Visual arts Jackie Wullschlager

Martin Puryear

‘Big Phrygian’ (2010–14) / by Martin Puryear

Big Phrygian is a huge painted red cedarwood cup, folded and drooping, as worn by freed Greco–Roman slaves and French revolutionaries. “Phrygian Spirit,” a looping wall-based yellow cedar abstraction, curls as lightly as paper. The painted pine hoop “Cerubian” indicates infinite skies, while the metal hinges of “Shackled” recall the bonds of slavery, and the fallen question mark of “Queste” perhaps alludes to freedom of the mind.

Surrealism in Egypt

Tate Liverpool

First shown in Paris, Madrid and Düsseldorf, Tate Liverpool’s exhibition excavates the forgotten story of art of Liberté, the radical collective of surrealist painters, photographers, film-makers and writers that flourished in wartime Britain. The exhibition, which runs from 25 November to 18 January, 2020, is significant for its challenge to colonial rule, the strong presence of women artists and an independent attitude to French surrealism.

Phillip King: Colour on Fire & Ceramics

Thomas Dane Gallery, London

New works by the HS-5-year-old sculptor include “Colour Me Pink,” a large geometric form of precariously balancing shapes in bright blues and pinks perforated with cylindrical holes. It is shown with a complementary group of statuette Unglazed ceramic vessels, each sliced through to reveal its volume.

Bernard Dunstan

An African-American sculptor with a distinguished reputation in the US — MoMA held a retrospective in 2007 — Puryear emerged out of Minimalism in the 1970s, with surrealist influences also clear, but his warm, humane art, rooted in objects and experience, remains distinctive, and a joy to discover in this first UK show. Final fortnight, parallel-unit.org, to December 6

Jasper Johns: ‘Something Resembling Truth’

Royal Academy, London

Marvelous to come face to face, in this first Johns retrospective in the UK for 46 years, with his direct yet conceptually complex “Flag” and “Target” paintings from the late 1950s and early 1960s. Later work is congruent, self-referential and abstract. Last week, royalacademy.org.uk to December 10

Rose Wylie: Quack Quack

Severn stainless gallery, London

Rose Wylie, also 85, waited most of her lifetime for recognition, but in the past decade her work has not the spirit of an fringe-drenched age. Large, idiosyncratic, face-nail, they are collage-like canvases, with loosely applied paint, lively, doubled cartoonish figuration and incongruously mixed sources ranging from art history to Quetzal Tarantaul to an olive oil label. This is her first solo show in a London public gallery. severnstainless.org November 30–February 11

Everything We Do Is Music

Drawing from London

The Metropolitian Museum’s Shmavy (rather) curates this imaginative exploration of how Indian classical music has inspired art from Indian miniatures to today’s animations, video art and abstract painting. Artists include Naeem Mohammendi, Dabnul Singh, Francisco Clemente, Lee Mullican and many lesser known names. drawingroom.org.uk November 30–March 4

25 November/16 November 2017

Critics’ choice