

## Art

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### Oliver Basciano & Robert Clark

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## This week's new exhibitions

**Recording Britain** | **KAWS** | **AL and AL** | **Martin Parr** | **Maria Taniguchi** | **Andrew Cranston**, **Jonny Lyons** | **Things Fall Apart**



📷 Sculptures by KAWS . Photograph: Christopher Thomond

### Recording Britain, Eastbourne

It is remarkably poignant to think that in 1939, with war a certainty, so concerned and uncertain were the authorities as to Britain's future, they instigated a scheme to document the country as it was; fearing, presumably, that it could be lost forever. Recording Britain, an initiative steered by the art historian Kenneth Clark, commissioned 1,500 watercolours from a plethora of artists: John Piper, Kenneth Rowntree, Walter Bayes and Barbara Jones among them. Collectively, the works are like a illustrated census, capturing a country in a moment of time, from bucolic rolling fields to city pubs, bus stops, Essex tattoo parlours and the elephants at London zoo. Alongside them here will be a small selection of work by contemporary recorders of the landscape, not least the astute social commentary of Laura Oldfield Ford.

*Towner, Sat to 2 May*

OB

### KAWS, Wakefield

The Brooklyn-based artist KAWS spent his formative years tagging the downtown walls and freight trains of Manhattan. Later he conceived the skull with crossbones and crossed-out eyes that helps to identify his work. Here, in his first UK museum exhibition, he has developed his cast of characters into immaculately constructed sculptures, some reaching up to 10 metres in height, scattered across the hillside and towering above willingly intimidated visitors. Fashioned from bronze, fibreglass, aluminium and wood, his bulbous animal-human hybrids might be uncannily reminiscent of jovial cartoon personalities, but they tend to stand alone in poses of slightly disorientating pathos.

*Yorkshire Sculpture Park, Sat to 12 Jun*

RC

### AL and AL, Manchester

The Manchester film-maker duo AL and AL are nothing if not ambitious, taking the theory of the multiverse – a hypothetical set of possibly infinite other universes – as the basis for their new exhibition. Appropriately spectacular animations and artfully lit and edited film sequences are further dramatised by haunting soundscapes. Philip Glass has been specially commissioned to compose a piece for their *Icarus At The Edge Of Time*; his soundtrack will also be performed live in concert (Royal Northern College Of Music, Sat). Another film installation pays homage to the pioneering scientist Alan Turing (*The Creator*), as thinking machines travel back from the future in search of the father of the computer age. According to AL and AL, we live in “the most radical upheaval ever of our picture of reality since we discovered the Earth was not flat.”

*HOME, Sat to 10 Apr*

RC

### Martin Parr, Wakefield

This Martin Parr retrospective adopts a typically unassuming title: *The Rhubarb Triangle And Other Stories*. Parr recently turned his always-insightful camera to the rhubarb triangle in question, which lies between Wakefield, Morley and Rothwell in West Yorkshire. The series is characteristic of the photographer's 40-year oeuvre represented here, which spans broadly divergent and often contrasting social classes. The viewer can be inclined to cringe or snigger but Parr's skilful vision is social commentary devoid of sneering.

*The Hepworth, to 12 Jun*

RC

### Maria Taniguchi, London

Large paintings of brickwork: there is something absurd about such a subject. With each acrylic painted brick laid upon the other, the rows classically unaligned, there is no single point for the eye to rest on. The colour is almost a uniform grey, with only the slightest variation in shade (the only “action” to the work). It seems an almost too literal equivalent to watching paint dry. Yet in the hands of Manila-based Maria Taniguchi, what should be dull becomes an interval of meditation for the viewer. We inevitably begin to count: one, two, three... course by course; then lose count and recount. It's this sense of time passing, process, and the subtle political references to labour inherent in the paintings (the artist's video work, often portraits of craftspeople, makes this explicit), together with a glorious stillness reminiscent of Agnes Martin, that makes these canvas works moments of pleasure rather than tedium.

*Ibid. London, W1, Fri to 2 Apr*

OB

### Andrew Cranston, Jonny Lyons, Edinburgh

The absurdist, potentially catastrophic and often downright heart-breaking performances of Buster Keaton come to mind when looking at the work of both these artists, showing in concurrent exhibitions at the Ingleby Gallery. Jonny Lyons utilises meticulously crafted and utterly impractical props that are always imbued with a generous-hearted humour. Captured in film and photography, his *Lost Boys* elevate the kinds of improvised traffic-cone escapades indulged in on the way back from the pub into metaphysical ideas. Andrew Cranston's *Paintings From A Room* present surreal scenarios of loneliness. In moody tones, his protagonists are marooned in vacuous interiors and vacant lots. Painstakingly layering paint, collage and varnish, Cranston carries his dream world off with a charismatic intensity.

*Ingleby Gallery, Sat to 26 Mar*

RC

### Things Fall Apart, London

In the mid 20th century, proxy cold war battles found fertile ground in the power vacuums of various African states emerging into “independence” after colonialism. Angola, for example, was under Soviet influence during the 1970s and 80s, a state of affairs that stoked the flames of civil war. Similar stories can be found in the histories of Benin, Congo, Ethiopia, Somalia, Eritrea and Mozambique. Exploring these diplomatic relationships and their cultural and social effect is Calvert 22's *Red Africa* season of film screenings, talks and events, with this group exhibition as the centrepiece. It includes the politically informed sculptures of Mozambique-born Angela Ferreira, the caustic satire of Cuban illustrator Tonel, and the ghostly architectural photographs of the South Korean Onejoon Che.

*Calvert 22, E2, to 3 Apr*

OB