

glass

in saatchi's shadow

An historical extension of the YBAs, Henry Hudson is a symbol of our insular united kingdom of art



The Saatchi gallery in London is currently revealing its latest pickings from the **British art scene**; no need to mention what happened last time - (young British artists, anyone ?) contemporary British art still lives in constant reference to it. This selection looks to be more subtle, restive, considered. It also appears, albeit from a cursory glance, to be consistently dull.

Charles Saatchi has made a grand gesture, not a million miles from that made by the Turner Prize judges last year. He presents a new phase in British art that absorbs the shocks and changes of recent years. It reflects the more serious introspective tone that the nation has adopted, but is this how we really feel as things lurch from bad to sh*t-riddled worse?

One thing that the Brit art of the 90s never was, when it came crashing onto the scene like an inebriated Tracey Emin down a staircase, was dull. It was arresting, attention grabbing, sensationalist, hilarious and in some cases worthless. Above all, with these elements both glorious and tawdry, it was very British and at times highly relevant, cutting to the bone of the Britain of that decade.

In a recent preview article of Newspeak, one of the artists exhibiting asserts that this group is in no way descended from the YBAs. Instead, she sights the Modernists as their unifying influence, garnering much more historical credence and depth. YBA bashing has long been a popular sport, but there is no denying that as a group of artists they achieved a huge amount for the British art scene, and for old uncle Saatchi in the bargain. Though his new scions may be dismissive, there is much to be treasured from their legacy, not least their archetypal Britishness.

Scratching the surface?

Henry Hudson is an artist whose work drips and stinks of this nation; for the last few years he