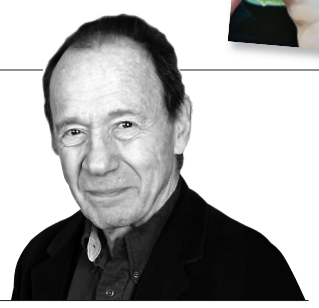
063 Diaries 25/09/2013 12:43 Page 3

DIARY

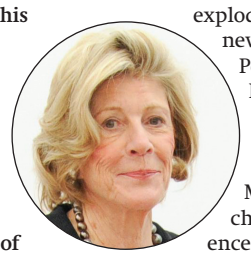
Will future Ashmolean visitors will be treated to Eric Fischl's 2012 portrait of collectors Mr and Mrs Hall reclining on the beach?

Anthony Haden-Guest's NEW YORK



Bali high

Ashley Bickerton, whose new work, a fierce mix of the conceptual and the expressive, is up at Lehmann Maupin's Chrystie Street space (until 26 October), has lived in Bali for 20 years. Back in New York with his fourth wife, Cherry, who is Balinese, he finds the art world vastly changed. "We thought we were in the boom-boom 1980s," he says. "But in retrospect, it seemed a quaint little village where all the neighbours knew one another. Now there's all this professionalism. Titles! Director of exhibitions, director of curatorial interests, liaison to the director of curatorial interests! This part of the art world seems more present now than the actual artist part." Bali too has changed, though. "A lot of people thought I had gone off to look for some Gauguin idyll," he says. "That couldn't have been further from the truth. I knew what I was getting into. What was a faraway place, where only the more thoughtful type of tourist would go, has become the Costa Brava of south-east Asia." So could he be on the way back? He simply doesn't know.



A composed Klein

The season's opening events were giddily variegated. The dinner for Ashley Bickerton's opening at Lehmann Maupin was at Cata on the Bowery and vibrated with movers and shakers, including the collectors Adam Lindemann and Michael Schwartz and museum folk such as the New Museum's Lisa Phillips, the Guggenheim's Richard Armstrong and the Contemporary Arts Museum Houston's Bill Arning. Emmanuel Perrotin opened a New York gallery last month at 909 Madison, the former HQ of the Bank of New York. Those present included the MoMA President Emerita Agnes Gund (above), the Whitney's director Adam Weinberg, the music producer and designer Pharrell Williams, and the artists Maurizio Cattelan, KAWS and Paola Pivi.

Ashley Bickerton's *MV2* (detail), 2013

Pivi had filled the space with vivid, seemingly weightless polar bears for the show, "Ok, you are better than me, so what?" (until 26 October). Perrotin's guests were then ushered to an event at the Russian Tea Room, which seemed to have morphed into an exploding Fabergé egg. Dominique Lévy's new gallery is in the same building as Perrotin's and opened with "Audible Presence" (until 16 November), a show of Lucio Fontana, Yves Klein and Cy Twombly. Klein's *Monotone-Silence Symphony* was performed in Madison Avenue Presbyterian church across the street in the presence of the artist's widow, Rotraut. The 70 singers and musicians somehow contrived to maintain an unbroken note for 20 minutes, followed by 20 minutes of enveloping silence. But Manhattan missed out on the three naked "living brushes" making blue bodyprints that were a feature of the work's first performance in a Paris gallery in 1960.

Stik to it

It took a year for Christopher Pusey of the Dorian Grey Gallery to get permissions for the Street artist Stik to paint the Statue of Liberty on a five-storey building above the Doc Holliday bar on Ninth Street and Tompkins Square Park. The London-based artist had flown in and decided the background should be Shaker Beige. "It's the same colour as a building I painted in Amman, Jordan," he said. Plain sailing? No. One neighbour was spray allergic,

Stik with his Statue of Liberty mural

another denounced the noise from the cherrypicker but then started reminiscing about the Tompkins Square riots. Stik, a purist, who has refused commissions to do headphones and trainers (unlike some other street artists), told him "Tompkins Square is the people's capital." The temperature the next day was in the 90s, and there was a downpour the day after, but it was well timed. Stik had finished 20 minutes before. Then he flew off to do a project for the Hiroshige Museum of Art in northern Japan. *Lady Liberty* will become an edition of 100 prints. Yes, the lives of street artists are different from those of studio artists, but perhaps less and less.

Louisa Buck's LONDON

What a blast

A rootin'-tootin' time was had at this year's Mayor's Thames Festival, courtesy of artists Richard Wilson and Zatorski + Zatorski and musician Ansuman Biswas. They had summoned an armada of historic vessels from the age of sail, steam and diesel to congregate in the Pool of London at Tower Bridge and perform an ear-splitting "Ships' Opera" using an array of nautical steam whistles, bells, horns, hooters, sirens, and even the booming cannon from HMS Belfast, firing for the first time in more than 30 years. Earplugs were provided for those positioned around the river but let's hope there were some to spare for the couple who had unwittingly booked the Second World War battleship for their nuptials (giving a whole new meaning to the expression "shotgun wedding"). But at least they got first-hand experience of the event, unlike Alderman Roger Gifford, the current Lord Mayor of London and Admiral of the Port of London who, along with his less illustriously titled counterpart, London Mayor Boris Johnson, was conspicuous by his absence.

Naked ambition

There were mixed feelings at the opening of the Royal Academy's "Australia" show with grumpy Melbourne native Germaine Greer harrumphing that "we deserve better" while Sir Norman Rosenthal, making only his second visit to his former domain of three decades since he stepped down as chief curator five years ago, declaring his intention to walk out of the Sidney Nolan room "and try not to look at anything else". When asked if the row of dots adorning his tie were an Aboriginal homage, Sir N (above) snapped that they were "nothing of the sort – I was given the tie by Miuccia [Prada]". He was happier to wax lyrical about his new post as the Ashmolean Museum's new curator of contemporary art, sponsored by the British-born US-based über-collectors Andrew and Christine Hall. He will this month unveil an exhibition of the Hall Art Foundation's Malcom Morley holdings, with not a didgeridoo in sight. Perhaps future Ashmolean visitors will be treated to Eric Fischl's 2012 nude portrait of Mr and Mrs Hall reclining on the beach?

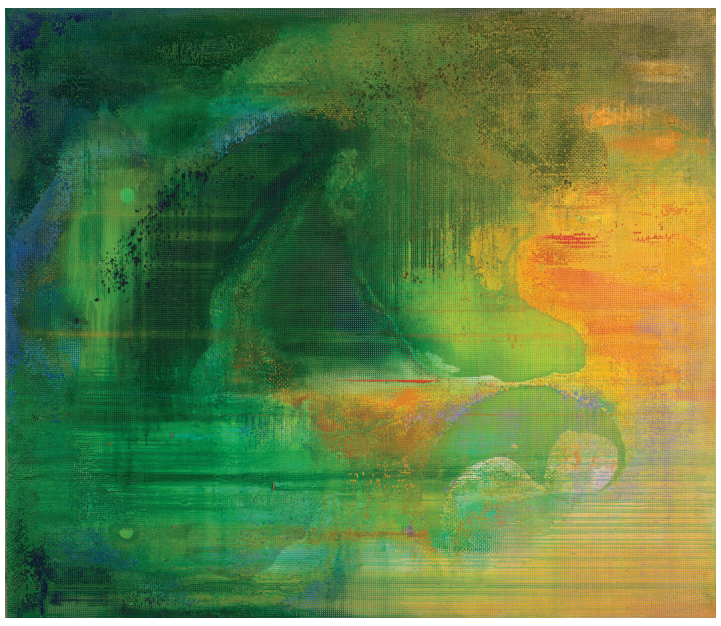
Serota's secret

BBC founding father Lord Reith might have been somewhat nonplussed by the psychedelic mini dress and orange Mary Jane "flatforms" worn by Grayson Perry to deliver the first of this year's BBC Reith Lectures at Tate Modern. But he would have agreed that the "transvestite potter from Essex" (Grayson's words) amply fulfilled the Reithean remit to educate, inform and – especially – entertain. Perry is the first practising visual artist to deliver the BBC's flagship lecture series. Perry's opening oration "Democracy Has Bad Taste", had the audience of art and media grandees rolling in the aisles – despite many of the laughs being at their expense. Sir Nicholas Serota was especially sporting, refusing to confirm or deny Perry's revelation that Casa Serota contains a "world-class" collection of Cliff Richard memorabilia; he silkily stated that he never discusses his private possessions while also slyly observing that such conversations could cause a spike in the price for Sir Cliff collectables. Walkin' talkin' living dolls, anyone?

Subculture and shopping

Memory lane for many at the oddly high-end party to unveil the Institute of Contemporary Art's pop-up "A Journey Through London Subculture", at the derelict Old Selfridges Hotel. The event traces 30 years of the capital's subcultures, from John Maybury's 1985 "The Union Jacking Up", an underground filmic ode to pals Leigh Bowery and Trojan, to the more comfortable output of designer and Topshop collaborator Louise Gray. Among those clutching champagne flutes were subculture survivors Tom Dixon, former blowtorch-wielding "creative salvage" furniture maker, now design guru with an OBE, and Scarlett Cannon, the founder of the legendary Cha Cha club, now "heavenly healer, glamorous gardener". Presiding over the gathering was Selfridges' creative director Alannah Weston, who some felt merited an inclusion given the way in which she has encouraged so many artists over the years to run riot in her family's Oxford Street store.

ERIC FISCHL: MARY BOONE GALLERY/JULIANA BALESTIN. STIK: SEBASTIAN PIRAS NY. THAMES: FRANTZESCO IANGARIS. AGNES GUND: NEIL RASMUS/BFA NYC. CLIFF: BEATSIXTIES. ASHLEY BICKERTON: LEHMANN MAUPIN. SIR NORMAN ROSENTHAL: PIERRE ROUCHALEOU.



William Tillyer, *The Watering Place IV*, 2013, Acrylic on mesh and canvas, 177.8 x 203.2 cms (70 x 80 ins)

William Tillyer: *The Watering Place.*

11th October - 30th November 2013

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