

# notion

MUSIC · FASHION · CULTURE



ISSN 0309-2009 / UK £3.00  
US\$9.99 / AUS \$13.90

## VULTURE ABOUT TOWN



Recent Turner Prize winner **Mark Wallinger's** odd, Pierre Menard-esque performance of Antony Gormley's career has progressed in recent months through two notable acts of opacity. Of most public note was his subject's victory in the "Angel of the South" competition during the glacially combative public vote.

Wallinger's idea for the **Ebsfleet Landmark Competition** for the Kentish countryside had the simplicity and power of a gunshot: a giant white horse, 50 metres tall, astride the Gateway to England. Initially the Vulture felt no little disdain for this OK Big Horse, considering that it lacked the intelligence, subtlety and beauty of Gormley's Angel. Eventually, however, he was persuaded of its worth: is it not rather appealing to consider the idea of A FUCK-OFF BIG WHITE HORSE in the middle of thick, bland Kent, ever aimed at Franco? It's fucking great. Enough, even, to see the Vulture slip into inebriant profanity in celebration.

Wallinger has also curated a solo show at **the Hayward**, which hosted a well-received Gormley show back in 2007 and thus allowed for the temerarious conceit which opened this round-up. His show, **The Russian Linesman**, concerns itself with intellectual cause célèbre "iminal": all things inchoative, beginning, and marginal, the sort of entrance. It's as rewarding as one would expect, Wallinger being an intellectual, stimulating and ever-unpredictable artist. In happy news for the provinces, the show shall go on tour, taking in **Leeds Art Gallery** and **Swansea's Glynn Vivian Art Gallery** between May and September.

Meanwhile, the Vulture recently came across two pleasing surprises to counter his past gripe with the current crop of artists (see Vulture's pessim). **Progress** showed briefly at Brick Lane's **Dray Walk Gallery**, displaying the work in progress of 48 students from the **Bath School of Art & Design**. The Vulture was particularly impressed with the intelligence of theme on display: interrogating the relationship between design and our lives and seeking to rephrase our understanding of these objects. It was engaged and refreshingly free of the aesthetic substantialism too often found in East London.

A real joy of discovery was to be experienced at **Gregory Smart's** show **Eye Blood You** at the **Empire Gallery**, one plucked from amongst the ever-fruited collection of galleries which grow on Vynar Street. Smart is a powerful, physical painter of abstracted, grotesque figures: his works suggest a meeting of Goya, Pollock and Bacon in a cessy froth to consider past lovers and rivals in love in order to do them the greatest disservice possible with paint. A naked blue man, dangling a bunch of grapes over his pedicled form, is reminiscent of a macabre Modigliani.

Smart is a brilliant draftsman who is well aware of his place in the tradition of painting, a type of which there has been a distressing lack in recent history as more pugnaty-media have marginalised the form. It marks him out as one to watch. For a quick refresher on the prosaic magnificence of modern painting, by the by, there's no harm in reacquainting yourself with some **Picasso** at the **National Gallery's Challenging the Past**. Really, the man was brilliant: not to mention absolutely hilarious.

A late work, *Mistral* (1965), shows Picasso at once at his funniest and dearest: a black and white image of the troy's long face, maddening, reflecting on his history of sex and terror over a glass of wine and testing the assumption, given Picasso's own published personal history, of self-portraiture. It's skewed, beautiful and brilliant, and from a period usually considered less brilliant than the pre-war work. A chief success of the exhibition, actually, is its refusal to curate uterocologically; instead, showing him across the breadth of his career, breathing new life into the later works, and ultimately leaving one to marvel at the volume of his production and multiplicity of his imagination. The Vulture cannot really do better than Jonathan Jones' summation: "Picasso makes almost all other artists in the history of the world look like hacks."

## · FORTHCOMING ·

**MARIO GIACOMELLI - PUGLIA [PICTURES]** @ ATLAS GALLERY, LONDON SHOWING NOW UNTIL 16/05/09  
[www.atlasgallery.com](http://www.atlasgallery.com) / BOLD, POETIC PHOTOGRAPHS OF EVERY DAY ITALIAN LIFE FROM A MASTER OF  
BLACK AND WHITE REPORTAGE, EASILY ONE OF THE 20TH CENTURY'S GREATS.

**TRAVELLING LIGHT** @ WW GALLERY AND PHAROS GALLERY, LONDON, 15/05-28/05/09; VENICE BIENNALE 06/06-11/06/09.  
[www.travellinglight09.blogspot.com](http://www.travellinglight09.blogspot.com) / A COLLABORATION BETWEEN TWO PUNCHY YOUNG EAST END GALLERIES FOR  
THIS YEAR'S BIENNALE, FINDING TENSIONS AND BEAUTY IN THE CONTRAST BETWEEN CULTURED VENICE AND GRIMY HACKNEY.

**LONDON ORIGINAL PRINT FAIR** @ THE ROYAL ACADEMY OF ARTS, LONDON 22/04-26/04/09  
[www.londonprintfair.com](http://www.londonprintfair.com) / PRINTS ARE OH SO IN RIGHT NOW, THANKS TO SHEPARD FAIREY'S REPLICA AD INFINITUM HOPE-RAMA POSTER.  
BUY ORIGINAL PRINTS HERE AT THE WORLD'S OLDEST AND EUROPE'S BIGGEST PRINT FAIR FROM £100 ALL THE WAY UP TO £1MIL.