

Critic's choice



Martin Coomer picks the best shows to see this week



BLOOMBERG NEW CONTEMPORARIES

Last chance: brilliant selectors including Marvin Gaye Chetwynd ensure that this year's pick of the graduates show is a refreshingly boisterous affair.

ICA. ▶ Sun Jan 25.

ADVENTURES OF THE BLACK SQUARE

Take a trip round the world with the rectangles that changed art history in the Whitechapel's scintillating survey.

Whitechapel Gallery. ▶ Apr 5.

Daniel Guzmán: Chromosome Damage

★★★

The Drawing Room. ▶ Feb 21.

It may seem strange to describe portraits of grotesque monsters and defecating harpies as charming, but that's what Daniel Guzmán's drawings, inspired by Aztec sculptures and deities, are. Sure, the Mexican artist's mythological borrowings result in some pretty weird and lewd combinations – from leering, red-faced devils with penises for tongues, to the aforementioned multi-breasted women squirting trails of poop – yet there's something about them that feels oddly quaint and endearing.

Partly, that's because of the size of the drawings, which are small and intimate rather than overwhelming or threatening. But more than that, it's down to Guzmán's style. Thick outlines in pastel have a childlike, cartoonish quality that make his figures seem almost friendly, while the muted colours and the raw, untreated paper background feel



satisfyingly earthy. There's a kind of retro sensibility – particularly with his occasionally straightforward, un-monstrous depictions of women, where you'd be forgiven for thinking you're looking at a modernist nude from a century ago.

A few, final works have real bite, though. In these, the mash-up of

human, animal and totemic forms becomes so extreme as to produce something that appears almost abstract – a sort of demonic, chimerical knot of flesh. Yuck.

Gabriel Coxhead

THE BOTTOM LINE These monsters are too cute to make us quake.