

Carey-Kent, Paul, 'The London Art Fair for Beginners', FAD Magazine, 20 January 2016

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The London Art Fair for Beginners



Lucia Pizzani

Experienced visitors don't find it hard to navigate the London Art Fair, which is pretty consistent between years. But for newer visitors, here are the rules:

1. Proceed directly to the Projects Space on the 2nd floor, while your energy is at its peak. Here are the fresher artists and the more coherent shows by gallerists who have to present a curated booth rather than give a chance to all their artists. This year the 'Dialogues' sub-section, which pairs five UK with five foreign galleries, is particularly good. Then pick up a copy of the XL Catlin Guide of recent graduates.

2. Pop up to the Photo50 show just above the Projects. This year's 'Feminine Masculine' is well presented, and about 50% good.

3. Turn right out of the Projects entrance, passing a corridor of galleries on the way down to the 1st floor, but not bothering with any other 2nd floor galleries.

4. Spend your remaining available time on the first and finally ground floors. Here the booths can be distractingly crowded with people and works, and the fare is mixed: plenty is bad, but the 20th century British art is often good, and a reasonable proportion of the rest is worth a look.

That still leaves a lot to choose from. This year, though, you should be sure to see the following:

P17-21 The five pairs of galleries 'in dialogue'

P4 Kristin Hjellegarde

P6 dalla Rosa

P14 Grey Area

P30 White Conduit Projects

30a & b CHARLIE SMITH / Heike Strelowe

51 Patrick Heide

G3 Jessica Carlisle

Ground floor own space – Jerwood Gallery

As for individual artists, the following are my top ten with a qualification bar of showing at least four works of merit:

P14 grey area Guy Allot – paintings from the laboratory of art and the body

8 Piano Nobile John Armstrong –

underappreciated painter (1893-1973) from my home town, Hastings

P20a L'etranger Katie Cuddon – wittily traumatised communication difficulties in ceramic and works on paper

P18b NEST Joachim Coucke – sculptural meditation on virtual and real from the Belgian
17, 24, 25, 43 William Gear – Scot (1915 –97) on the up from his centenary touring show last year

29, 51, P30 Andy Harper – new and older work flowering well

P21b Division of labour [Jeremy Hutchinson](#) – the best performative photo-video combination

P12 Iniva [Eduardo Padilha](#) – Brazilian identity filtered through football and ceramics

P30 White Conduit Projects [Lucia Pizzani](#) – nice sub-project from the Venezuelan on the sexual politics of the orchid

50 Art First [Dolly Thompsett](#) – teeming paintings and, unusually, drawings



Joachim Coucke



About Paul Carey-Kent

Art critic and curator, based in Southampton. I write most regularly for Art Monthly, Frieze, The Art Newspaper, Border Crossings, STATE, Photomonitor, Art Critical, ArtLyst... and, of course, FAD - when I'm on the train to and from my job in London as a health and social care financial policy analyst.

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