Critic's choice

Martin Doulier picks the best shows opening this week

Raw Truth: Auerbach – Rembrandt

Ordovas. ➤ Dec 1.

In conversation is an odd way to describe the act of hanging paintings by different artists next to one another, as the gallery has done here. Is there some kind of dialogue between work from the 1960s by the radical modern British painter Frank Auerbach and that of seventeenth-century Dutch master Rembrandt van Rijn? Are they really having a chat? If anything, this is more of a sequence, with Auerbach reaching out to or between through some artistic ouija board.

The conversation here is at its most fluid when the talk turns to portraiture. Rembrandt’s tiny ‘Portrait of Dr Eynonlin Bueno’ from 1645–47 (painted, right) hangs between two Auerbach portraits of Estella West made in 1964 (‘Head of EDW’, pictured, left). The quiet gaze of Dr Bueno is echoed in West’s sunken eyes, lost under inches of paint. The masterful intensity of Rembrandt’s delicate touch contrasts with Auerbach’s frightfully thick layers of near-abstraction.

But Rembrandt’s beautifully atmospheric ‘The Three Trees’ (1643) is dwarfed by three of Auerbach’s stunning and immense landscapes. It’s hard to see the link between the intricate subtlety of the Dutch master’s work and the Brit’s huge, blobby canvases of beige, black and maroon, even though they share a similar darkness.

Often, it’s up to us to make the connections – as when Auerbach’s ‘The Sitting Room’ (1964) is hung between a painting and etching by Rembrandt depicting Joseph selling his family. There’s a modern, gestural painting on the one hand, religious-themed baroque art on the other. Both are beautiful but drawing parallels feels forced. Edna Frankel

The Bottom Line: Stunning paintings that aren’t necessarily on speaking terms.

Opening this week

Masterpieces of Chinese Painting 700–1900

V&A

8 October to 9 January 2015

Opening this week

Alan Cristea 31 and 34 Cork St, W1S 3NU. 7439 1866.
www.alanCREASE.com. ➤ Green Park. Mon–Fri 10am–5.30pm; Sat 11am–7pm.

Tom Wesselmann: The Late Prieta

A meticulous collection of boxes of fruit and lush green vistas are given the pop treatment in these prints by the American artist who transforms the classical themes of still life, nude and landscape into colourfull explosions. Bright and cheery, this show will rid anyone of the winter blues. Thu Nov 14 ➤ Dec 21.

Liason Gallery 27-29 Bell St, W1V 5DA. 7724 2739. www.liason.
gallery.com. ➤ Edgware Rd. Mon–Fri 10am–6pm; Sat 11am–5pm.

Nostalgic for the Future Just two years of their fifteenth anniversary, Liason Gallery celebrates this milestone by looking back at the artists whose careers they’ve nurtured since the gallery’s inception – including John Latham, Richard Long and Richard Wentworth – and looking toward with their younger artists – such as Ciel Royer, Ryan Gander and Haroon Mirza. Thu Nov 14 ➤ Jan 11.

Necropolis An art exx by Cherry Pickles & Alexander Lumsden

Necropolis

Menier Gallery 11–16 Nov

Special Guests IASM presenting ‘Mémoires d’Images’ Fri 15 Nov 6.30pm.

For all of this week’s exhibitions, head to timeout.com/londonart

72 Read more reviews and listings and book tickets at timeout.com/london