theguardian

This week's new exhibitions

Robert Clark & **Skye Sherwin**
The Guardian, Saturday 18 September 2010

Habibi (2003), by Adel Abdessemed.

Adel Abdessemed, London

Adel Abdessemed is not the first artist for whom big bold one-liner art has translated into art market success, though his work has a bleak political punch rooted in personal experience that sets him apart. An Algerian-born Berber, he left his wartorn homeland in 1994 and his themes of exile and global conflict are writ large. Included in his first London solo exhibition, Music Box is an oil barrel embossed with spikes that plays Wagner's Ride Of The Valkyries, while a new commission, Silent Warrior, turns African tins that either contained food or toxic materials into masks. The centrepiece of the show is the gargantuan momento mori Habibi, a scaled-up replica of his own skeleton, which hangs horizontally from the gallery ceiling. Stand in its shadow and wonder at the horror.

Parasol Unit, N1, Wed to 14 Nov

[RLH]

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Skye Sherwin

Rafael Lozano-Hemmer, Manchester

The Mexican installation artist Rafael Lozano-Hemmer brings to life the unnerving suspicion that the artwork is observing the observer. Using biometric scanners, surveillance cameras, computers and video projectors, his sculptures keep their eyes on you, record and react to your presence, even feel your pulse. In Pulse Room, 100 lightbulbs throb in unison with visitor's heartbeats. For People On People a sensor projects your moving image inside the shadow images of other visitors. Turn around and another participant's moving portrait is in the process of haunting your own shadow. Other installations invite you to engage in intimate social exchanges: conversing in real time with the voices of past visitors or sharing the secret inventory of what you keep in your pockets.

Manchester Art Gallery, Sat to 30 Jan

Robert Clark

Salvator Rosa, London

The 17th-century wild-child painter Salvator Rosa makes Caravaggio look like a choirboy. A proto-Romantic who was rumoured to have lived with a gang of roving thieves at one point, his paintings are renowned for such tantalisingly diabolical subjects as black sabbaths and bandits alongside flagrant cleric-baiting fare. This is the first major showing of his art in Britain in 37 years, and includes two of his most notorious works: Witches At Their Incantations, a shadowy phantasmagoria of unrelenting horrors, and his papal satire Allegory Of Fortune, depicting the ordinarily blindfolded figure bestowing her bounty open-eyed on an array of farmyard animals wearing cardinal red.

Dulwich Picture Gallery, SE21, to 28 Nov

SS

Liverpool Biennial

A sprawling mix-up of contemporary art from a vast range of sources, the Liverpool Biennial always fascinates for its sheer size. The John Moores Prize at the Walker, this year judged by a panel including Gary Hume and Alison Watt, aims to stress a

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continuing place for painting. The Bloomberg New Contemporaries, an insight into what creative insubordination today's art students are getting up to, is joined in the always impressive A Foundation spaces by what promise to be captivating installations from Sachiko Abe and Antti Laitinen. The central Tate show, Touched, concentrates on art of highly emotional effect with contributions from legendary provocateurs Magdalena Abakanowicz, Otto Muehl and Franz West.

Various venues, Sat to 28 Nov, biennial.com

RC

Hydrarchy, London

There's high seas adventure, political intrigue and fishy tales in this group show exploring the contested borders of the sea. Uriel Orlow's new installation The Yellow Fleet takes its inspiration from the extraordinary story of 14 cargo ships, the crews of which founded their own social system, including an Olympic games, while they were stranded for eight years on the Suez Canal following the six-day war in 1967. Social microcosms take a nasty turn in a video of Paul McCarthy's 1981 work Death Ship, where the scatalogically inclined performance artist plays tyrant captain. Diving into history's horrors, Mathieu K Abonnenc uses movie clips to chart slave trade voyages across the Atlantic with images of jungles and lost cities beneath the waves. And the sea becomes a site of libidinous fantasy in João Pedro Vale's Moby Dick-inspired curiosities, including whales teeth printed with sailor-on-sailor erotic imagery.

Gasworks, SE11, to 7 Nov

SS

Donald Judd/Kitagawa Utamaro, Birmingham

American sculptor Donald Judd was a master of geometric minimalism. His sculpture, reduced to its most essential elements, attained an almost unprecedented purity of abstract form. When he turned his hand to the furniture exhibited here, he retained the aesthetic rigour of his sculptures. The shelves and tables could fit well within modernist architecture, yet his beds and chairs pay little attention to the organic curves of the human body. In contrast, the woodblock prints of the 18th-century Japanese artist Kitagawa Utamaro are surely some of the sexiest images of all time. Utamaro knew how to seduce the eye: those unforgettable little white toes curled so beautifully in orgasm glimpsed amid rhythmical swathes of exquisite fabrics.

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Ikon, Wed to 14 Nov

RC

Anna Parkina, Southend-on-Sea

There's a beguiling dynamism to Russian artist Anna Parkina's works. Urban life is filtered through collages of inky works reminiscent of Raymond Pettibon, magazine cut-outs, photocopies and paint. Everything from TVs, guitars and Hitchcockian birds through to fashion imagery, traffic and the facades of cheap new building developments have thrummed across her canvases. Rather than the raucous information overload that might suggest, Parkina invites new ways of seeing, arranging her material with an offbeat rhythm that it's easy to slip into. She's also a publisher of one-off artist's books and the works on show here are centred on her latest tome, Birjulevo, inspired by the Moscow suburb. In addition to a new video, there's research material and sketches relating to the book that re-imagines the everyday grind, from travelling on the metro to street arguments, as a mysterious transformative ritual.

Focal Point, Mon to 6 Nov

SS

Ground Level/No Such Place, Derby

Contemporary artists turn into experimental cartographers in Ground Level, an exhibition that stresses the role map-making plays in determining our overall worldview. The artists here, including Stephen Willats, Maria Theresa Alves and The Atlas Group, break the rules, pose awkward questions and lead us astray, revealing maps less as objective diagrams of truth than highly culturally and politically specific perspectives on global control and possibility. In No Such Place, Cathy Haines uncovers the history of "imaginary maps": from early maps of unchartered territories featuring mythical beasts to a blueprint for straightening the Thames.

QUAD, Ground Level from Sat to 31 Oct; No Such Place from Sat to 14 Oct

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