeby London August 28 to October 2

With galleries now under pressure to provide 'experiences' in lieu of spaces for old-fashioned contemplation, it's no surprise that architectural installations are soaring in popularity – particularly those involving crawling around creepy spaces and getting lost in labyrinthine corridors. Lengthy queues for Christoph Büchel, Mike Nelson and Gregor Schneider's psychologically disturbing installations testify to the willing masochism of the contemporary art world. Graham Hudson's rickety installations, however, do not create an oppressive separation between artist and viewer. Despite building up an air of mystery at Rokeby by boxing up the gallery's storefront, any tension is quickly relieved inside where Hudson has created a very inviting den.

In contrast to the vast budgets and production teams usually associated with architectural installations, Hudson uses the more modest magpie technique of scavenging in skips and charming local shopkeepers for waste packaging. For this Rokeby exhibition, he spent five weeks dragging mountains of cardboard boxes, wooden off-cuts and disused office furniture back to his lair. While his six-month residency at Chelsea College of Art's Parade Ground in 2006 encouraged visitors to witness the sprawl of his ever-evolving work-in-progress, this time the scrap materials have been formed into a dense, compact structure. Its shape and scale, a room within the gallery room, suggests an oversized wendy house, although its cosiness is tempered by an ascetic masculinity; benches have thoughtfully been provided, but certainly no fluffy cushions. The stylish, pod-like interior, with its warm



Graham Hudson
This sculpture is 18 metres
long 2007

glow of bare lightbulbs against orange melamine, calls up a medley of retro-sci-fi references: *Thunderbirds* spaceships, *Austin Powers* kitsch, Woody Allen's *Sleeper*.

The installation seems benignly welcoming, but Hudson cannot resist laying on a mildly challenging assault course. Clambering across a platform of wooden pallets, the intrepid visitor is invited to duck into the chamber through a suggestively curved double opening – that might be interpreted as draped stage curtains or the entrance to a womb, depending on your psychoanalytical frame of mind. Two pleasingly symmetrical 'rooms' bracket the chamber, with a higher platform linking them, steps either side made from planks stacked just perilously enough to feel a jaunty wobble. The raised middle area is gently obstructed by a surreal cloudscape of billowing bin bags that bob over a forest of totem-like assemblages incorporating pallets, wooden boxes and office fans. This is not the place to whinge about health and safety; in any case, Hudson has covered his back with a smattering of token disclaimers: hazard tape, 'fragile' stamps and a child's swimming float that, with Magritte-like literalness, reads 'this is not a life-saving device'.

Around the chamber, stacks of wooden boxes – an art-historical nod to Donald Judd – are filled with artisanal curiosities, a less po-faced nod to *Blue Peter*. One stack, in which a tin of paint appears to have dripped down through all the boxes – an illusion mirrored by the cascade of dangling lightbulbs – has all the decorative pointlessness of a designer water feature; a hotel lobby pastiche of minimalist sculpture. Other 'features' include a toilet roll sprouting a bouquet of blue tissue paper,

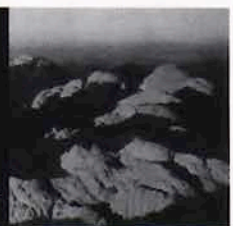
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THE DRAWING ROOM





a take-away coffee-cup lamp, and a piece of metal twisted in a shape vaguely reminiscent of a Vernon Panton chair. In an overzealous take on eco-friendliness, Hudson discards nothing – like the godfather of the readymade before him, he has even bred Duchampian sheets of dust, tracing abstract patterns into its thick surface. As an artistic strategy, it responds to the call in Nicolas Bourriaud's *Postproduction* for artists to 'operate' on and reinvent existing objects rather than create superfluous new ones.

Hudson's installation is also a paean to the work of art technicians in an era where so many aspiring artists support themselves through gallery work. It is full of nerdy in-jokes: a hammer jammed in a box, a spirit level, a saw, packaging crates at either end of the chamber that suggest a work impatiently waiting to be packed up and shipped off to the next venue. This self-referentiality is echoed by the choice of soundtrack to the installation: Bach's *Well-Tempered Clavier* – a series of exhaustive exercises for tuning pianos. It whirs away cryptically on two turntables – their rotation is frustratingly stalled by swinging light bulbs – and the music's original function fails dismally, just as any domestic or space-age functionality of Hudson's installation is sabotaged by its structural precariousness and superseded by the impermanence of its exhibition context.

Hudson is not interested in proposing a utopian model for living, or in creating unsettling experiences to fan the fires of an already paranoid society. His approach instead paradoxically combines an irreverent dadaist attitude with a formalist's reverence for materials; a maximalist love of minimalism; the desire to build as an expression of living, the dread of permanence as a dead art-historical weight. ■

JENNIFER THATCHER is director of talks at the ICA.

■ Ma Yongfeng: The Cretaceous Period

■ Joel Papps: goodpasture's ArtSway Hampshire July 28 to September 16

After taking part in ArtSway's annual open competition in 2006 and scooping the prize to return with his own show, recent graduate Joel Papps has done well to be paired with the Beijing-based Ma Yongfeng. Papps has filled his share of space with forms cut out from chipboard and plywood. A circular piece fixed to a wall perhaps delineates the circumference of a tree, while generally the impression is of branches, leaves and roots. Even the overall title of 'goodpasture's' is evocative of the world of flora. This is, however, a disease, Goodpasture's Syndrome, which attacks the lungs and kidneys. Papps himself suffered from it. The imagery is derived from a vocabulary of MRI scans, X-rays and medical diagrams. Such a figurative approach verges on being reductive. This use of autobiography and overdetermined points of reference feels a little clumsy, but is redeemed by a kind of sculptural playfulness and invention. A sheet of plywood forms a partition, an architectonic biopsy of diseased material. Other pieces lean, balance, interlock, lay flat and are fixed to walls. It is hard not to respond to the investment of labour in the cursive processes of drawing and cutting, or the attention to the placements and combinations of the cut-outs. Whether or not this low-fi installation can maintain a comfortable affinity with Ma



SASKIA OLDE WOLBERS 06 October – 11 November 2007

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THE

POWER TOO

ISSUE



GRAHAM HUDSON

ROKEBY, LONDON

28 AUGUST - 2 OCTOBER

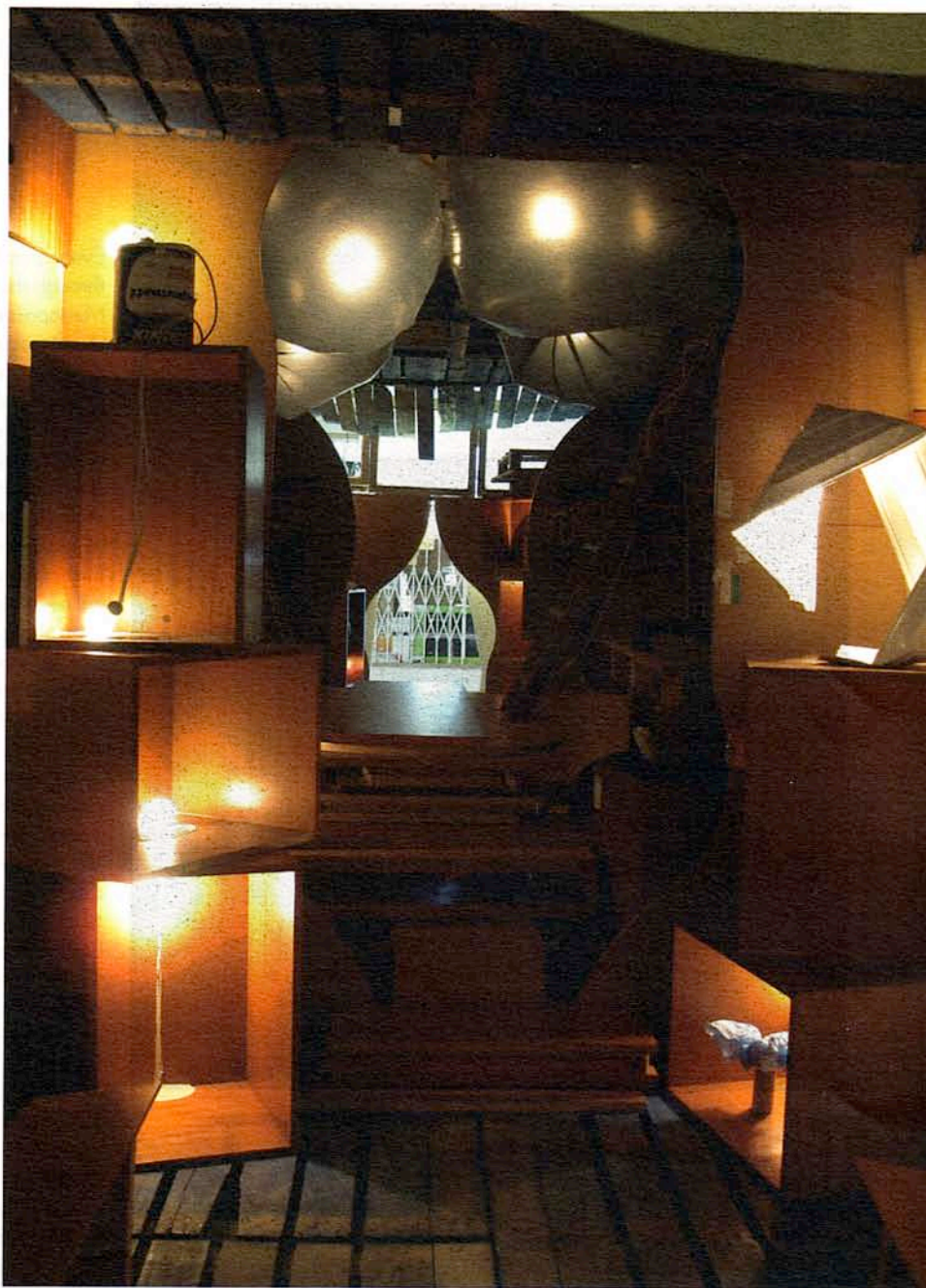
There's a deliciously English sensibility to Graham Hudson's sculptures. Architectural fantasies in plastic, metal and MDF, they capture an aesthetic of controlled chaos that's entirely absent from the utopian gestures and clean lines of Modernism – always more of a Continental obsession. Closer to Heath Robinson or Gothic Revival than Le Corbusier, his whimsical, topsy-turvy work celebrates a spirit of amateurism, of rag-and-bone and of 'Make do and mend'.

Throughout August Hudson was hunkered down in Rokeby creating a kind of grotto called *This Sculpture Is 18 Metres Long* (2007). Like the product of his 2006 residency at Chelsea College of Art, this is a ramshackle pseudobuilding, but unlike that project, the focus is on the interior: a room within a room, it has no facade. Instead the facade of the gallery itself has been altered, its window filled with cardboard boxes, blocking out the light and carrying a symbolic message; they're objects that are ready to be thrown away, Hudson's preferred medium. All sorts of junk go into the construction of *This Sculpture Is 18 Metres Long*, a tunnel filled with a series of kinetic and not-so-kinetic sculptures, an elongated cabinet of curiosities. It resembles an inorganic alimentary canal, devouring visitors and expelling them into bare space at the other end, bemused and disorientated.

But it's tremendous fun. Climb through the crazy ogee of an opening and you find yourself in an altered reality. Everyday objects like bin bags, rolls of tape, stepladders and moulded polystyrene are re-engineered in unexpected ways. Hudson makes much of the use of light. It shines from every nook, from behind translucent cardboard packaging or underneath a nest of nails. In the centre of the sculpture are four black plastic bags billowing in the wind from electric fans and pulsating with light from the bulbs within them. These organ-like structures enhance the feeling that you're inside some strange animal, a monster that feeds on detritus, a future parasite that has evolved to mop up the phenomenal amounts of waste we produce.

Suffusing everything is a drone, a half-musical noise produced by two record players that spin endlessly, their needles stuck in hand-gouged grooves. There's a *click, click, click* as well. This is the sound of a dangling lightbulb hitting the edge of the record, being pushed round in a circle and hitting the edge again, casting an ever-moving shadow. In an ingenious turn Hudson has created a perpetual motion machine that functions in three dimensions – sound, light and movement – and with nothing more sophisticated than a few pieces of household rubbish.

This Sculpture Is 18 Metres Long is a product of the artist's delight in the mix of collecting, creativity, wit, haphazardness. Though it comes across as unsystematic, it isn't devoid of meaning. Just the opposite – Hudson shows us the huge potential for meaning that resides in the things we throw away. His act of recycling and reconfiguring this urban debris draws attention to the absurdity – not of his creations, but of our own indifference to the unexhausted potential of the things we make redundant. *David Shariatmadari*



This Sculpture Is 18 Metres Long, 2007 (installation view).
Courtesy Rokeby, London

guide



The cook, the
beef, the dwarf
and his lover...

**The return of
R Kelly's Trapped
In The Closet**



exhibitions



● William Blake Edinburgh

Has there ever been an artist like William Blake? such a multitalented, self-mythologising rebel, such a self-publishing, sexually liberating Christian, such an impossible artist to pin down or put down? Blake wasn't as lyrically seductive a poet as Keats, as far ranging in political rage as Shelley, as convincingly crazy in visionary insight as Swinburne, nor was he ever as good a painter as Turner. He was a working class Londoner. Professionally, he was a loser. Yet, for so many, including subsequent artists and poets, he has been more of an influence than any of his Romantic contemporaries – and it's 250 years since he was born. This show of prints celebrates an artist/writer whose world view, like Van Gogh's, one can become entranced by.

ROBERT CLARK
National Gallery Of Scotland, to Nov 4

● Graham Hudson London

Master crafter Graham Hudson returns after a year in Los Angeles. He is best known for the ramshackle installation he built at Chelsea School Of Art that the public was invited to dismantle at the end of the exhibition. Hudson's tattered sculptures allude to the makeshift communities that form in big cities.



Traffic cones, plastic bags, cardboard and MDF all feature, hacked into towers of teetering rubbish. Lately the artist has been building another of these flawed creations, once again transforming cheap tat into a sprawling, magical world. **JESSICA LACK**
Rokeby, WC1, Tue 28 to Oct 2

● Iceland Bury

Iceland comes to Bury in the form of art from the Safn in Reykjavik which houses the impressive collection of Petur Arason and Ragna Robertsdottir. Work by international artists – some Icelandic, mostly of a minimalist or conceptualist bent – includes Carl Andre's Icelandic basalt slabs,



Tacita Dean's etchings *The Russian Ending*, Lawrence Weiner's text sculpture *The Light Of Day & Iceland Spar* (work

pictured) and Birgir Snebjorn Birgisson's chilling figurines of doctors and nurses. Richard Long presents volcanic boulders. The one work not from Safn is a special commission by Helmet Lemke based on one hell of a continuous 37-hour storm near Vik. **FRANK**
Bury Art Gallery, to Nov 2

● Eva-Mari Haikala Exeter



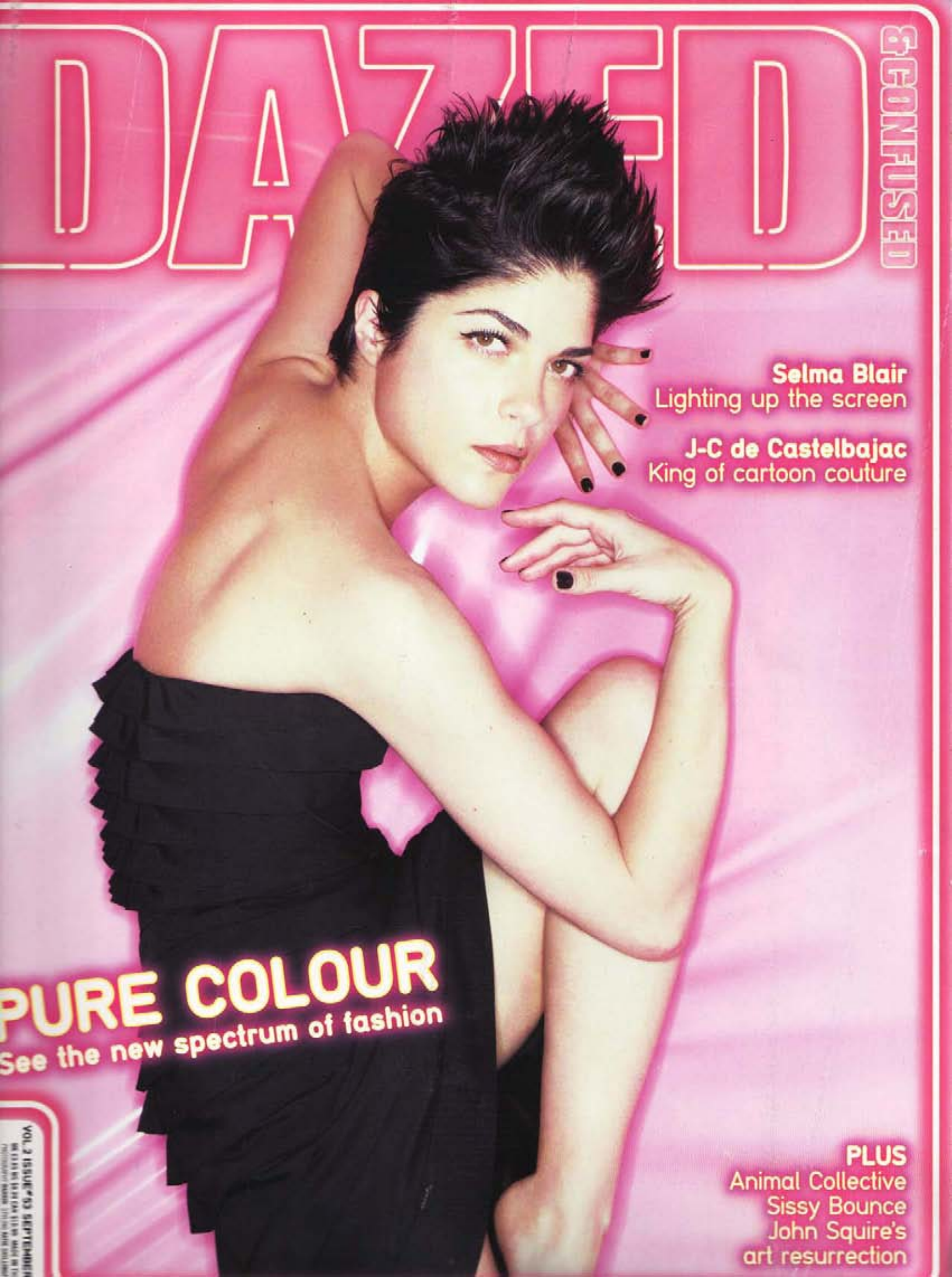
Eva-Mari Haikala's dreamy 16mm film is inspired by the works

of Pierre Bonnard, the French artist who spent much of his career

painting his infirm wife in bed and in the bath. Seduced by the intimacy of his paintings, Haikala creates her own version, filming a woman on a bed. It's a strangely hypnotic work, and with photographs and videos that also focus on privacy the viewer becomes an interloper into a melancholic world full of quiet contemplation and hallucinatory images. **IL**
Spacex, Sat 25 to Sep 22

DAZED

BEONFUSED



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Earthquake unfriendly: GRAHAM HUDSON

Making political and social statements out of throwaway material, Graham Hudson's art teeters on the edge of stability.



Light and Balance 1, 2007

Graham Hudson creates raw, unstable and haphazard sculptures that look like they've been banged together in moments. He famously built an artwork/shed/home/studio outside Chelsea School of Art, which he lived and worked in for six months last summer. He didn't ask for council permission, building the piece around him while living under the eyes of 24/7 CCTV. Life, art and object all mixed up into one intense experience. When the project concluded, the house and art he made inside it were all auctioned off. Since then, alongside international shows,

Hudson has done commissions for Dover Street Market and Comme des Garçons in Tokyo – one of which had to be removed for not meeting earthquake standards. Hudson's work can seem violent – like a sculptural version of paint smashed on a canvas. As Hudson points out, "rawness can become sublime".

Dazed & Confused: What interests you about using found materials in your sculptures?

Graham Hudson: The materials are found on the streets and in cheap chain stores – they are there for anyone to take. It's important they are not desirable by a capitalist yard-stick. A thousand people find these things everyday, most just choose to think about them and move on, or just step over them. I choose to pick them up. Part of this reflects on the values of what we 'pick up' and what we 'leave behind'. Taste and fashion are capitalist carrots. I then try and sell my own carrots. This is either divine retribution or taking the piss.

D&C: There's often something unstable about your work. Some pieces look like they could even disintegrate or become unstuck.

GH: You just can't beat a wobbly sculpture. Dodgy as hell, teetering on collapse. That makes your one-to-one experience with it in a gallery 100 per cent unique. You're there with the piece, seeing it change. It's fragile, stupid as hell, and something like life.

From August 28 – October 2 at Rokeby,
37 Store Street, London WC1
www.rokebygallery.com

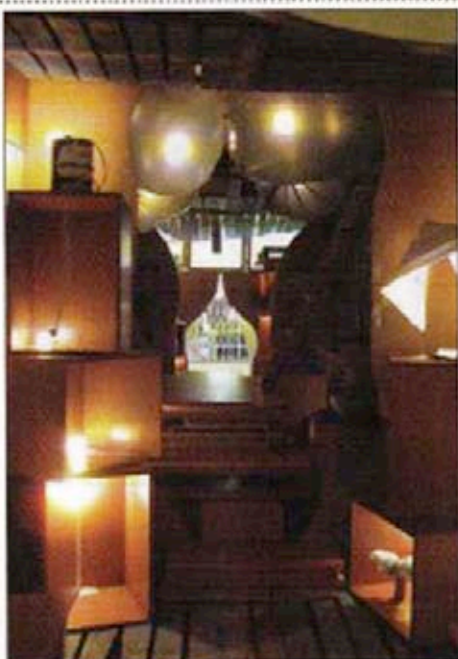
Graham Hudson

★★★★★

Rokeby West End

Graham Hudson uses junk as a source of both raw materials and inspiration. His eccentric and engaging installation 'This Sculpture' is 18 metres long and takes up most of Rokeby's store-front gallery, and you'd miss it if you didn't peer past the front window, full of old cardboard boxes. Once inside, staggering over rickety wooden palettes, you enter through a jig-sawed opening in the side of a large wooden art-crate, into a weird, glowing interior.

A staggered passage of rickety rooms built floor-to-ceiling from old laminate shelving and workstation desk-tops, full of improvised lamps tucked into odd nooks, Hudson's peculiar architecture is a baroque monument to hobbyist reclamation; not a moralising message about recycling, but more a celebration



'This Sculpture'

of the artist's gleeful capacity for invention, using whatever materials are at hand.

Hudson's radiant, flat-pack netherworld undeniably has the earnest enthusiasm of the introspective fantasist; a closed-off world with surreal tones of film noir where physical space becomes psychological: surrounded by gyrating electric fans wrapped in inflated binbags, illuminated by hanging lightbulbs, one's sense of place and purpose drifts, feeling both at home and out of place. On either side, scratched LPs rotate on old record players, more dangling bulbs bumping into them, making wobbly plinky jazz piano tunes; time, self and memory all slip out of joint. Before you know it, you stumble out of the sculpture and into the deserted back end of Rokeby's gallery. No art here, reality-as-usual. Luckily, the only way out is back through.

JJ Charlesworth