

LIST picks

THE BEST EXHIBITIONS



*** Torsten Lauschmann** An excellent exhibition of sculpture and photography by the German-born, Glasgow-based artist. Lauschmann creates work that manages to find the magical in the everyday, making pieces that use film projectors to create wall drawings that hover in the space between figure and ground. *Gallery of Modern Art, Glasgow, until Sun 25 May.*

*** Print the Legend: The Myth of the West** A major exhibition curated by Art Monthly's Patricia Bickers, this group show presents a selection of northern European sculpture, photography, installation and film in the context of the Western and its role in the creation of the myth of the American. Featured artists include Cornelia Parker and Douglas Gordon. *The Fruitmarket Gallery, Edinburgh, until Sun 4 May.*

*** EJ Major: Try to Do Things We Can All Understand** The first solo show by the London-based artist. Major presents four bodies of work from the last four years, influenced by her personal background and training as a social scientist. The work examines questions of identity, biology and society, and the circumstances that bring these spheres together. See review, page 94. *Street Level Photoworks, Glasgow, until Sat 10 May.*

*** 'run run'** An exhibition of sculpture curated by gallerist Sorcha Dallas and Glasgow based artist Alex Frost. The exhibition continues Frost's interest in the relationship between art and technology, and how this has been filtered through various craft processes. The exhibition includes work by 13 local and internationally acclaimed artists. See preview, left. *The Collins Gallery, Strathclyde University, Glasgow, until Sat 3 May.*

REVIEW PHOTOGRAPHY, PRINTS AND FILM EJ MAJOR: TRY TO DO THINGS WE CAN ALL UNDERSTAND

Street Level, Glasgow, until Sat 10 May ●●●●●

Photographs capture nothing. Portraits are even more successful at framing the absence at the core of subjectivity and how this can be signified through the image. This is neither as simple as it first appears, nor is this observation an attack on the power of photography to still manage to say something about our plight as absent and de-centred subjects. EJ Major, knows this, and has exhibited printed, film and photographic works at Street Level, images that attempt to deal with 'the failure of language and its suggestive possibility.'

This is the London-based artist's first exhibition in Glasgow, and continues a successful run of shows in the space. As part of Glasgow international, the work on show definitely has international significance, in that it should still manage to touch the post-humanist 'soul' of every viewer, as well as being of a high enough aesthetic quality to be seen alongside many other of the worthies that the Gi will be presenting.

Major takes herself as subject matter in her work, even when the images are taken from films and other found sources. Little stories emerge when Major cuts, selects and arranges various images and words from her materials; unsaid dialogues between different characters in different films rise up. In the multiple monitor piece 'Try to do things we all can understand', a selection of frozen frames from blockbuster films are presented: Bette Davis in *Now Voyager* or John Malkovitch in *Dangerous Liaisons*, tragic and heroic characters that have coloured the artist's life. These images, alongside snippets of dialogue, make for difficult reading. Love, as we all feared, is dead.

Elsewhere we find reproductions of sometimes gleeful, sometimes dark scenes from Major's Brownie album, with terrifying sentences from Faulkner's 'As I Lay Dying' that the artist had underlined when a teenager, overprinted onto the images. This again is uncomfortable. The gallery text tells us that the artist would occasionally lose the ability to speak during her teenage years: darkness, loneliness and emptiness occupies the core. (Alexander Kennedy)



Unresolved despite aids

REVIEW INSTALLATION, SCULPTURE AND PAINTINGS ENRICO DAVID: ULTRA PASTE

Talbot Rice Gallery, Edinburgh, until Sat 10 May ●●●●●

It's hard to believe the ejaculatory inference of the title of this exhibition is unintended, because the whole purpose of 'Ultra Paste' (the show's key work) seems to be a re-imagining of teenage sexual awakening as viewed through the filter of the artist's memory.

A roped-off white cube sits in the centre of the gallery, its interior showing a life-sized, grid-walled approximation of David's youthful bedroom informed by a 1935 photo-collage by Picasso's muse Dora Maar. Next to a dimly-lit bed and alcove, can be glimpsed a collaged image of what we are told is the artist at 11 years old, rubbing sexually against 'an exasperated old lady'. Yet the stated conceit that the figure's height reveals his age is offset by the manly proportions of his body, while the 'old lady' is a wooden mannequin in crucified pose.

David's accompanying statement rather convolutedly plays on his and the work's relationship with nostalgia and memory, boldly pondering whether 'any of this will be delivered with enough clarity or adequacy of intentions, either to myself or anyone else.' The work suggests not. The force of structural consideration that David's words implies seems to be absent from a flimsily realised work.

Just as the abstract junk sculptures of 'Resolved through aids' and 'Sodulator' are designed to reflect Arte Povera, so the 20-part gouache 'play' of 'Shitty tantrum' – a series of irreverent storyboards with no discernible narrative throughout – is far more pleasingly representative of the artist's bad taste and magpie-like humour, particularly with amusing titles such as 'The fake kidnap' and 'A theatre of the tolerated'. On the whole, though, this is closer to the Emperor's new semen-stained clothes than any kind of ecstasy. (David Pollock)



Major from a Distance

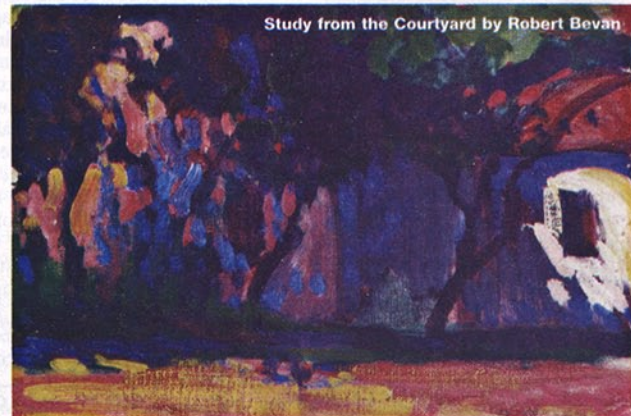
REVIEW PAINTING/WORKS ON PAPER FROM SICKERT TO GERTLER: MODERN BRITISH ART FROM BOXTED HOUSE

NGMA, Edinburgh, until Sun 22 Jun ●●●●●

This exhibition celebrates the lives of Bobby and Natalie Bevan, whose Essex home Boxted House contained numerous works by prominent 20th century modernists. It also showcases the work of Bobby's father, Robert Polhill Bevan, a close associate of the Camden Town Group. This exhibition has evidently been thoroughly researched (although more details could perhaps have been left to the catalogue) and features a wealth of information, situating the couple within a rich and complex artistic community.

Each gallery's display directly corresponds with a room in Boxted House, giving a sense of the paintings' original country house setting, particularly thanks to photographs of the artworks in situ. However, while it is interesting to see which works the couple chose for their personal rooms, the juxtapositions created by these selections are not always especially illuminating. Despite fine draughtsmanship, some of Bevan senior's landscape paintings feature a rather sugary palette, while further examples of work by his wife – also an artist – would have been welcome.

Paintings by Sickert, Gertler and their associates may prove to be the biggest draw, but visitors should not neglect the collection's fine works on paper, including powerful drawings by Henri Gaudier-Brzeska (also look out for his sculptural pieces) and a Goya etching. Although Maggi Hambling remembered 'the people and the gin more than the pictures', this exhibition reinstates the art of Boxted House to its rightful place. (Liz Shannon)



Study from the Courtyard by Robert Bevan