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AMES

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Art in high places

Cathy de Monchaux at the Tower, Lucy Wood at the Met, and Jeremy Deller in the Home Office



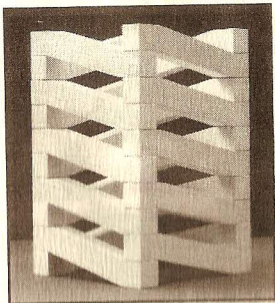
**LONDON
DIARY**

**LOUISA
BUCK**

Paul De Monchaux at Westminster Hall...

2005 seems set to be an auspicious year for the De Monchaux artistic dynasty, who, if all goes according to plan, will be making their sculptural presence felt in

some of our most prestigious public places. First off is patriarch Paul de Monchaux, who last year was chosen by the BBC to create a contemporary memorial to Winston Churchill in the wake of their "Great Britons" series. De



Monchaux's abstract sculpture "Song" (maquette left), inspired by Churchill's use of the structures of poetry and song in the

preparation of his speeches, is to be unveiled next month in Westminster Hall, where the wartime leader was laid in state.

...and daughter Cathy at the Tower...

Westminster Hall was also the location of Charles I's trial and conviction for treason, leading to his execution on a specially erected scaffold nearby. By a curious coincidence, just as her father's sculpture is about to be unveiled in this evocative and historically rich place, his daughter Cathy's response to another



"Two fat ladies": part of the selection of prisoners' work chosen by Jeremy Deller and Alan Kane for the new Home Office building

more when it has the irresistible name of Turps Banana. This imaginatively titled publication, which launches at the end of this month, is the brainchild of artists Peter Jones and Marcus Harvey, who describe their new projects as "a magazine about painting made predominantly by painters" but with the proviso that "although the majority of contributors will be painters and artists engaged with painting, we agreed at the start that the magazine would not carry a singular position or attitude but would seek to be as open as possible..." Certainly the first issue's lineup covers the painterly spectrum, with Harvey and Jones interviewing the former's old Leeds mucker Damien Hirst about the new paintings which Hirst is unveiling at Gagosian New York this spring; English painter-writer Merlin James is writing about his work and is also the subject of an article; and Colla Smith, fondly remembered by Jetsam for his bravura

then prudently pocketed her chips). More raunchy activities then ensued, courtesy of the high-camp Cuban Brothers, "born of the loins of 70s Havana and raised on a diet of soulful sexy tunes" ("White-Cuban, more like," muttered one curmudgeonly guest at the the trio's awesome display of fake tan and polyester suiting). After much strutting, cigar-chomping and flashing of teeth, Los Cubanos demonstrated that they could outdo Imagination in the suggestive, if not the musical stakes, when their synthetic suiting was ceremoniously removed and this year's selection of White Cube's female employees were treated to a private view of the performers' (somewhat poorly filled) posing pouches. Things went from bad to gross when MC Miguel Mantovani (who had been rotating on his head wearing only a thong) declared that his missing left testicle (which he claimed had already been preserved in formaldehyde) could be used by Damien Hirst for a sculpture. However, despite a full showing from the gallery's other galaxy of artists, White Cube's most famous member was not in attendance, and so was unable to accept this generous offer.

Lightening-up the city

A happy antidote to the relentless product-placement of Regent Street's Christmas lights (whose dismal track record spans Tango fizzy orange to this year's display of Disney-heroes The Incredibles) can still be found in the City of London even after the festive season. Here, until early February, Maggie Ellenby's light projections turn the windows of office buildings in the Queen St area into limpid forest groves, populated by the shadowy silhouettes of the wildlife which would have inhabited the coniferous forest that once covered the Thames valley, before the onslaught of today's concrete jungle. This poetic intervention is the pilot project for a larger scheme to improve the much blighted area around St Pauls, with Tim Head, Brad Lahore and Jorge Orta among the other artists chosen to lighten up the location during the ensuing months.

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