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A Toilet as Art? Henry Hudson Thinks So



BY VIOLET NAYLOR-LEYLAND

Left, Henry Hudson's Whitechapel Galley Loo; right, Marc Quinn and Hudson.

When an exhibition is called "Crapula," you might imagine a crude affair, but British artist **Henry Hudson's** new show at 20 Hoxton Square Projects, in London, proves to be quite the opposite.

A sophisticated crowd—to say the least—took in the opening party last week at **Alexander Dellal's** East London gallery. Socialite **Countess Debbie von Bismarck**, actress-model-painter **Meredith Ostrom**, and the gallery owner's mother, **Andrea Dellal**, were just some of the keen viewers on Thursday night, along with a top selection of London artists, such as **Sue Webster**, **Tim Noble**, **Keith Coventry**, **Hugo Wilson**, and **Piers Jackson**.

Inside the airy white showroom were depictions of lavatories at some of London's most prestigious galleries and museums—the Tate Modern, National Portrait, Serpentine, Victoria and Albert, and Courthauld—drawn in chalk on old-fashioned school blackboards. There were also an illuminated bronze relief glimmering in one corner and a self-portrait bust of the artist made from human hair collected from London's subway system, the Tube. But what really seemed to steal the limelight were the six-by-five-foot paintings hanging at the back of the room that depicted three scenes from William Hogarth's "A Rake's Progress"—in plasticine. "I think they're amazing—like enormous Auerbachs!" said artist **Marc Quinn**, referring to the renowned 1950s British painter Frank Auerbach, who used shades of brown (a color artists tended to avoid) in his work, to great effect.

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Ray-Ban-wearing smokers puffed away outside as guests were ushered into the gallery and handed cooling cocktails of Maker's Mark, lime, and ginger ale. Society beauty **Marina Hanbury** swept in wearing an elegant black tailcoat, model and lead singer of Thrush Metal **Laura Fraser** arrived with yet another new hairstyle, and **Nicky Haslam** came in dressed as a Picasso painting—*naturellement!*

Although **Keith Coventry** and Hiscox Art Projects curator **Elliot McDonald** were still smarting from the insult "You pair of slimy queens!," which had been screamed at them gratuitously (so they claim) from Hudson's studio window the day before, each professed they had come to the show in full support. "We're big fans!" Coventry admitted. "I really love him," McDonald remarked. Perhaps Hudson had a point after all.

Tardy rockers including Big Pink singer Robbie Furze and his beautiful girlfriend, **Mary Charteris**, Kooks Hugh Harris and **Luke Pritchard**, and D.J. **Isaac Ferry** turned up just as the diners sloped off to bag a table at Hix (**Mark Hix's** new chophouse). And as for the hard-cores—they stayed true to the traditional approach of "eating is cheating" and headed straight to Dan Macmillan's party—the one he was throwing with Nike. Hey, it was Thursday night!

"Crapula" is on display at 20 Hoxton Square Projects, located at 20 Hoxton Square, London, until June 27, 2010.