

**DUNCAN CAMPBELL:
ARBEIT**
Hotel

Flitting next door, we settle in excitedly to watch Duncan Campbell's 39-minute paradocumentary about a German chancellor – for about 52 seconds, before I snap back to reality and beg the gallerist to give me a screener DVD to watch later. Marathons are too short for films; plus, the Schoenberg blasting from my daughter's earbuds is almost as distracting as the sound of her chewing; and in any case, a curator I'd seen earlier in the week told me that he'd been sent a screener and loved it – and frankly, who the hell watches films in galleries anyway? Thankfully the gallerist relents immediately, though when I watch it later at home I'm a bit perplexed. Generally I think Campbell's films – which tend to scramble filmic archives and self-shot, poetic footage in the doomed pursuit of knowledge about places and times distant from home – are the cat's meow; but this one, a second-person narrative about Hans Tietmeyer and the formation of the EU, is languid and dense and, cliché alert, a lot easier to admire than it is to adore. (It's also hugely assured, though, and I'm going to watch it again.) Back in Hotel, meanwhile, the gallerist mentions that he was just about to leave for a performance by some Brazilian dancers in nearby Whitechapel – it being Saturday lunchtime and all – and would we like to go?

**OSCAR MURILLO:
AREPAS Y TAMALES**
Cole Contemporary

Hell to the yes, and not least because I've guessed – or think I've guessed – what this is. Not long ago I taught Murillo in a London art school (he's still a postgrad student). He was exhibiting a smashed-up studio floor tricked out with understated video projections, and his fellow students were reminiscing happily about the 'hot' South American girls he got to dance on it at the opening of the interim show. On arrival here, though, there's a bunch of tables with fluffy tablecloths and food on them and a handful of girls not dancing at all but, rather, doing some discontinuous yogacising – accelerated kundalini-style breathing, contortions that make it look like their heads have disappeared into the floor – while, on an audio recording, a yoga instructor calls out moves that they effectively ignore. It's an interesting tributary of relational art: what'll be left are the tables, with the performance as a kind of contagious rumour. "Peripheralism plus scenography" is what I think I hear my pint-size companion say through a mouthful of éclair, while

she tips a plateful of coconut snowballs into a rucksack emblazoned with a picture of Bruno Mars. Personally I'm glad that Murillo has more than one idea, or more than one way of approaching one idea. But then as we're leaving someone says, "Wait, there's going to be bingo!" and that suddenly seems like too many ideas already. (A week later, I discover that Murillo is now working with Hotel; mystery solved.)

SCOTT LYALL: NUDES 3
Campoli Presti

Doubling back, we pop in here – Sutton Lane's new home under a new name, in what used to be Wolfgang Tillmans's studio – and I immediately start to wonder, once again and not for the last time, whether I've made a mistake with my choice of workmate. This show is called *NUDES 3* and there's a photograph of some bare flesh (admittedly just legs) at the entrance. How wrong can you be, though, because Lyall's work turns out to be U-rated and coolly luscious: the Canadian makes the palest of abstractions using a UV printer, spraying and erasing (hence the strikethrough) dispersive layers of pale pastel ink on canvas, though the press release immediately gets technical enough that I don't really know how this happens: it speaks of 'tanning' the image and of an index of rays 'beyond colour'. Search us. "Cool", says my cohort tentatively, dipping a finger in her bag and bringing it out covered in chocolate and cream, having declared that she's not going to be doing anymore "stupid artspeak". The word that comes to mind for me in front of these paintings, meanwhile, is 'want' – and I don't even really mind which one, though actually I'd like at least three so that I can feel the spectral subtleties of tone bodying forth in contrast and, oh, I'll take the photo of the legs too so I can do the tonal cross-referencing it seems to encourage. All of which probably does Lyall's austere, medium-querying procedure a disservice, but if the optical enjoyment is what gets someone to think about them in the first place, today we at least do the looking.

GERT & UWE TOBIAS
Maureen Paley

Minimalism to maximalism. Upon walls painted midnight-blue, the Cologne-based brothers have strung a seemingly endless array of big woodblock prints and paper collages pasted on gloopy gouache, all suffused with creepy folkloric signifiers – which mostly means 'anthropomorphic animals doing undefined things to each other' – and dotted the floors with glazed ceramics in a similar vein. The ghost of Max Ernst hangs around, pointing at all the collaged bird-headed things, coughing and wanting royalties (or at least a credit in the press release). It all feels a bit content-light, and I wonder idly which bits draw on 'personal biography', as the aforesaid handout mentions; maybe those that recall the portions of the Tobiases' lives spent looking through mouldering old almanacs and art books. "It's good for a bit and then it's all the same", says a small voice beside me, and it's hard to disagree.

MAGALI REUS: ON
Approach

Metal poles with metal casts of point-and-shoot cameras on them, grey Jesmonite casts of the X-ray trays used at airports, wall-mounted aluminium rectangles with coinlike metal discs jammed into slots cut in them. Reus, who 'lives and works between Amsterdam and London' – better look on a map to see where that is: France? – conjures with specificities, but this whole swish-yet-scatterly install (complete, on our visit, with a nonfunctioning film) feels pretty abstract, an evocation of a state of potential, perhaps. Minimalism and consumption get interlaid, summarising the avant-garde's descent into style – though Reus's intellectual programme feels more individualistic and delicate than that. At this point, she goes on my 'definitely interesting but I don't really know what this is; try and find time to find out' list, which at any point fills a couple of Moleskine notepads. "This room looks like a tornado hit it" is the fifth-grader's squeaky assessment. Pressed further, she says that that means it's good – and I've seen her bedroom, so I believe her – before we go downstairs and encounter the gallery owner and she tells him the show is, yes, "awesome". It's clear that he's never heard anyone say that about any of his shows: soon after, clutching Free-Lunches-at-the-Approach-Forever vouchers, we depart.



**RUTH BEALE, UNA KNOX:
OH, ZERO, ONE**
Cell Project Space

What ties this doubleheader together is a shared interest in retrieval mechanisms and memory – hence the title, which, we're told, 'could be the bytes and digits of a computer's smallest addressable memory unit'. Knox approaches recall in two very different ways, first by making prints (on silk) of pre-seventeenth-century scholar's bookplates sourced from the British Library, secondly in her video *4.5 ft. and to the left, behind me* (2011), in which a man wanders around a giant archive of some sort, stares melancholically at a clock mechanism or lengthily descends a circular staircase. (Apparently this is hilarious, if you're nine years old.) The building, for Knox, is analogous to a brain, a mental storehouse: the man supposedly suffers from temporal lobe epilepsy, which leaves him open to seizures and mental delusions, which he acts out. There are computer servers in the building, and all of this (the video, the bookplates) has something to do with a movement from 'real' archives and artefacts to digitised ones. Ironically, meanwhile, Ruth Beale's work ends up inadvertently making a case for nonphysical archives. Along with her

wallwork listing all of London's public libraries, she's installed a minilibrary of utopian literature – some of which, the gallery director tells us, has been stolen.

**BETTINA SAMSON:
MALLUMA MATERIO**
Nettie Horn

As we descend into Vyner Street, utopianism feels contagious, because here's Bettina Samson nodding back to Josef Albers's 1920s Bauhaus glass pictures. Samson's sleek black-and-white geometric reliefs – made from fired, moulded glass evenly finessed with matt spraypaint – variously draw on the geometry of Mayan architecture that Albers was interested in and graphic simulations made by a spectroscope that Samson used in an astronomy laboratory in Marseilles, a device intended to detect dark matter. Past and futurity fold together, since

there's a pointed confluence of design in the paired images: *For a future observation of the dark matter II* and *Last trip to Chichén Itzá and Uxmal II* (both 2011), for example, both angle their patterned geometries on the diagonal, and it feels like one could be mapped onto the other. To me there's something vaguely disheartening and David Icke/2012-ish about dragging the Mayans into the future in this way, but that doesn't spoil my companion's enjoyment. "It's so *modern*", she coos approvingly; which is, I think, as pithy a three-word summary of Samson's footnote-laden, decoding-requiring practice as you're going to get.

**JOAN JONAS:
VOLCANO SAGA**
Wilkinson

Joan Jonas is a bit of a baffler for me: instinctively I always think she's great, and yet at the same time I've never known exactly what her work is about. I've seen her onstage in Reykjavik waving sticks about and screeching and left feeling none the wiser, and now I've seen *Volcano Saga* (1985/1994), which brings together props, drawings and video footage from two