

Time Out

London

LONDON'S WEEKLY LISTINGS BIBLE

DECEMBER 14 - 21 2005

No.1843 £2.50



Graham Hudson



'Je ne regrette rien...'

★★★★★

Rokeby West End

Junk assemblage is a century-old tradition and has become something of a game for connoisseurs. There's an enduring, seductive mystery in how two or three or, in this case, several dozen objects reverberate together – or don't. In his gallery-filling, boat-like piece of bricolage, Graham Hudson manages to make the conjunctions sing around half of the time. Illuminated light-bulbs dangle from the arms of a fig-

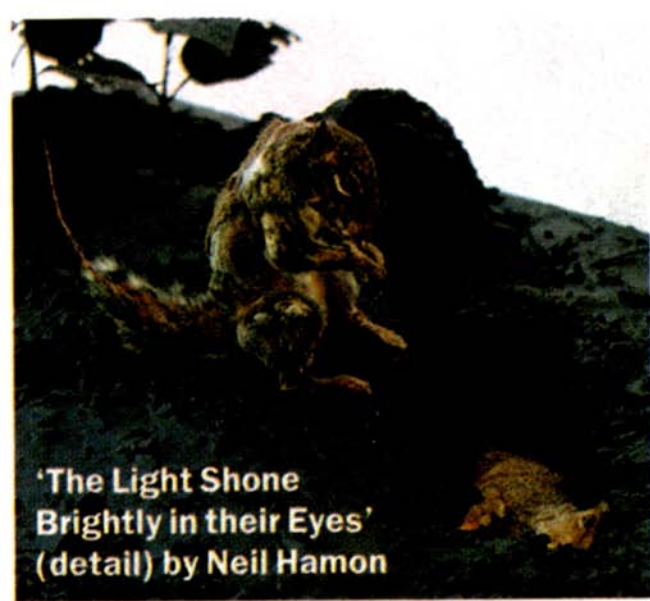
urehead (in the form of a shop mannequin) onto twin angled turntables. Intermittently striking the spinning vinyl, they make crackling refrains by Vera Lynn and Edith Piaf skip and intermingle. At the rear is a thrown-together fountain; purple liquid dribbles down a child's plastic sword into a bucket set on a hubcap in a blue garden pond. This amalgamation of bucolic, nostalgic and warlike signifiers makes you wonder to what extent this is a state-of-the-nation address.

But other arrangements show scant sensitivity to form or visual interest.

With the extremities curving out to meet the walls, Hudson's installation may be modelled on baroque painting, but he hasn't managed to create an experience that teems with comparable excitement.

Downstairs is a much simpler piece, a glowing commercial light-box rotating in a stately fashion on an L-bracket fixed to the wall – selling emptiness. Rather than employing overload, it suggests that Hudson's talent is for evoking it by means of simple oppositional gestures.

Martin Herbert



**'The Light Shone
Brightly in their Eyes'
(detail) by Neil Hamon**

'Larry's Cocktails'

Gagosian *West End*

Rather than putting on its own summer show, the Gagosian Gallery has handed over the keys of Heddon Street to the artist/curators David Ersser, Maria von Köhler and Sally Underwood. They've created an experience several shades darker than the blue-chip norm. In the window, they've installed a blinking neon sign that gives the show its title and suggests that the venue is a trashy cocktail joint. Inside, animals (staples of silly-season exhibitions) are ensnared by morbid imagina-

tions. Underwood's 'Pedigree' is a quivering polyurethane pug – a cross between a milk pudding and the buckets of skin that never fail to shock me as I walk past Smithfield market each morning. Taxidermy no longer seems alarming, but the creatures in Neil Hamon's woodland tableau are so badly stuffed that visceral half-life pervades over hermetically-sealed death. A rancid-looking, one-eyed rabbit, its spine poking through ravaged fur, sits on a blackened tree stump; dirty little mice survey a comparatively clean rat and a moth-eaten squirrel says goodbye to a little friend that is sinking into the ground. Disney it ain't.

By adding toy swords and scabbards, Graham Hudson has transformed a round-about horse into Pegasus. Dangling from long flexes, lightbulbs rest on record players so that Bach's 'Tocatta and Fugue in D Minor' (apparently from the soundtrack of Disney's 'Fantasia') becomes a weird scratch version, doomed never to get past the first few bars. The air of deliberate failure and Gothic miserablism may come from the fact that, in the orbit of the world's most powerful art dealer, the artists feel out-of-kilter, but it's the best show I've seen at Gagosian all year. *Martin Coomer*