

In the studio *Michael Samuels*



Michael Samuels's towering sculptural assemblages and wall works are made by cutting up and reconfiguring old Formica furniture. They explore the formal properties of landscape and architectural space, light and colour and construction and deconstruction. He is one of 20 artists nominated for this year's Jerwood Contemporary Painting Prize. His studio is in Hackney.

Painting Prize? I don't see any paint...

'That's true – I think it's more that I have a painterly approach. I make my sculptures in a very instinctive way, in how I choose the different colours and patterns of the Formica. I also include old standard lamps and LED lights, which is another way of using colour.'

You have a lot of work in here...

'These were all made in the past few months. I'm quite immediate when I start working and just get caught up in the building of them.'

You must get through a lot of tables – are you on eBay all day?

'I do use eBay but if there's a table in a colour I particularly want I use a sniping tool which ensures that your bid is placed in the last few seconds, so I don't spend hours at the computer.'

So what's the going rate?

'Anything between £5 and £100. They're cheaper if they're listed under "drop-leaf" rather than Formica.'

Formica is quite collectable – do you ever feel bad about chopping it up?

'It's all delivered to the studio so I'm not tempted to keep any. I like that the tables have a history which the sellers often tell you. If one turns out to be a wedding present, I don't have the heart to say that it's going straight under the circular saw.'

Interview Helen Sumpter

Michael Samuels's show 'Childstar' is at Rokeby from May 16-Jun 20 (see Soho to Hampstead listings)

Critics' choice Galleries

Angaza Afrika

October Gallery, Soho to Hampstead

A dozen African artists on show for the launch of a new book (see *Preview*).

Julian Schnabel

Robilant+Voena, Mayfair to Sloane Square

The king of overstatement shows calligraphic skill in berry-hued canvases.

Michael Samuels

Rokeby, Soho to Hampstead

Tables turned and hacked into colour-splashed sculpture (see *In the studio*).

Gregory Crewdson

White Cube, Mayfair to Sloane Square

You can't get more staged or atmospheric than these filmic stills.

Nigel Cooke

Stuart Shave Modern Art,

Soho to Hampstead

Museum-worthy show of urban degenerates by British painter.

Rokeby

020 7168 9942. 37 Store St, WC1E 7QF.

Ⓧ Tottenham Ct Rd. Tue-Fri 11am-6pm,
Sat 11am-4pm.

* **NEW Michael Samuels** May 16

▶ Jun 20. See *In the studio*

Special Focus: REVIEWS MARATHON, LONDON

DRAWINGS BY PAUL DAVIS

At ArtReview we're constantly pursued by galleries who want us to cover their latest shows. Sure, we know - your show is always the best in town. But to cover even a tenth of what we think is good would mean printing the magazine on microfiche! So to make it up to all those galleries (and building on our New York reviews marathon in February), we sent out our top critics to cover 103 shows in the space of a week in May. When we told our gallery friends what we were doing, they complained that covering every show in town would make the review of their's less special. As the late Johnny Cash once said, "You can't hardly win, can you?"

NORTH LONDON

CHARLES DARWENT

THE HUT PROJECT
Limoncello

MARTIAN MUSEUM OF
TERRESTRIAL ART
Barbican Art Gallery

PHILIP GURREY
Madder 139

ALVIN LANGDON COBURN &
JANE ENGLAND
Ancient & Modern

YURI MASNYJ
Sutton Lane

TAMY BEN-TOR
Brown

THROUGH A GLASS, DARKLY
Kenny Schachter ROVE

LISA OPPENHEIM
Store

YOU DIG THE TUNNEL,
I'LL HIDE THE SOIL
White Cube Hoxton Square

DANISH KONKRETE
Rocket

BOB AND ROBERTA SMITH
Hales Gallery

DAVID FRYER
Trolley

KATE HAWKINS
Bischoff/Weiss

MARGARITA GLUZBERG
The Money Plot

BUILDING DWELLING THINKING
Laura Bartlett Gallery

JOHN, I'M ONLY DANCING
Fellowes & Pheasant

LEE UFAN
Lisson Gallery

TAL R
Camden Arts Centre

EAST LONDON

J.J. CHARLESWORTH

WE WOULD LIKE TO THANK...
Seventeen

KEN CURRIE
Flowers East

HAYLEY TOMPKINS
The Drawing Room

ALEXANDRE DA CUNHA
Wilma Gold

ALEX BAGGALEY
Alma Enterprises

STEFAN SAFFER
Kate MacGarry

HELMUT STALLAERTS
IBID Projects

SIMON MORSE
VINEspace

ANNIE ATTRIDGE
Nettie Horn

KATE WILLIAMS
Lorem Ipsum Gallery

SIMON LINKE
One in the Other

CHARLIE WOOLLEY
David Risley Gallery

KATE DAVIS
Fred

JOAN JONAS
Wilkinson

NATHALIE DJURBERG/
DIEGO PERRONE
Whitechapel Art Gallery

TOM GALLANT
Museum 52

EDUARDO PADILHA AND
MICHAEL SCHWAB
Studio 1.1

STEFAN THATER
Hotel

KATHERINE TULLOH AND
GARY MCDONALD
Transition Gallery

ELIZABETH PRICE
MOT International

ZOMBIE SURFERS
Cell Project Space

SEBASTIAN BUERKNER
The Showroom

HELENE APPEL
The Approach E2

RUTH PROCTOR
Hollybush Gardens

PAUL P.
Maureen Paley

MARKUS AMM
Herald St

PAUL ROONEY
Matt's Gallery

SOUTH LONDON

REBECCA GELDARD

MARIA LASSNIG
Serpentine Gallery

ISA GENZKEN
Hauser & Wirth

JULIAN SCHNABEL
Robilant + Voena

JODIE CAREY
Alexia Goethe Gallery

DIDIER MAHIEU
Economist Plaza

GREGORY CREWDSON
White Cube Mason's Yard

INSTITUTE OF PSYCHOPLASTICS
Pump House Gallery

CHINA DESIGN NOW
V&A

EDWARD BURRA
Crane Kalman Gallery

MANFRED KUTTNER
westlondonprojects

IS THERE ANYBODY OUT THERE?
England & Co

JERWOOD CONTEMPORARY
PAINTERS

Jerwood Space

DUCHAMP, MAN RAY, PICABIA
Tate Modern

SKIN & BONES
Somerset House

RBA ANNUAL EXHIBITION
Mall Galleries

MAY 68
Hayward Gallery

XU BING
Albion

OLA KOLEHMAINEN
Purdy Hicks Gallery

MORICEAU + MRZYK
Ritter/Zamet

RYAN GANDER
South London Gallery

ANNE RYAN
Greengrassi

COLTER JACOBSEN
Corvi-Mora

PETER DOIG
Tate Britain

WEST LONDON

MARK RAPPOLT

SEAMUS HARAHAH
Gimpel Fils

MARC NEWSON
Gagosian Gallery,
Davies Street

GAJIN FUJITA
Haunch of Venison

MERIEEM BOUDERBALA
Le Violon Bleu

MUSTAFA HULUSI
Max Wigram

STEPHAN BALKENHOL
Stephen Friedman Gallery

LORENZO QUINN
Halcyon Gallery

JOHN CURRIN
Sadie Coles,
South Audley Street

BOYLE FAMILY
Delaye Saltoun

LILIANE LIJN
Riflemaker

DAVID KORTY
Sadie Coles HQ

JOANNE ROBERTSON
Blow de la Barra

DALE DEVEREUX
Jill George Gallery

ATUL BHALLA
Aicon Gallery

STEVEN GREGORY
Opus Gallery

LUCY HARVEY
Anthony Reynolds Gallery

BARBEROSGERBY
Established @ Sons LIMITED

GARY WEBB
The Approach W1

DOUBLE PERSPECTIVE
Maddox Arts

MICHAEL SAMUELS
Rokeby

PAUL MORRISON
Alison Jacques Gallery

YOSHISHIGE SAITO
Annely Juda Fine Art

KEITH SONNIER
Sadie Coles HQ off-site

CLAERWEN JAMES
Flowers Central

ZEBEDEE JONES
Mummery + Schnelle

MICHAEL SAMUELS *Childstar*, Rokeby

Samuels's works are totems to laminate living (that 1950s/60s period when 'progress' meant having a check laminate on the kitchen table to mimic the effect of a tablecloth while saving you the labour of actually washing and ironing one). He chops, clamps, balances, extends, contracts and colour-coordinates his furniture until it becomes a towering (but never quite tottering) sculpture of colour and light (frequently from anglepoises but also from LEDs). For all that they come across as messy accumulations of domestic modernist tat, there's a lot of precision here and some delicate G-clamping, and you become conscious of the ways in which Samuels has used, adapted and arranged furniture to create his artworks in much the same way that anyone else might use, adapt and arrange it to create a personal living environment. I wonder why it's called *Childstar*, though.