

In-A-Gadda-Da-Vida

Angus Fairhurst, Damien Hirst and Sarah Lucas

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Tate Britain

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Notes for Teachers, GCSE and AS/A2 students

by Angie MacDonald



Angus Fairhurst, *A Couple of Differences Between Thinking and Feeling (Solo)* 2002

© the artist courtesy Sadie Coles HQ

Essential information for schools before planning your visit

Please be aware that this exhibition contains some challenging material of a sexual nature. We advise teachers to make a preliminary visit to the exhibition before bringing students, to decide whether or not it would be suitable.

Changes were made to the exhibition right up to the last moment. Be sure to pick up a ground plan and up-to-date list of exhibits before you go in,

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Introduction

In-A-Gadda-Da-Vida is a collaboration between three of Britain's best-known contemporary artists. Angus Fairhurst, Damien Hirst and Sarah Lucas have worked together to create a full-scale exhibition installation that could be described as an excessive landscape.

'For this exhibition, the artists have created a vision of paradise which deviates from clichéd associations with natural beauty. Run riot at the corners, this is not a place of serenity. An encroaching tabloid media and cheap commercial strategies make up its surroundings while at the centre lies sex, death and destruction, as might be said of the original Garden of Eden'
Gregor Muir, exhibition curator.

How do we approach *In-A-Gadda-Da-Vida*?

This exhibition provides an excellent opportunity for students to consider the work of three contemporary British artists and to consider the Brit Art phenomenon and the role of art in today's world. It is an exciting and thought-provoking exhibition and could connect to a wide range of project work. You can draw out issues in art both past and present by making comparisons between works of historic and modern art from the Tate Collection and work in *In-A-Gadda-Da-Vida*. Links could also be made to previous Turner Prize exhibitions.

This pack is for teachers and for GCSE and AS/A2 students. It aims to provide:

- information about the exhibition
- suggestions of themes and issues to discuss
- information on resources available
- information on each of the three artists
- a "key work" focus for each artist which you can photocopy to use in the exhibition

In-A-Gadda-Da-Vida: some facts and questions

Why is it called *In-A-Gadda-Da-Vida*?

The title is taken from the 1968 recording by the American psychedelic rock band Iron Butterfly and is a reference to the biblical theme of the Garden of Eden. Apparently the lead singer Doug Ingle was so drunk at the time of composing the song that was intended to be called 'In the Garden of Eden', that the phonetically slurred version was noted down and subsequently used. This exhibition uses the title as a setting in which to explore themes of life, love, sex, death and destruction. Visitors are challenged to consider whether there is any possibility of a Garden of Eden or whether we are in some sort of everyday hell.

What sort of works will you see?

The exhibition is described as an installation and has been planned and conceived as a complete work in itself. It includes well-known works by all three artists as well as major new works created especially for the exhibition. The range of media, materials and processes is striking - it includes paintings, sculptures, installations, text-based work, assemblages and photographic work. You can stop at a pond, consider ordering a pizza, worship dead flies, wander through woodland with exotic butterflies or come face to face with overprinted newspaper headlines. You will also find Zeppelins, candy covered pigs, a dilapidated truck and bronze gorillas.

Why these three artists?

This exhibition is, essentially, a celebration of the friendship of the three artists Angus Fairhurst, Damien Hirst and Sarah Lucas. Apparently Lucas was invited to have a solo show at Tate Britain but she declined requesting instead that a three-way collaboration between herself, Fairhurst, and Hirst was considered. Lucas says, 'this is more experimental. More mental. And physical. It's about maintaining a level of excitement. It's a conversation I've been waiting to have a long time....'

The three have known each other for over 17 years. They first met as students at Goldsmiths College in South London in 1986. They first exhibited together in *Freeze*, an exhibition curated by Hirst in 1988. Fairhurst has collaborated directly with both Lucas and Hirst before. Fairhurst and Hirst even shared a studio for a while in Bermondsey, and in 1995 Lucas and Fairhurst took a studio together in Clerkenwell, London. However, this is the first time that they have all three worked collaboratively.

Having known each other a very long time - what do these artists have in common? It is interesting to consider their shared interests and common themes. And this is a unique exhibition - unlike a solo or group show, the works you see have been created, selected and installed with this collaboration in mind. Despite this, each artist still stands apart as they pursue their own artistic enquiry and at times there seems to be little or no connection between them.

What is Brit Art?

Fairhurst, Hirst and Lucas are all associated with the phenomenon of YBA (Young British Artists) and the Brit Art scene of the 1990s. The generation known as Young British Artists were born between the mid 1960s and the 1970s and emerged from art schools in the late 1980s. Set against the backdrop of Thatcher's Britain, major changes were taking place in these educational establishments and both teachers and students came together to consider contemporary life and culture. Goldsmiths College was at the forefront of these changes where teachers such as Jon Thompson, Richard Wentworth and Michael Craig-Martin encouraged critical debate and challenged traditional divisions between departments such as painting, sculpture and photography.

How and when did it start?

The YBAs challenged the complacency of the establishment and looked for alternative ways to present and exhibit their art. Their work made use of a diverse range of materials, including found objects and ready-mades, using quotation and deconstruction to express what they felt about contemporary culture. These artists used their work to address social issues and taboo subjects and consequently received much press attention. With an air of optimism and self-confidence they worked collectively to promote themselves. While still at college, Hirst organised the Freeze exhibition in 1988 in a Dockland warehouse. This show included his work and the work of his Goldsmiths contemporaries and is usually considered the start of the Brit Art scene. Others in the Freeze exhibition included now well known artists such as Angela Bulloch, Mat Collishaw, Ian Davenport, Tracey Emin, Anya Gallaccio, Gary Hume, Michael Landy, Simon Patterson, Fiona Rae, Sam Taylor-Wood and Gillian Wearing.

How artists and galleries worked together

New spaces and galleries provided the exposure for the Brit Art generation. Fairhurst, Hirst and Lucas have all been involved in unusual ways to promote and exhibit their art. They have all exhibited independently at Jay Jopling's legendary gallery, White Cube. Jopling remains Hirst's dealer while Lucas and Fairhurst are with Sadie Coles HQ in London. They have also taken part in group shows such as Brilliant! New Art From London at the Walker Arts Center, Minneapolis in 1995.

The collector Charles Saatchi has played a key role in the Brit Art scene. He converted an old paint factory into a gallery in north London to show his collection of mainly young and unknown artists. Saatchi bought up graduating students' work and held onto it until its value increased, thereby promoting the status of the YBAs. London rapidly became the centre of the international art world in the 1990s. Artists such as Tracy Emin and Damien Hirst achieved celebrity status. In 1997 the Royal Academy of Arts staged the exhibition Sensation providing a survey of work by Saatchi's artists. Today The Saatchi Collection is sited permanently on London's South Bank.

The opening of Tate Modern in 2000 has often been described as the culmination of the Brit Art scene with many of these artists now included within the Tate Collection. In 2004 it is interesting

to reflect on the Brit Art phenomenon and consider, with the help of this exhibition, where these artists are now and what their work has to say about art and life today. Visit this exhibition and decide for yourself!

Some general questions to consider in the exhibition

- What do these three artists seem to be interested in? (You could make a list)
- What sorts of materials and techniques do they work with? Do you think that art can be made of anything?
- Why do you think they use so many ordinary everyday objects and materials? How do they transform them?
- What do you think is the difference between two objects made of the same material, one of which has an everyday function while the other is declared art?
- Many of the works have quite elaborate or dramatic titles. Why do you think this is?
- Can you find any works that make you smile or laugh? If so why do you find it/them humorous?
- The title In-A-Gadda-Da-Vida is taken from a song by the rock band Iron Butterfly. It refers to the idea of the Garden of Eden. Why do you think this title was chosen? Do you think it is appropriate? Can you think of a better title?
- These artists worked together to create what they describe as an 'exhibition installation'. How do you feel in this space?
- Why do you think some of the works are so large?
- Why do you think these artists have designed wallpaper?
- Why do you think they make so many direct references to the media?
- Although these artists share many common interests and ways of working their art is very distinct. Can you see differences and well as similarities in their work? (Again, you could make a list)
- What does this exhibition tell you about values within society today?

Some questions to consider when looking at individual works in the exhibition

- What are your immediate reactions to the work?
- What does it make you think of?
- What materials has the artist used?
- How do you think the work has been made?
- What is it called? Does the title change your first ideas about the work?
- Where is the work and what is next to it? Do you think its site is important to the meaning of the work?
- What particular issues or themes does the artist seem concerned with?
- How does it relate to the theme of the Garden of Eden?
- Does it have an emotional impact?
- Does it make you consider aspects of life or art in a new way?

Themes and issues to explore

In-A-Gadda-Da-Vida raises a number of key themes and issues. Use this section to focus discussion and debate. Students could be split into small groups and given two or three themes/issues to investigate.

The Garden of Eden

Fairhurst, Hirst and Lucas invite us to explore ideas about the Garden of Eden. By referring to the phrase 'In-A-Gadda-Da-Vida' we are already presented with a confused and distorted idea of this garden of paradise. What does the Garden of Eden mean to you? Most cultures have a version of a golden past - a beautiful place where Adam and Eve live in harmony until they eat the forbidden fruit and are cast out of paradise. Many artists have been fascinated by ideas of an earthly paradise and also by Adam and Eve's fall from grace and have created visions of the sinners' suffering.

Even within the Christian tradition there are many interpretations of the Genesis story. Eden is not just the story of original sin and the fall of man but a metaphor for the birth of consciousness, thought and self-determination. You could say the story of Eden has been interpreted according to different attitudes to gender, sexuality, self-knowledge and self-control.

Questions to ask of the exhibition

- What vision of paradise do these artists create with their installation?
- How does it deviate from more usual associations with natural beauty?
- Why do you think visitors encounter a pond early on?
- Are there areas of the exhibition that appear quite like your idea of Eden?
- Are there sections that are unpleasant, far from paradise?
- Why do we see exotic butterflies, candy covered pigs and huge gorillas?
- How does this vision of Eden reflect on the world we live in?

You might like to consider other artists who have explored the theme of Eden. For example Hieronymus Bosch, Masaccio, Michelangelo, William Blake, J.M.W. Turner and John Martin.

The found/ready-made object

One of the hallmarks of the Brit Art generation is their use of quotidian (everyday) objects or ready-mades to great effect. A ready-made is an object/work that has not been made by the artist. Often a ready-made is an object that has a particular function or meaning that has been changed because the artist has placed it in a new situation.

Within the history of art, the ready-made has a specific context. Almost a century ago, the artist Marcel Duchamp [1887-1968], placed 'ready-made' stools, shovels, bottle racks, bicycle wheels and urinals in an art space. Duchamp was challenging the whole idea of the artist as the maker. He was also questioning the point at which meaning is placed on an object. For Duchamp context was everything. Duchamp's legacy is still with us and many contemporary artists play with the idea of the ready-made.

For discussion

- Can you find examples where these artists have appropriated an ordinary object and transformed it in some way?

Throwaway materials

Not only do these artists use ready-mades in their work but they deliberately choose ordinary everyday objects and materials which they collage together to create something new and startling. They clearly enjoy transforming disposable low-ranking materials and challenging conventional ideas of high art and aesthetic value.

This exhibition not only carries on the tradition of Duchamp but also the possibilities of collage recognised by pioneers such as Kurt Schwitters [1887-1948]. Hirst has described collage as the greatest idea of the 20th century. For these artists, the bric-a-brac of everyday life becomes a revelation. For example, Lucas uses cigarettes and tabloid imagery while Hirst has a fascination with toys and gimmicks. Furthermore the collaborative character of this exhibition is in itself a form of collage.

For discussion

- What sorts of throwaway materials can you see in the works? How have they been used and transformed?

Transformation and metaphor

Through a process of transformation, subtle alterations and juxtapositions of every day objects these artists question the way we perceive the world around us. They play with the meaning of objects suggesting that meanings are not always as fixed as we think. They also explore the symbolic value of objects. Very basic things such as cigarettes, pills and cartoon gorillas are offered up as though they hold the promise of revelation. We are reminded of Picasso's famous Bull's Head of 1942 composed from discarded handlebars and a bicycle seat. As Lucas explains, 'In a way it's just concrete stuff, ordinary stuff, ordinary stuff made up of ordinary materials in that way that it is just what it is, say it's a table or whatever. But in another way, it's pure magic; there's suddenly this object there' (exhibition catalogue).

For discussion

- Which 'transformations' do you like best in this exhibition?
- Can you find examples where objects are being used for their symbolic rather than functional value?

Appropriation and links with other artists

All three artists seem to have quite a relaxed approach to appropriating ideas, images and materials. They all reference high and low culture and the historic and contemporary. For example, Lucas is quite happy to combine commonplace objects, or appropriate the language of tabloid newspapers to create humorous installations while Fairhurst takes imagery from glossy

magazines and advertisements. In his recent work, Damien Hirst makes specific references to paintings by Francis Bacon. Influences on the artists' work include Minimalism's insistence on pure/basic sculptural forms (especially Hirst), Conceptual art's insistence on giving priority to an idea, Arte Povera's use of poor, scrap materials and the way Pop artists appropriated imagery from advertising and commercial graphics.

For discussion

- What do you think about artists appropriating material from other sources and often intended for very different contexts?
- What do you think of artists quoting the work of past artists? Who should be considered the author of such work?

Extravagant titles

All three artists have a liking for extravagant, dreamlike and whimsical titles. Some of their titles seem deliberately naive or disingenuous while others are expressive or funny. They use titles to add another layer to the meaning of the work - a new twist to surprise or confuse us. Their titles make reference to, for example, jokes, the work of other artists or music.

For discussion

- What do you think about the way these artists use titles?
- Which is your favourite title?

Humour and language

All three artists use humour in their work. They enjoy using linguistic and visual puns as well as playing with unusual juxtapositions. Their work seems to combine the Surrealist sense of the bizarre with a particularly English strain of humour reminiscent of the comedy of Peter Sellers, Tony Hancock and Monty Python. They are fascinated with the power of humour and the ability of a joke to somehow reveal a parallel world - an ambiguity. As Gregor Muir writes in the catalogue, 'All three enjoy unearthing something in a joke - be it a feeling, an object, or the way it's told - and this often proves inspirational.'

Their work is also characterised by a particular strain of dark humour that is usually hinted at both in the work and its title. They seem to relish the way ideas of sex and death come together in your average sick joke. As Hirst says, 'I think a joke's like art; it's like water. It's got to be able to go everywhere.'

For discussion

- Can you find examples in the exhibition that you find humorous?
- Can you find examples where the title adds a joke/double meaning to the work?

Globalisation

Much of the subject matter in this exhibition critiques the values of 21st century culture. In

particular, these artists show an interest in the theme of globalisation in their recent work. They are critical of mass consumerism especially the world of advertising and fast food. They make the point as Hirst says that 'the people in the business who have the most control are the furthest away from creativity'. They also highlight the irony of the fact that while we constantly challenge the value of art we are content to 'consume' and surround ourselves with possessions whose value is far removed from their material reality. These artists use shock and crudeness partly to challenge the apathy and deadness of consumer culture. Hirst states dramatically, 'the tragedy of the world is that the good can't be bothered and the bad can'.

For discussion

- Can you find works in the exhibition that refer directly to consumerism and/or the globalisation of culture? If so what do you think the artist is trying to say?

Death - paradise lost

The uncertainty of existence and our constant desire to find meaning is at the centre of this exhibition. The links between sin and mortality are suggested in this Garden of Eden. The themes of death, loss and melancholy are explored in works such as Fairhurst's Mnemonic Table 1996-2004 or Hirst's Adam and Eve Towards the End 2004. It is as if they want to hint that the Tree Of Life may not prove to be the gateway to immortal life but in fact leads to irrevocable death. Or as Tate curator, Clarrie Wallis, writes in the exhibition catalogue, '...the work is also an examination of the ironies, falsehoods and desires that help us negotiate our own path through alienation towards the inevitability of death.'

For discussion

- Why do you think these artists are interested in the theme of death?
- Can you find examples where a sense of loss or a feeling of sadness is suggested?

The crucifixion

Two of the artists present interpretations of the theme of the crucifixion. See Lucas's Christ, You Know It Ain't Easy 2003 and Hirst's The Pursuit of Oblivion 2004. Explore the different ways they reference more traditional images of the crucifixion. Hirst refers to paintings by Francis Bacon while Lucas's title refers to the Beatles 1969 recording 'A Ballad for John and Yoko'.

For discussion

- How does each artist approach the subject of the crucifixion?
- What does each say about the suffering of Christ?
- Why do you think they have included these works within their 'Garden of Eden'?
- What does each one say about contemporary life?

Wallpapered paradise

The themes of this exhibition are set against a backdrop of wallpapers created by each artist. Hirst has created a psychedelic landscape with his Butterfly Wallpaper 2003, Lucas has enlarged

pizza delivery leaflets with her Pizza Wallpaper 2004 and Fairhurst has created a distorted, out-of-focus woodland setting with his Underdone/Overdone Wallpaper 2004.

For discussion

- Why do you think each artist has created a wallpaper setting?
- How does each wallpaper function as a setting within 'The Garden of Eden'?
- How does each wallpaper reveal these artists' differing approaches to making art?

Angus Fairhurst

Angus Fairhurst was born in Penbury, Kent in 1966. He studied at Canterbury Art College (1985-6) before moving to Goldsmiths College, from which he graduated in 1989. Fairhurst emerged as an influential figure in the group of young British artists who came to prominence in the 1990s. He has exhibited widely in group shows and was included in *Apocalypse* at the Royal Academy, London in 2000. Recent solo exhibitions include those at the Spacex Gallery, Exeter, UK and the Kunsthalle, St Gallen, Switzerland, both in 2001. Fairhurst lives and works in London.

Key work in focus

One Year of the News (1st January - 31 December 2003) 2004

Inkjet paper newspapers, 6 newspapers x 52 weeks

316 x 1976 cm

This work consists of a year's supply of the front page of six newspapers that have been photocopied on top of each other so that each of the 312 panels represents one week of the news. Through this process the graphic quality of the 'Front Page' becomes obscured to the point where the image starts to degenerate or break down. The news, or more generally time and experience, has been literally compressed.

Things to think about

Disintegration

Much of Fairhurst's work revolves around a sense of collapse - of disintegration of form. His recent billboards works, which involve complex images, are constructed by combining a number of advertisements, which have previously been dissected, and had their body and text removed. See for example, *Five Billboards, Body and Text Removed* 2003 and *Billboard, Everything but the Outline Blacked-in* 2003. Fairhurst says 'keep adding until you can't add anything else. Take everything away until there is nothing left.' And he is interested in how out of this disintegration renewal takes shape.

'I'm interested in how far you can push something until it's completely destroyed, because I think it's not just destruction - you're making something else. There is a transformation in this process of over layering and over gilding the lily...' (Angus Fairhurst, October 2002).

Repetition

Fairhurst uses repetition. He is fascinated with the idea of entropy through repetition and conversely the notion of endlessness through mass production. Look at the way he repeats, overlays and distorts images creating visual conundrums that we have to try and sort out. His *Underdone/Overdone Wallpaper* 2004 is a distorted, multi-layered woodland setting. Consider also the way he repeats motifs, such as the gorilla, in different works re-inventing them each time.

The consumer image

Many of Fairhurst's works explore and expose elements of consumer culture either through materials or references made. He appropriates found images such as billboard advertisements, cheap postcards or newspapers, manipulating and transforming them through addition, reduction and repetition. His aim is to underline how meanings are worn out by mass commercialisation. The more advertisers try to channel a central message the more it is reduced to nothing. Fairhurst's appropriation of the controversial advertisement for Opium in which the model Sophie Dahl poses wearing nothing but gold stilettos demonstrates how he can transform an image into something much more fascinating than the original. *Stand Still and Rot* 1997-2004 is more direct in its criticism of our apathy in the face of mass consumerism. Fairhurst shares and develops attitudes to consumerism found in the work of Andy Warhol and Michael Landy.

Worn out jokes

Fairhurst's work is often humorous. He uses the comic device as a means of expressing his fascination with repetition - rather like a much-used punch line of an over-told joke. The best example of this is the banana skin which seems to appear as a reminder of a tiresome joke that nevertheless manages to amuse. See, for example, his 9 feet long peeled bronze banana titled *Undone* 2003.

Melancholy

Some of Fairhurst's work is informed by a bleaker humour and a desire to state something that does not reduce the realities of pain, loss and death. Included in this exhibition are works that hint at a paradise lost rather than an eventual Eden. See for example, *Mnemonic Table* 1996-2004 which is being slowly engulfed by ivy and other plants, or his neon *Stand Still and Rot* 1997-2004.

The gorilla motif

Since 1993 Fairhurst has used the motif of the gorilla in a number of works. He started by developing drawings and cartoons exploring the gorilla's potential to convey human attributes. A gorilla suit began to stand in for a 'kind of everyman' as seen in works such as *Pietà* 1996. More recent works struggle with the boundary between man and beast and place the gorilla in absurd situations. For example, *A Couple of Differences between Thinking and Feeling II* 2003 shows the gorilla contemplating a missing arm on the floor while in *The Birth of Consistency* 2004 the gorilla is captivated or confused by his own reflection. Fairhurst's gorilla could be a cynical dig at

Darwinism.

Distance

Fairhurst's work seems to encapsulate a sense of distance. It is as if he is saying something and denying it at the same time. As Lucas says 'There's a distance inside Angus that never diminishes. While Damien's right up in your face.' It is interesting to compare Hirst and Fairhurst's different approaches to dealing with similar subjects.

Damien Hirst



Devotion 2003 © the artist Courtesy Jay Jopling/White Cube
Photo: Stephen White

Damien Hirst was born in Bristol in 1965 and graduated from Goldsmiths in 1989. In 1988 he curated the legendary Freeze exhibition in London's Docklands, which showcased his own work and that of fellow students. He was subsequently acknowledged as the leading figure in the celebrated group of British artists who emerged in the 1990s. He has gone on to exhibit across the world and was awarded the Turner Prize in 1995. His recent exhibition at White Cube London was his first solo show in Britain for eight years. He lives and works in London, Devon and Gloucestershire.

Key work in focus

Adam and Eve Towards the End 2004

Glass and stainless steel vitrine and mixed media

221.1 x 427 x 121 cm

In this double vitrine the floor of the outer area is strewn with a selection of broken toys and the inner section is divided into two equal but separate spaces full of relics. Adam and Eve are absent but each is represented by a piece of furniture and a selection of objects. It is up to the viewer to create an image of the people from their possessions.

The broken toys are suggestive of a lost 'childlike innocence' while the objects within the inner section, which include a false arm and walking stick, highlight the fragility of the human body and the ageing process. The work as a whole seems to symbolise loneliness and isolation and evokes both the pain and comfort of memory and the acceptance that everything in nature surrenders to the passage of time.

Things to think about

Belief systems

Much of Hirst's recent work explores religious themes and challenges us to think about our own beliefs. This exhibition includes two works examining Adam and Eve's fall from grace and his butterfly paintings have titles such as Forgiveness, Redemption or Salvation.

Hirst is fascinated by our obsession with medicine and our belief that science can make us better. He says that *Standing Alone on the Precipice and Overlooking the Arctic Wastelands of Pure Terror* 1999-2000, which houses 18,000 individual pills, confronts our impossible desire to thwart disease and death - 'to be immortal for a while'.

The fragility of life

Hirst is constantly reminding us of how fragile and transient life is. You could describe much of his works as modern day vanitas symbolising the fragility of life. For example, he refers to biological cycles and preserves dead animals. He lines up pills and he 'pins down' the ephemeral beauty of butterflies.

Death

Hirst has a fascination with mortality. Many of his works challenge society's reluctance to confront death. His use of dead animals and decaying flesh is intended to shock through 'realness' or vividness. His works often display a morbid humour reinforced by his elaborate titles. Hirst seems to ask why it is so shocking to think about death and decay. Why is death still such a taboo subject?

Real objects

Hirst uses a diverse range of media. In this exhibition there are vitrines, aquariums, paintings, sculptures and collages. With all his work he combines a formal logic with the symbolic value of objects. He systematically arranges the component parts such as pills, butterfly wings, instruments or toys. He takes objects from the real world and organises, controls and arranges them to create dramatic works. He talks of his desire for 'realism' and his work tries to close the gap between the world of representations (of images) and the real world. His work is always testing the boundaries as to what art can be.

Paradox of beauty and decay

Hirst's works often involve the sharp juxtaposition of attractive and repulsive things. He chooses beautiful butterflies and repellent flies, colourful fish and rotting flesh. It is as if he wants to combine heaven and hell in his work, reminding viewers of the paradox of beauty and decay - not even the beautiful are immortal. He is perhaps also using shock tactics to highlight the sense of alienation and deadness that he sees as endemic to contemporary urban culture.

See for example, *Black Sun* 2004, a huge circular black painting thickly encrusted with hundreds of dead flies which reminds one of what Francis Bacon once said 'here you are, existing for a second, brushed off like flies on a wall'.

'In the garden there are two Adams and two Eves - each of us has a double: there is something blooming and something breaking down, something building up and something falling away, something active and something hanging around in the background. And Innocence, which contains the seeds of its own destruction.'

(Damien Hirst, exhibition catalogue)

Makers and collectors

Hirst is interested in the complexities of making and collecting art. You could say his work challenges the idea that art history is a series of collectable and 'desirable' masterpieces. His elaborate pieces are often about containing or controlling fragile subject matter. They involve other people in their making and Hirst is famous for his use of assistants not only to assemble and install his work but also to make it. This exhibition has involved many other people and it took three weeks to install some of his larger works.

The Collector (Can't See the Wood from the Trees) 2004 suggests an obsessive Victorian who is so intent on looking through his microscope he fails to see the beauty around him. This work highlights the pathology of the compulsive collector, who in his desire to contain and order the world destroys what he most cherishes. It also hints at the darker side of desire and attachment.

Francis Bacon

Hirst is inspired by the paintings of Francis Bacon [1909-92] and his vitrines and tanks have been compared to the framing device often seen in Bacon's paintings. Hirst's monumental work *The Pursuit of Oblivion* 2004 makes direct reference to Bacon's work *Painting* 1946 where a crucified

body hangs like an animal carcass behind the figure of an executioner. In Hirst's work the body has become the bloody carcass of a cow making the connection between the crucifixion and the abattoir. Why not compare Hirst's work directly with Bacon's *Three Studies for Figures at the Base of a Crucifixion* c.1944 in room 24 of the Collection displays?

Sarah Lucas



Christ You Know It Ain't Easy (Detail) 2003

© the artist Courtesy Sadie Coles HQ

Sarah Lucas was born in 1962 in London, where she continues to live and work. She studied at Goldsmiths between 1984-7. Recent exhibitions include Temple of Bacchus (with Colin Lowe and Roddy Thompson) at Milton Keynes Gallery, 2003; Charlie George, Contemporary Fine Arts, Berlin, 2002; and The Pleasure Principle at the Freud Museum, London, in 2000. Lucas exhibited in the fiftieth Venice Biennale last year.

Key work in focus

Cnut 2004

Jesmonite sandwich, concrete figure, cigarette, paint, stainless steel toilet, plastic seat.

Sandwich: 60 x 244 190 cm

Figure: 87 x 102 x 43 cm

This work consists of a monumental raft-like sandwich on top of which is a concrete cast of a headless naked male, smoking a cigarette while sitting on the toilet. The edges resulting from the casting process have been left rough and unfinished and the figure is slumped. The pose of the figure references a photographic self-portrait by Fairhurst called *Stand Still and Rot* 1997.

Cnut, the old English spelling of Canute doubles up as a crude anagram. This work and its companion piece, *All We are Saying is Give Pizza a Chance* 2003 seem to comment on the process of corporate globalisation and how our everyday lives are affected by consumerism. It is as if the figure is resigned to the bombardment of mass consumerism, recognising, like King Canute, that he cannot stop the 'tidal wave of shit food that's engulfing the planet'.

Things to think about

Transforming ordinary things

Lucas manipulates materials. She assembles, collages and plays with visual ideas. You could say her work parodies the idea of the still life. Lucas's works are modern day still lives created out of throwaway materials, which have been transformed in simple but playful ways.

Appropriating the language of popular culture

By appropriating the attitudes, language and accessories of male working class culture - the tabloid pin-ups, beer, pubs, football, the St George Cross and smoking - and then turning them into art Lucas undermines old fashioned stereotypes.

Excessive consumerism

Lucas's new work makes reference to the excessive consumerism of today. She says 'I'm dipping into culture, pointing a finger; directing attention to what's there'. Her pizza delivery leaflets, a wasteful example of advertising, are transformed into a gigantic, dynamic wallpaper while *Spam Zeppelin* 2004 refers to processed food and product design.

Crude puns

Lucas is known for her use of crude linguistic and visual puns. In the early 1990s she began using furniture and food as substitutes for the human body - usually with crude genital puns. Explore the way her works use puns to suggest double and often humorous meanings. For example, *Spam Zeppelin* 2004 plays on the phrase 'spam javlin' which is slang for penis.

Confronting gender and class stereotypes

Much of Lucas's work has explored gender and class stereotypes, especially the objectification of the female body. Lucas returns to these themes in this exhibition with works such as *The Man Who Sold the World* 2004. She often combines tabloid culture with the readymade object to confront sexual stereotypes - highlighting the casual misogyny encountered in everyday life. Her work is often deliberately aggressive, blunt and 'masculine' in attitude and presentation.

Cigarettes

Lucas has an obsession with cigarettes as a material for art and she uses them in a lot of different ways. For Lucas, cigarettes are a means of independence, a rebel accessory as well as a phallic stand-in. She first started using cigarettes in her photographic self-portraits in an attempt to appear to be doing very little - by smoking a cigarette it looked as if she had time on her hands. Since then she has used the cigarette as a sculptural device as can be seen with *Christ, You Know it Ain't Easy* 2003 and *The Kiss* 2003. Her preferred brand for making work with is Marlboro, which she describes as the 'Coca-Cola of fags'.

Sex and death

Lucas explores the themes of sex and death with bluntness often foregrounding bodily functions and cravings and exploring contradictory feelings of desire and disgust, attraction and repulsion. Her areas of interest - the subconscious and in particular the co-existing drives towards both sex and death - were described by Sigmund Freud in the *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1920). Works such as *The Man Who Sold the World* 2004 with its wanking arm, suggest that sex is habitual - a pulse, going on all the time, while *The Stinker* 2003 introduces a darker undercurrent that hints at violence, abuse and sex tourism.

Lucas's obsession with cigarettes suggests a connection between smoking and sexually obsessive behaviour. Furthermore the fact that cigarettes combine pleasure with the knowledge of their harmful effect creates a tension which Lucas seems to enjoy. She says:

'There is this obsessive activity of me sticking all these cigarettes on the sculptures, and obsessive activity could be viewed as a form of masturbation. It is a form of sex, it does come from the same sort of drive, and there's so much satisfaction in it. When you make something completely covered in cigarettes and see it as solid it looks incredibly busy and it's a bit like sperm or genes under the microscope'

(Sarah Lucas, 2000, interview with James Putnam).

War

In Lucas's recent work she makes a number of references to politics and war. See for example; *Fuck the Egg Man* 2003, which includes media images of President Bush. She says *Unknown Soldier* 2003 is based on a photograph she saw of an ad hoc memorial to one of the soldiers killed in Iraq. 'I use fluorescent strips as a source of energy, i.e. penis; but also, in pieces relating to death, as a symbol of eternal life'.

Questionnaire

We would greatly appreciate it if you would fill in this brief questionnaire to help us develop our student and teachers' resources in the future

1 How helpful did you find the Notes for teachers? (please circle)

Excellent Very Helpful Helpful Satisfactory Unsatisfactory

2 How did you use it to support

a) your lesson planning

b) to guide you round the exhibition

c) the follow up to your exhibition visit

d) as additional material to the Tate Britain Teachers' kit (which gives ideas for planning and structuring a group visit to the gallery, and is on sale at £12.99 in Tate Britain shops. To order call 020 7887 8869/70)

e) other (please describe)

3 Please describe how you structured your exhibition visit

4 On average, how much time are you prepared to spend reading/working with your Notes for teachers?

5 What did you think of the level the notes were pitched at? (please circle)

Too High Just right Too Low

6. Do you have any suggestions for future developments of Notes for teachers?
