

Sylvia Plath: Her Drawings



Plath completed most of these works between 1954 and 1956, during which time she arrived in the UK to commence a Fulbright fellowship at Cambridge, where she met and married Ted Hughes. The couple honeymooned in Paris and Benidorm, which explains the subject matter of many of these dogged pen and ink sketches. Dramatic juxtaposition is served in the form of 'Cambridge: A View of Gables and Chimney-pots', whose cosy suburbia rubs up against the anguished lines of the accompanying (though later) poem 'Brasilis'. Yet it's inevitable that everything connected with Plath is seen through the lens of her suicide in 1963, from domestic scenes to apparently innocuous sketches of meadow flowers and horse chestnuts, ripe for speculation in spite or perhaps because of the work's apparent lack of expression.

Plath was prone to making equally exacting versions of the same subject. The most enigmatic examples here depict an accumulation of barnyard scrap, almost identical save for one version from which a square of paper has been cut. Formally, this excision encapsulates the gulf in this show between what we can see and what we will never know. **Martin Coomer**

I Decided Not to Save the World



Tate Modern Major spaces

From the Arab Spring to the eurozone debacle to the antics of the Occupy movement, it seems as if the world is aflame with political upheaval. There's a keen self-conscious humour, then, to a show of politically inflected art that declares that artists aren't going to 'save the world'. This little show, organised by Tate in collaboration with Istanbul's Salt art centre, brings together four artists from beyond the periphery of Europe, whose work toys with the problems of an artist's influence or impotence when addressing their social or political context.

Morocco-based Yto Barrada's work is full of a quizzical melancholy about the effects of modernisation and Western influence in Morocco – a video documents the artist's quixotic efforts to rescue a lone palm tree from the rapid urban development of Tangier. This is a knowingly futile gesture, like Romanian Mircea Cantor's one-second video of a child cutting the stream of water from a tap with scissors. Elsewhere, feeling guilty for not acknowledging your country's politics drives Lebanese artist Mounira Al Solh's funny and



'Palm Sign', 2010, by Yto Barrada

thoughtful video, in which she deliberates about making art that too easily fits the stereotype of what 'Lebanese art' should be like. 'Eurasian' collective Slavs and Tatars presents a turban fashioned from stalks of wheat, resting against a brick – evasively symbolic, it conjures political or religious meanings but runs away laughing, leaving you thinking that artists are better at making thoughtful mischief in the world, than thinking they can change, or save it. **JJ Charlesworth**

Art



Mayor Gallery Galleries Central

Parisian rooftops, wine bottles bearing half-burned candles... (see Untitled, above). If you didn't know whom they were by and hadn't clocked the flurry of red dots, you'd label these drawings as being the earnest attempts of a gifted amateur (charming in their way) and move on. Knowing that they are by Sylvia Plath is cause for considerable poring.

Irrational Marks: Bacon and Rembrandt

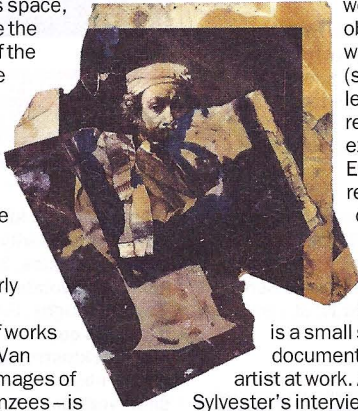


Ordovas Galleries Central

To step off Savile Row, walk four paces and come face-to-face with Rembrandt's 1659 'Self-portrait with Beret', is a special pleasure. Heavily framed, this late portrait in which the ageing artist's face is rendered from layers of thick impasto – smoulders on this new gallery's sparse white walls. Flanked by six self-portraits by Francis Bacon, and an Irving Penn photograph of the artist with a copy of the Rembrandt tacked on the studio wall behind him, the thematic thrust of this show becomes obvious. Given

the tiny size of this space, however, it's more the personal nature of the encounter with the works that gives 'Irrational Marks' its clout, rather than any exposé into the Dutch master's influence on the British painter.

Bacon's painterly cannibalism – his consumption of works by Velázquez and Van Gogh, alongside images of Hitler and chimpanzees – is



well known. His obsession with the work of Rembrandt (see 'Fragments', left) however, remains under-explored.

Endorsing the relationships that can be drawn from looking at Rembrandt's portraiture with those of Bacon

is a small selection of documents on the British artist at work. A clip from David Sylvester's interview with the artist is

also screened, articulating the crux of Bacon's attraction to 'Self-portrait with Beret'. With the inclusion of this corroborative footage, all threads appear tied.

This is a straightforward show that can be lauded for doing something new-ish with Bacon, but ultimately it stands out because there are some remarkable loans, the likes of which you might expect to see in a public museum rather than a private gallery space. But this secondary market (resale) gallery – headed-up by art-world powerhouse Pilar Ordovas, responsible for record-breaking auction sales – evidently has the means. **Rosalie Doubal**



COMMA

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SAT 19 November
Vera Tussing / 11am - 6pm

SUN 20 November
Rosemary Butcher / 11am - 6pm

MON 21 November
Rosemary Butcher / 11am - 6pm

TUE 22 November
Ben Duke / 11am - 6pm

WED 23 November
Rosemary Lee / 11am - 2.30pm

Tony Adigun & Avant Garde
Dance / 2.30pm - 6pm

THU 24 November
Frauke Requardt & Freddie Opoku-Addaie / 12pm & 5.30pm

Moreno Solinas & Igor Urzelai / 12.30pm - 5pm

FRI 25 November
Simon Ellis / 11am - 2.30pm

Luca Silvestrini / 3pm - 6pm

SAT 26 November
Darren Ellis / 11am - 6pm

SUN 27 November
Eva Recacha / 11am - 6pm

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