

## GALLERY 4

**THIS GALLERY CONTAINS SEXUAL IMAGERY**

**Tom Burr** uses photography, objects and sculpture in his installations. His work often borrows from art history, particularly the visual language of Minimalism. The collage of black and white photographs in **White Bulletin Board (Beyond Repair)** shows details of Puritan homes and churches typical of the Neo-Classical architecture seen in American New England and the US in general. The objects and title of **This Drinking Alone (The Deep Intoxication Series)** suggest the aftermath of a decadent lifestyle or born from a desire to escape daily reality. Like the buildings in the photographs, these sculptures appear controlled and restrained. They are architectural but also human-like in form.

The two photographs by **Nobuyoshi Araki** show women tied up and restrained by the Japanese art of erotic rope-tying known as Kinbaku (meaning to bind tightly) or Nawa Shibari (to tie rope). These elaborate and theatrically-

staged images reference the aggressive nature of the voyeuristic gaze as well as ideas of control, repression and power, themes that run throughout this exhibition.

*This guide is intended as an introduction to the exhibition. Please feel free to ask a Steward any questions you have.*

*There is more information in the Reading Room on the Second Floor which is open every day 12.00 - 6.00pm*

*A catalogue is available in Arnolfini Bookshop price £6.95*

*A free Family Pack is available from Arnolfini reception.*

*An interview about Pale Carnage with curator Martin Clark can be downloaded from Arnolfini's website.*



Introduction  
to the  
exhibition

**Pale Carnage**  
**17 February - 15 April 2007**  
**Galleries 2,3 and 4**

PALE CARNAGE brings together work by 12 artists. Many of them take inspiration from the culture and history of the late 19th and early 20th Centuries, a time when modernism was emerging, bringing with it great artistic experimentation and cultural advances. Some of the artists in this exhibition revisit the aesthetic sensibilities of the time. Others make work that draws heavily on the period's rich cultural legacy.

Many of the works subtly explore the darker side of early modernist thinking, in particular addressing the relationship between Classicism and Modernism and its unsettling association with Fascism. In so doing, the works explore themes of cruelty, desire, beauty, decadence, voyeurism and violence.

The title of the exhibition is taken from a poem by Ezra Pound (*April*, 1913). Pound - a poet, musician and critic - was

a key figure of the time and was once described as 'the centre of modernism'.

## GALLERY 3

In the centre of this gallery is **IN THE DEAD OF NIGHT WHEN EVERYTHING SLEEPS** by **Lothar Hempel**. Several large plinths support a number of puppet-like musicians that appear to process across the gallery, as if taking part in a parade, carnival or theatrical production. The photographs attached to the plinths are of artifacts found near the Parthenon in Greece, one of which also has a superimposed image of a dancer. The combination of objects and styles, ancient and modern, suggests the eclectic forms of a dream. Like much of the work in this gallery, it also feels theatrical.

**Ulla von Brandenburg's** large black and white wall painting, **SZENE II**, is based on an image taken from a

production of a play by the Belgian Symbolist playwright Maurice Maeterlinck (1862 – 1949). This artwork is like a backdrop for other works in this gallery. Maeterlinck made much of his work during a period of cultural transition of the late 19th century into modernity, known as the fin de siècle. Von Brandenburg's other work **REITER** (meaning Knight), projected on the opposite wall presents a tableau vivant (meaning 'living picture'). Once a popular form of entertainment, costumed actors would pose, silent and motionless as if in a picture. This contemporary recreation depicts a tense and unsettling scene. As in Hempel's mysterious carnival, there is an ominous sense that something might be about to happen.

**Steven Claydon's GRAZING DEFLATION** could be the bust of a famous historical figure. Like Hempel's overlapping photographic images behind, this sculpture is formed from a combination of things: features from different people and materials from different sources. All four of his works here combine carefully selected materials and substances. They appear part-classical and part science fictional.

The materials used in **PERIODIC TABLE (VALKONIAN SOLUTIONS FOR VALKONIAN PROBLEMS)** are chemical substances, painted and arranged as though in a version of the Periodic Table. Like the wall hangings to the left, the materials and imagery are mysterious, perhaps relics from an unknown civilisation or even another

reality. In fact, the gold sheets are made of Mylar, developed by NASA and now available as 'space blankets', for keeping people warm in emergencies.

**Gillian Carnegie's** painting **YELLOW WALL** appears to be a simple abstract monochrome. However the thick impasto surface reveals a landscape scene. This work is deliberately hung alongside **KALVIN**, a completely different style of painting, for easy comparison. Viewers can easily shift their gaze between the two. Like von Brandenburg's interest in moments of cultural transition, Carnegie's side-by-side placing of these works seems to be emphasising changes, differences and shifts.

Like Claydon, **Dirk Stewen's** work uses carefully chosen and manipulated materials. The black rectangles are made from photographic paper with a layer of dark ink. The ink reacts with the surface of the paper creating fluid and organic patterns. They are embroidered with coloured thread and bits of confetti. The framed pieces on either side contain pages from old books on painting with their colour reproductions torn out, leaving only the description of what was once there. Photographs (present and absent), photographic paper, confetti and faded books are all associated with the attempt to record the passing of time. The inscription on the left hand book translates as: 'The picture itself has been destroyed, only this reproduction remains.'

**Aida Ruilova's** short film **BEAT AND PERV** creates a disturbing, uncanny atmosphere that is strangely familiar yet steeped in obscure symbolism. What might these noises and actions mean? Surrounded by the stillness and control of other artworks, this video offers a different take on the uncanny.

## GALLERY 2

The work of **Athanasios Argianas** is influenced by the decorative arts of the 1930s, modernist literature and poetry as well as the structures of music and songs. **LYRICAL MACHINE** and **SONG MACHINE NO 6** could also be seen as models for public monuments. In his paintings Argianas alludes to complex mathematical and musical structures but these systems are often disrupted by the appearance of nature. In **THE SINGER SERIES** he has painstakingly rendered the braided hair of a group of anonymous women. Like many of the works in **PALE CARNAGE**, these works provoke feelings of precision and control.

In **Cerith Wyn Evans' work A SHORT HISTORY OF THE SHADOW BY VICTOR I STOICHITA** a monitor displays text taken from the book of the same name; a cultural history of the shadow in art and cinema. Wyn Evans has translated the text into Morse Code using a computer program, which in turn controls a modernist looking lamp which flashes it out eerily into the gallery letter by letter. The text being communicated in code can also be read on the screen. This work plays with light and dark,

as materials, as an experience and as subject matter.

Combining light and dark in a different way, **J D Williams's** work on the far wall uses a repeated motif in many different combinations. The drawings are made with black boot polish rubbed into thin, hole-punched paper. The paper has become ripped in places from the excessive drawing. The motif is taken from a shape the artist found in the corner of a drawing by the French playwright and poet Antonin Artaud (1896 – 1948). Together the drawings appear like stills from an early experimental film, or perhaps large photographic negatives.

**Mark Leckey's** film **PARADE** creates a Romantic 19th century atmosphere in a contemporary London setting. A shadowy figure journeys through a dreamlike world of collaged streetscapes and glossy surfaces ending up in the midst of opulent, decadent grandeur. These are dark, menacing places where the main character is detached and isolated from his surroundings. This conjures up ideas of the Dandy or Flaneur, a fashion conscious, privileged individual, idly drifting around the city. JD Williams's other work, a print, shows another dandy-like figure. The figure is John Strachey, a translator of Sigmund Freud's writings.