

ISSUE 56 JANUARY & FEBRUARY 2012 £5.00

# Art Review:

Contains 8% STANISLAW LEM; 5% ALEX HARTLEY;  
25% FLUORESCENT PANTONE 801; 1 PARTICLE PHYSICIST

A portrait of Theaster Gates, a Black man with a beard, wearing a dark blue shirt and a light-colored pith helmet. He is looking slightly to the right with a serious expression. The background is a solid orange-red color.

## Theaster GATES

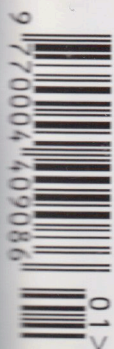
Anthropologist, urbanist, activist –  
the 21st-century artist

plus

LONDON REVIEWS MARATHON

1 day, 4 critics, 50+ exhibitions, the stuff of legend

EVE SUSSMAN & THE RUFUS CORPORATION







## KIMBER SMITH

Modern Art

Wow! Stuart Shave has a second exhibition that's actually an exhibition. Does he not understand that running a gallery in 2011 is all about throwing up various challenges to the nature of existence and being? Smith's show features works on paper (largely from the 1960s and 70s) that look as if they might be recording the interaction of biological cells or the paths of atomic particles (using a Feynmanesque notation). Others might describe it as an expressive semigeometric abstraction. But I'm the author of this. They're not.

## OMA/PROGRESS

Barbican Art Gallery

Curated by Brussels-based collective Rotor and housed in the rubble left behind by the previous exhibition at the Barbican, this is not so much a presentation of work by one of the most significant architectural practices (headed by Rem Koolhaas) of the past three decades as it is of the working practice of the office. Featuring everything from staff 'thoughts' (one employee, for example, maps the movement of his mouse during the course of a working day and then speculates that he might be better off being paid according to distance travelled), a live stream of the roughly 3.5 million images on the OMA server, a couple of lumpen objects that may or may not (no one knows) be or have been models or research from the practice archives (note to self: send photos of objects to Lewis), speculation about the past and future of museums and social housing, as well as documentation and anecdotes about the firm's

greatest hits – among them the Maison à Bordeaux, CCTV building in Beijing and Kunsthall Rotterdam (in which the full height of one passageway can never be repainted because of health and safety laws) – all aligned to the furiously optimistic (or depressing – the question is left open) sense of 'progress' throughout. You're left in no doubt that contemporary architecture is about the accumulation of data and the transfer of imagery (Koolhaas and Co work miracles using the aesthetic properties of various graphs). This is a far cry from Paul Noble and his pencil, but no less interesting for that.

## RYAN MCGINLEY: WANDERING COMMA

Alison Jacques Gallery

Ryan McGinley is big. In fact he's never been bigger. The seven photographs presented here are in the biggest format (280 x 183 cm) he's ever used. The imagery is kinda cheesy: *Dove* (2011) is a black-and-white print of a cross-armed woman, her breasts and her lips and a fluttering dove, like the perfect cover for a Prince single; *Purple Beacon* (2011) features the backs of a pair of youths in a purple sea waving flares at a purple sky. In general the works are incredibly calming – the kind of thing that a certain spa in Odessa should maybe think about buying to lift the mood. Indeed, perhaps that's what McGinley does best – capture a cool, calm, placeless vibe.

## GRANDMATERIA II

Gallery Libby Sellers

In a strange way, *Grandmateria II* picks up from and expands on where Andreas Blank (if you remember him from earlier – heh heh heh) left off: exploiting what a person who has read too many novels belonging to the fantasy genre might call a material 'alchemy' to shift our view of everyday objects and the everyday world. (Frodo, who wrote the press release for this show, refers to a philosopher's stone.) Stuart Haygarth's *Tail Light* (2011), for example, is a rather beautiful chandelier constructed out of the taillights of various vehicles. Fabien Cappello's *Brick Glass* (2010), a drinking glass melting onto a stem/stand comprising a single brick, describes a weird Venetian vernacular, and his *Christmas Tree Stool* (2010–11) recycles festive waste into beautiful furniture. Riffing on ecology, economy, technology, ontology and fantasy, a better conclusion to this day's adventure would be hard to find. So I'm not going to go looking.