

Regina José Galindo: 12 years

Selected Press

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Regina José Galindo: 12 Years

It's perhaps a harsh thing to say, but the work of Guatemalan artist Regina José Galindo sometimes veers pretty close to the sort of blatant symbolism you'd expect to find in parodies of performance art. In one video, for instance, she repeatedly gets thrown by a mechanical bucking bull on to a crash mat decorated with the Stars and Stripes – a comment on the US dominance of Latin America. Another shows her sitting in a public plaza while blood drips on to her head – symbolising the bloodshed that mars Guatemalan society. And, in one of the few pieces in this mini-retrospective where the artist doesn't feature, a man walks through village streets with a coffin strapped to his back – so that's a metaphor for the everyday burden of death, then.

If these descriptions of her work sound glib, well, maybe that's just a way of deflecting the relentless earnestness of Galindo's project. To be sure, she's exploring some big issues: social and political violence, the treatment of women, torture. But actually the ideas are more raw and affecting when she dispenses with elaborate allegories and goes straight for the jugular – such as when forcibly



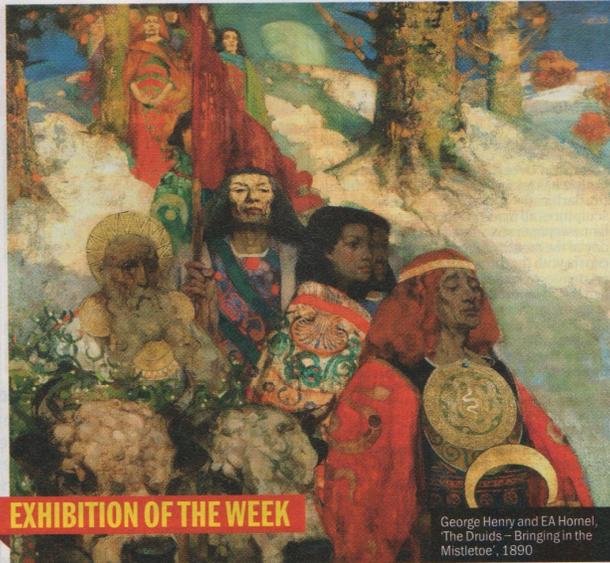
Rollo Galleries West

subjected to water-board treatment, or carving the word 'Perra' ('Bitch') into her trembling leg with a knife.

Yet these films lack something, because although obviously of live performances – complete with flash photography and glimpses of the audience – you'll only ever get to experience them as video documentation. In that sense, the best pieces are those that incorporate this discrepancy: the way her poetry recital gets lost to traffic noise, as she dangles from a wire above the city, or the sinister, voyeuristic scrutiny of the camera focusing on her naked form, wrapped in a clear plastic bag, and left, like a murder victim, in a rubbish dump. **Gabriel Coxhead**



'We Don't Lose Anything by Being Bom', video, 2000



EXHIBITION OF THE WEEK

George Henry and EA Hornel, *The Druids - Bringing in the Mistletoe*, 1890

Pioneering Painters: The Glasgow Boys 1880-1900

In recent decades Glasgow has housed more successful artists than any other UK city (London excepted, of course), 2010 Turner Prize winner Susan Philipsz among them. At the end of the nineteenth century it was a similar story, illustrated by this significant showing of paintings by the group of male artists known as the Glasgow Boys. For the record there was also a group of design-oriented female artists at the time, known, natch, as the Glasgow Girls.

As a brief primer, 'the Boys' were a loose bunch of young painters based in and around Glasgow who, for a short period, painted and socialised together and included Joseph Crawhall, James Guthrie, John Lavery and Arthur Melville. They took inspiration from contemporary French painters (many of them also



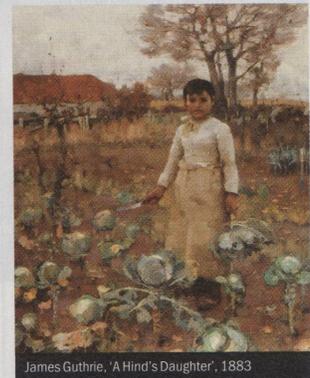
Royal Academy of Arts
Major spaces

studied in Paris), in particular Jules Bastien-Lepage, whose work was typified by down-to-earth subjects such as peasants in the landscape and naturalistic effects of painting *en plein air*. As a result, the paintings of the Glasgow Boys display a much freed, lighter representation of both rustic Scottish life and international subjects including landscapes and life in Europe and Japan.

While some images of ruddy-cheeked children may, to our contemporary tastes, tip over into chocolate-box territory, there are plenty of stand-out works to justify

the 'pioneering' in the exhibition's title. One is Guthrie's 'A Hind's Daughter' (pictured below), in which a young girl cutting cabbages stares unenthusiastically at the viewer, wielding a knife in one hand, and with an unsettling gaze reminiscent of 'American Gothic'. Another is James Paterson's landscape 'Autumn in Glencairn, Moniaive', where the light on the water appears both luminous and magical. Perhaps most striking is George Henry and EA Hornel's 'The Druids - Bringing in the Mistletoe' (pictured left). This bizarre painting shows a procession of Celtic priests descending a hillside in celebration of the winter solstice. It's unusual, not only for being a collaboration, but for its overtly decorative aesthetic. The rich use of pattern and colour, including gold leaf, evokes a far more mystical representation of Scottish life, inspired by its mythology and folklore.

If one had to choose a Turner Prize winner from the artists here, it would have to be Arthur Melville, for his three very different but equally stunning watercolours of Scottish, Spanish and Persian subjects. Although disappointingly dark and dull in the catalogue reproduction, these vibrant works really glow in the flesh. Helen Sumpter



James Guthrie, 'A Hind's Daughter', 1883

João Penalva



Simon Lee Galleries West

It's all about cropping and framing with João Penalva, both in a physical sense and in terms of contextualisation and narrative thread. This show, the London-based Portuguese artist's first at the gallery, features work in a variety of media from the past six years that, beneath quasi-museological appearances, deals with the erosion of certainties, featuring objects and images that often act as springboards into more esoteric territory. Artist-books home in on details – hands on guns and telephones, ripples on a pond – that are loaded and fetishised. Large, expensively mounted photos such as 'Vase', two images of a vessel printed



'Light beam', video projection, 2007

from negatives found in a folder, are captioned with texts that lead us away from hard facts into diversionary grey areas of memory and conjecture.

This is witty, at times whimsical, but cleverly expansive art, designed to engage with rhythms of curiosity and wandering attention. Penalva's study of ballet in the 1970s seems to underpin his choreography of the installation – and of the viewer's progress within it. Full of questions about the nature of what we are looking at, and where focus lies, the show repays numerous circuits, creating magic on macro and micro levels, particularly in films where fleeting beauty is captured both in the grand, romantic manner of fog wafting about a Friedrichesque forest and in the simple play of dust in a beam of light. **Martin Coomer**

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Saatchi Online Magazine, Top 10 London Shows, January 3rd 2011

SAATCHI ONLINE [Magazine](#)

Paul Carey-Kent's Top 10 London Shows in January

By [Paul Carey-Kent](#) · January 3, 2011 · [London](#), [Top 10 Shows](#) · Tagged: [Featured](#)

This may look like a forbiddingly heavy start to the new year – gloom, suffering, death, anxiety and religion abounds, not to mention a half hour drum solo – but there's also plenty of joy and wit to be found in the following shows with those themes.



Mauro Bonachina: Through a Glass Darkly

11/11/2010 9 till 5 through 15 Jan 2011

@ Maria Stenfors

www.mariastenfors.com

Unit 4, 21 Wren St – Kings Cross

London, England

This show, beautifully curated by Maria Stenfors herself, takes the eponymous Bergman film as the starting point for what might be called 'dark white works',

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catching a Scandinavian mood which is just right for a snowed-up winter. And though Jeppe Hein and Mirosław Balka bring some big name glamour, the most striking pieces are by the lesser-known Mauro Bonacina, who brings plenty of implied heat to a stand-off of sorts between a shirt, singed to the heart by the shape of an iron, and a bath which contains a toaster chucked into it in a pre-opening performance.



Regina José Galindo: Let's Rodeo 12 Years

@ ROLLO Contemporary Art

www.rolloart.com

51 Cleveland St – Fitzrovia

To 11 Feb

It's somewhat surprising that the widely-acclaimed Guatemalan performance video artist Regina José Galindo hasn't had a solo show in London before, but all the better that this ten video retrospective includes early and brand new work which even the most dedicated art globe trotter won't have seen. Galindo typically subjects her body to dangerous public acts which challenge imbalances of economic, political and sexual power: here the disturbing but memorably resonant images include her being waterboarded; cutting her flesh; getting whipped, spat-on and slapped in drastic simultaneity; selling the clothes off her body; and attempting to tame the bucking rodeo machine of US imperialism.



Screenshot

Oliver Pietsch: From Here to Eternity

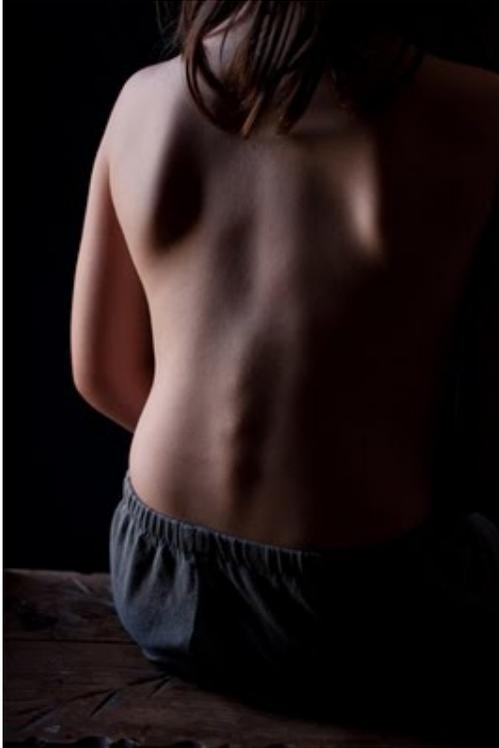
@ Nettie Horn

www.nettiehorn.com

25B Vyner St – Cambridge Heath

To 30 Jan

Filmic collages are the fashionable province of famed White Cube artists Candice Brietz and Christian Marclay, but the German Oliver Pietsch deserves to be considered alongside them. He's made several compilations to dreamlike near-narrative effect with thematically structured content ranging from clouds to drugs. *'From Here to Eternity'* focuses on death, its clichés, and how they are culturally constructed: from violent ends, to meditations on the way of it, to visions of the afterlife. The 40 minute run (first showing 12.00, last 5.15 or so) combines a startling range of sources and imaginative soundtrack choices to addictive effect.



Young Girl with a Skull

Neil Drabble: The Great Masturbator on Holiday

@Gooden Gallery

www.goodengallery.com

25A Vyner St- Cambridge Heath

8-23 Jan, 2011

If you share my taste for improbable constraints as a means of galvanising work, you'll like this show. Wide-ranging commercial and art photographer Neil Drabble went on holiday – though it can't have been too restful – and made work using objects and people from around his Spanish home, and titles from the paintings of Salvador Dali. In the manner of Dali's 'paranoiac-critical' method (whereby reflected swans become elephants etc) the work sets out to turn something commonplace into something Daliesque: two lemons make '*Duck*', a pin-pierced egg bleeding yoke stands in for Saint Sebastian, a few links of chain become a nude... Despite the extreme procedure, Drabble's wit rate is remarkably high.



Paa Joe: Taking It With You

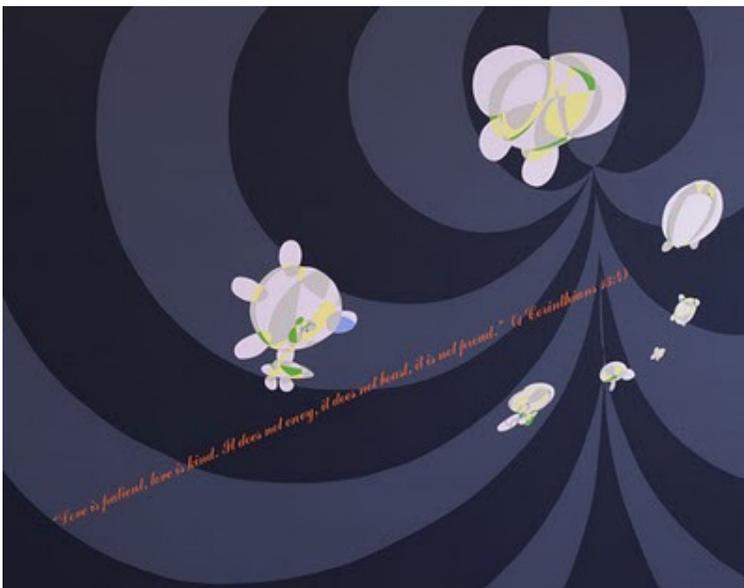
@ Jack Bell Gallery

www.jackbellgallery.com

276 Vauxhall Bridge Rd – Victoria

To 15 Jan. 2011

Jack Bell scours the world for the unexpected. Struck by the West African tradition of colourful and life-affirming figurative bespoke sculpted coffins which reflect the activities and ambitions of their occupants, he asked Paa Joe, who has been making them since the 1950's, for hardwood display versions of the softwood originals. These kitsch-as-Koons versions of iconic symbols of local life – eagle, fish, Air Ghana jet, cocoa pod – have a dodgem-like cheerfulness and are lined plushly enough inside their hinged lids to look comfortable berths.



1 Corinthians 13:4

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Nikola Savic: James 2:17

@ Zero 10 Art / St James's Church

www.zero10gallery.com

197 Piccadilly – Central

13 Jan – 3 Feb 2011:

I'm not sure how much I like this strand of London-based Serbian painter Nikola Savic: combinations of pop-tinged, slightly trippy abstraction with quotes from the bible. But maybe that's as it should be – for though the intrusively-trailed text undermines any formal properties the paintings may have, that emphasises that the words are there to be read, and graphically underlines the clashes between belief systems and modes of potential transcendence in modern society. And if it's time to return to explicitly Christian work, then it's a match made in heaven to show these big paintings and triptychs in St James' Church.



Untitled (46)

Lesley Vance: Psycho Painting

@ Carlson

www.carlsongallery.co.uk

6 Heddon St – Central

To 31 Jan 2011

This show scores on two counts. First, as a neatly themed collection of works in which the emotional and rational aspects of the creation of art can be explicitly separated – kicked off by a wonderfully smeary Richter portrait of Freud which swims reluctantly into focus and David Adamo's axes which seem to have whittled away – impossibly – at themselves. Second, as a stimulating introduction to several artists

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well thought of in America but little seen here, such as Kaari Upson (her obsessive installation is currently a stand-out in Miami's Rubell collection), Xylor Jane (brings subjectivity into number systems), Brendan Fowler (smashes photos on top of each other) and Lesley Vance (photographs still lives in a dark box as a basis for luminously subjective abstractions therefrom).



Screenshot from 'Solo'

Haroon Mirza: Interim

@ The Chisenhale Gallery www.chisenhale.org.uk

Jan 13, 2011 7.30pm &

Andrew Cross: The Solo

@ Mummery & Schnelle www.mummeryschnelle.com

83 Gt Titchfield St

Jan 12 – 15, 2011 (screened at 12, 1, 2, 3 & 4pm)

These rock-oriented events should both be worth catching. Haroon Mirza's collisions of object and sound utilise furniture, radios and other artists' work. This is an evening of 'sculptural and aural assemblage' with Richard Strange speaking the words of tragic Joy Division front man Ian Curtis in a stage set inspired by Beckett. Video artist Andrew Cross has a soft spot for prog rock, which extends to the notorious drum solo. When you hear that Carl Palmer (of Emerson, Lake &... fame) has collaborated on a 30 minute film of just him and his drums, you may fear the joke is on you – but honestly, it's paradoxically fascinating...



Hide and Seek

Tom Hunter: Unheralded Stories

@ Purdy Hicks

www.purdyhicks.com

65 Hopton St – Southwark

To 15 January 2011

For two decades Tom Hunter's photographs have explored and mythologised his neighbourhood of Hackney. Here he presents ten pairs of photographs which incorporate a threefold reflection of the locally present in the context of the internationally historic. The larger picture in each pair shows locals acting out an East End scenario with the forms borrowed from a famous painting: so for example Roisin, a friend's daughter, plays hide and seek in a pose taken from Ingres. A smaller picture shows an environment in which the people act as themselves: here is the Church Hall which Roisin attends. The local and personal is elevated as epic and representative at the same time as its everyday particularity is emphasised.



Becky Beasley: Lake Huron from the South-East

Muybridge Revolutions

@ Kingston Museum www.MuybridgeinKingston.com

Wheatfield Way (to 19 March 2011) &

Becky Beasley (8th May 1904 Kingston)

@ Stanley Picker Gallery www.stanleypickergallery.org

Knight Park Campus, Kingston University

(to 5 March 2011) – Kingston-upon-Thames

Although he found fame in America, it was in Kingston-upon-Thames that Eadweard Muybridge (1830-1904) was born – as plain Edward Muggeridge – and died. He bequeathed his personal collection to his hometown, where his zoopraxiscope discs and models of his sets are the core of a fascinating new display. Added to that Becky Beasley, who's in the British Art Show now on tour, builds on Muybridge's construction of a scale model of the American Great Lakes in his back garden. Even if you don't – as I happen to – work in Kingston, you may want to catch these complements to the major Muybridge show just fifteen train minutes away at Tate Britain.

Image credits: relevant artists and galleries

About the author



Paul Carey-Kent is the former Editor at Large of Art World magazine.

Regina José Galindo at Rollo Contemporary Art



[Rollo Contemporary Art](#) recently opened the first solo show in London of Guatemalan performance artist Regina José Galindo. Definitely not for the faint hearted, the exhibition features works from Galindo's twelve year career in which (to list just a few) she hires a bodyguard who subjects her to water-boarding, carves the word *Perra* (*Bitch*) into her leg and – in a work commissioned especially for the exhibition – is caned, slapped and spat at.

The extraordinary nature of these self-inflicted happenings might invite comparisons with the work of Marina Abramovic, the self-styled godmother of performance art (who enjoyed a retrospective at the [Lisson Gallery this Autumn](#)). Yet where Abramovic's work is introspective and explores ritual and artistic identity, Galindo's is political, focusing on the violence and repression of Guatemala, political relationships between the US and Central America and the subjugation of women.

This external focus to her work is breathtaking. I vividly remember seeing Catherine Opie's infamous self-portrait, [Pervert](#), at the New York Guggenheim, in which she carved the word "pervert" into her chest (accompanied with 46 needles stuck into her arms). But that act was performed to reclaim an insult hurled against her as a lesbian; as with Abramovic, the focus is foremost on the self.

Galindo's use of her own body to explore these global issues is as poignant as it is shocking: "My body is not like an individual body, but a social body, a collective body, a global body" she comments in relation to *Perra*. The vulnerability of her flesh in performing these acts brings a strange poetry to the political questions she raises. Nowhere is this more clearly shown than in the pictured work, *No perdemos nada con nacer* (*We don't lose anything by being born*) for which Galindo drugged herself, was put in a clear plastic bag and deposited at the local rubbish dump, to explore (amongst other things) the disinterested reaction of the locals at seeing yet another body at the dump.

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