

Art

This week's new exhibitions

Monuments Should Not Be Trusted | Jeff Keen | Mick Peter | Jan Pleitner | The First Humans | Condo | Gerard Byrne



Pyramid Selling 2 (detail), by Mick Peter. Photograph: Keith Hunter

Oliver Basciano & Robert Clark

Friday 15 January 2016 08.59 EST



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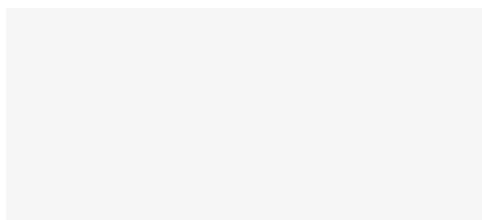
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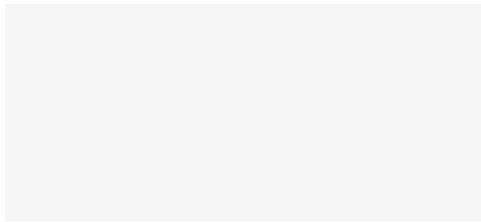


Save for later

Monuments Should Not Be Trusted, Nottingham

The first UK exhibition to present avant-garde art from the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia within the context of the political conditions that provoked it begins with the 1960s rise of consumer culture and ends in the early 1980s. With subsections such as Socialism And Class Difference and Comrades Superwoman, the historical framing will hopefully not detract from the defiant presence of many of the exhibits, which come in the form of just about all art media, as well as gifts created by workers for President Tito's birthday. The ubiquitous Marina Abramović is here, but so is socially challenging video performance by Sanja Iveković, and works by ethnologist Naško Križnar. Then there's the inscrutable group Laibach, the first western rock band to perform in North Korea.



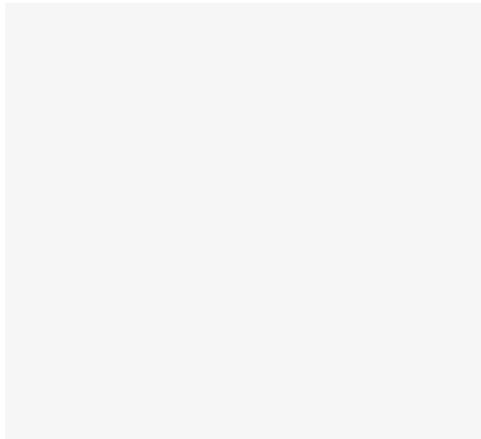


Nottingham Contemporary, Sat to 4 Mar

RC

Jeff Keen, London

While Francis Fukuyama's 1992 treatise on the "end of history" is often treated with disdain, its thesis can perhaps explain why it's not just down to technology that experimental film from the mid-20th century regularly feels dated. For example, the radical politics that typifies much of the work that came out of the London Filmmakers Co-op, a collective co-founded by Jeff Keen in 1966, can feel sadly alien to the contemporary viewer. The films that Keen produced - and there are more than 70 in total, two of which, *Rayday Film* and *The Cartoon Theatre Of Dr Gaz*, will be shown in two concurrent exhibitions - are rare then in that, in their fast-paced saturation of image and sound, they retain much of their original political verve.

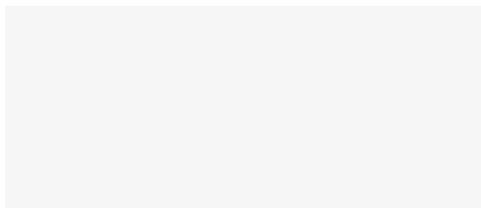


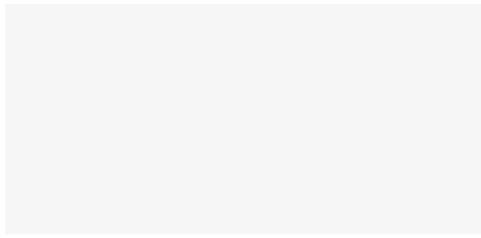
Hales Gallery, E1 & Kate MacGarry, E2, Sat to 27 Feb

OB

Mick Peter, London

Mick Peter's immersive installations feel akin to walking into an illustration: a strange, roughly rendered world variously populated by an array of absurdist characters. His 2006 work *Two Clerks*, for instance, featured large cement-melded, anthropomorphised playing cards in the tradition of Lewis Carroll, while 2010 installation *The Nose* offered a series of drooping latex music stands. On show here are Peter's recent crew of line-drawn folk, perhaps recalling New Yorker cartoons or Quentin Blake sketches, scaled up as Jesmonite-and-steel cutouts, incongruously surrounded by monstrously large sculptural red zips. External allusions to literature and theatre abound, but Peter's skill is his ability to lift the viewer from the constraints of our world and plop us down into the anarchic space of drawing, with its boundless possibilities of scale and form.



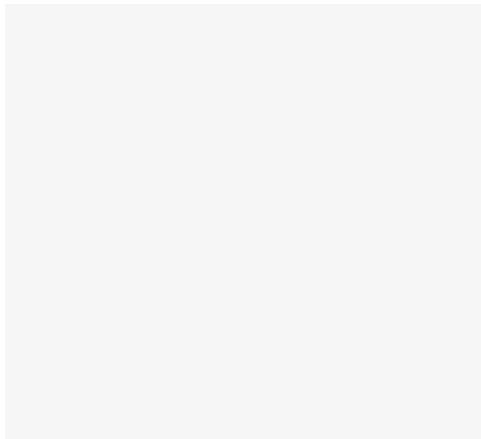


Drawing Room, SE1, Sun to 12 Mar

OB

Jan Pleitner, Dublin

The title of Jan Pleitner's exhibition, Water For The Tribe, is a reference to Frank Herbert's Dune ("A man's flesh is his own; the water belongs to the tribe"). Indeed, Pleitner's abstract paintings have something of the unashamed flash of best-selling sci-fi. Pleitner's heavily saturated colours are punctuated by sparks of white light, so his sharp-edged compositions constantly give you the eye. The paint is smeared, clawed at, squeegeed and shoved around so the paintings look thoroughly lived in, while at their more defined, they have something of the uplifting thrust of gothic stained glass.



Kerlin Gallery, Fri to 10 Mar

RC

The First Humans, Plymouth

In Ben Rivers's 14-minute film from 2012, The Creation As We Saw It, the artist intertwines three myths from the South Pacific island nation of Vanuatu that look back to the ancient past: tales that speak of the origins of humans, of pigs, and the formation of volcanoes. Our prehistoric ancestors, together with our formative relationships with non-human species and the natural world (and a gentle undermining of the anthropocentric differentiation between "humans" and "nature" - rejecting the false idea that we sit separate from the rest of Earth's ecosystem) can also be found in the work of the other five artists shown alongside Rivers's film here. These include Salvatore Arancio's lumpy ceramic landscapes; the strange, suggested primitive symbolism of Vidya Gastaldon's watercolours; as well as the brightly coloured but eerie tribal-like wall hangs of Andy Harper's installation.

Plymouth Arts Centre, to 2 Apr

OB

Condo, London

With the art piled high, Frieze and other art fairs can be soul-destroying affairs, only lifted by the fact they provide a chance to sample work from all over the

only liked by the fact they provide a chance to sample work from all over the world. Offering an alternative model but with the same sense of internationalism is this month-long festival, which showcases 24 galleries within eight of London's younger commercial spaces. Jaqueline Martins, fast becoming one of São Paulo's most interesting gallerists, is sending two of her artists: Ana Mazzei, whose sculpture riffs on minimalist, design and domestic forms, and Débora Bolsoni, who will stage a performative serving of soup in Peckham (The Sunday Painter, SE15); while Shanghai's Antenna Space and Berlin's Société are collaborating on a group show in Mayfair (Project Native Informant, W1).

Various venues, Sat to 13 Feb

OB

Gerard Byrne, Coventry

Gerard Byrne's art is unusually and deliberately difficult to categorise. Working in photography, theatre, film and installation, he explores our belief in documentary accounts and fictional stories. Such material interrogated in the past has included the Loch Ness monster and journalism in Playboy. While featuring a selection of work from the last 15 years, the centrepiece here will be the world premiere of 1/125 Of A Second, a new projection focusing on an exhibit at Stockholm's Biologiska Museet. Given his fascination with believable illusions, the museum's 19th-century wilderness diorama constitutes a perfect Byrne subject, the tableau piled with metaphorical layers the artist takes skilful pains to expose.

Warwick Arts Centre, Sat to 12 Mar

RC

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