

Robert Clark & Skye Sherwin

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Christina Mackie, Los Carpinteros, Frank Walter: this week's new exhibitions

From Christina Mackie in London to Frank Walter in Edinburgh, Skye Sherwin and Robert Clark find out what's happening in art around the country



The Photon, by Frank Walter. Photograph: Frank Walter Estate

Frank Walter, Edinburgh

It's about time that such terms as naive art and outsider art - used to label all things weird and non-mainstream - went out of the cultural window. Frank Walter, self-styled 7th Prince of the West Indies, Lord of Follies and the Ding-a-Ding Nook, may not have followed the straight and narrow path, but he constituted one hell of a creative force. During the last 25 years of his life, spent as a recluse in a remote Antiguan shack, part of which is reconstructed here, Walter produced a stream-of-consciousness array of enervating paintings, ranging from meditative abstracts through to reflections on Hitler's imaginary visit to the Caribbean. Perhaps most affecting here, though, are his Tiny Landscapes: black mountains rising against a mustard sky, a sailing boat leaning precariously into the wind, a distant aeroplane almost disappearing into the blue.

Ingleby Gallery, Sat to 23 May

RC

Carol Bove/Carlo Scarpa, Leeds



For Asta by Carol Bove Photograph: Augustin Ochsenreiter

What differentiates a piece of abstract sculpture from an exquisitely fashioned item of exhibition furniture - a plinth or display case, for instance - or, indeed, from the architecture of the gallery itself? The question is posed in this encounter between the US artist Carol Bove's assemblage sculptures and the late Venetian architect and exhibition designer Carlo Scarpa's vitrines and fixtures. Bove constructs steel armatures to hold her collection of found curios: offset against these, Scarpa's prototypes for keyholes and candleholders take on a surreal sculptural presence. It's all about painstakingly sensitive display, balancing objects compositionally against each other so they all take part in the art.

Henry Moore Institute, Thu to 12 Jul

RC

Test Run: Performance In Public, Oxford



Aus der Mappe der Hundigkeit, by Peter Weibel. Photograph: Valie Export

This show celebrates the unruly impact of live art in public spaces, from Gillian Wearing's crazed boogie-woogie in a south London shopping mall to Jeremy Deller's recreation of the 1980s conflict between police and striking miners, in the films *Dancing In Peckham* and *The Battle Of Orgreave* respectively. The earliest works date back to the 1960s, when feminist artists such as Valie Export seized on a new art form, free from a male-dominated history. Her *Tapp- Und Tast-Kino*, where she presented her nude top half inside a cardboard box to be groped in a comment on cinema's exploitation of women's bodies, remains as shocking today as it was in 1968. While many

of the iconic works are captured in documentary form, there are plenty of live encounters, too, including Florence Peake's *Lay Me Down*, a public space-set dance encouraging passers-by to reflect on homelessness.

Modern Art Oxford, Sat to 17 May

SS

Painting In Time, Leeds



Claire Ashley inflatable close up. Photograph: Claire Ashley

Anyone who has ever been involved in the fluid medium of painting will know the problem is deciding when to stop. This bright and lively exhibition transforms the rules of the game, enabling the paint to traverse its usual boundaries. Natasha Kidd's painting machines utilise pipes and pistons to spew an overflow of white emulsion. Claire Ashley's multicoloured inflatables look like the leftovers from a particularly action-packed party. At an edible painting event (6 May), visitors will be invited to physically consume their creations. Gone might be the magic of the transfixed instance, but let loose is the potential for fresh and messier escapades.

The Tetley, Fri to 5 Jul

RC

Christina Mackie, London



The Filters by Christina Mackie at Tate Britain. Photograph: Suzanne Plunkett/Reuters

Christina Mackie is an intriguing choice for the Tate Britain commission, the annual spot in the lofty neoclassical Duveen Galleries. Her work is fleet-footed - both materially and conceptually - mining often inscrutable, private associations to create mysterious constellations where you should expect to find everything from crystals to beer crates. What she's been creating at the Tate suggests a rainbow meditation on liquid and solid states, from paint to sculpture to the fluid thought-association her work hinges on. Nine silk nets have been dipped in dye and fall, like sheets of coloured mist, from the ceiling. Beneath these sit pans of semi-crystallised dye. The centrepiece is a bright yellow abstract sculpture suggesting some obscure scientific instrument, surrounded by chunks of raw glass sourced straight from the foundry displayed on plinths. For Mackie, it's all about questioning the divide between scientific objectivity and subjective dreaming.

Tate Britain, SW1, to 18 Oct

SS

Los Carpinteros, London



Candela by Los Carpinteros. Photograph: Paco Gomez

Cuban duo Los Carpinteros are design's political pranksters. This show of recent works includes one of their cute commentaries on the failed aspirations behind Russia's prize creations. In *Robotica*, the pair have recreated St Petersburg's Institute of Robotics and Technical Cybernetics, a

futuristic crown of a building, as a 10ft-high bright red Lego sculpture. *Tomates*, meanwhile, is a piece of highly crafted clowning around. As if seen after assault by an angry crowd, walls are splattered with squashed tomatoes, some real, some fashioned in ceramic. There are some neat jokes on architecture's more overblown creations in their watercolours, too, with a curving shell-like building christened "the croissant". More surreal is a painting depicting a forest of concrete blocks sprouting twisted iron girders. Its post-apocalyptic vibe makes an unsettling comment on the limitations of architecture.

Parasol Unit, NI, to 24 May

SS

Susan Steger, Berwick-upon-Tweed



Sound Strata of Coastal Northumberland by Susan Steger Photograph: Colin Davison

After premiering in Newcastle, Susan Steger's *Sound Strata of Coastal Northumberland* begins its tour of three of the sites that inspired it. From the border town of Berwick-upon-Tweed, the piece will travel to Woodhorn Museum's ex-coliery site in Ashington (27 Jun to 26 Jul) and end up in a Holy Island lookout tower (1 Aug to 6 Sep). Using mining engineer Nicholas Wood's 1838 cross-section diagram of coastal geological formations, stretching from the Scottish border to the River Tyne, as a graphic score, Steger weaves a compositional collage of evocative sounds. The effect is of a mutating drone sonically connecting us to the slow movements of nature beneath our feet.

Gymnasium Gallery, to 26 Apr

RC