

Art in Ruins Gimpel Fils

Dear Michael Archer,
How predictable! You've ignored us for five years but *Artscribe* has decided that it is time for a bad review by a "real" critic (something to do with the venue?). The only difference between our "irresponsible" negative critique and Terry Atkinson's "informed" negative critique is that ours makes *you* feel uncomfortable. There is no privileged position in *our* ruin scenario!

Don't be silly, save your energy and support for your "reconstructive" artists, they are going to need it. Ask Matthew to get someone else to do the hatchet job, don't you realize that your "respectable" status, even with a bad review, lends us credibility, and anyway we will use it as our next press release.

Yours
Art in Ruins

I had undertaken to review an exhibition for Artscribe, but before I could set pen to paper this singular missive arrived from the exhibition's perpetrators. It is heartening to discover that one's efforts are valued. MA.



ART IN RUINS

GLYN BANKS HANNAH VOWLES

Hannah and Glyn always appear in public dressed in black as they mourn their own 'death' as 'creators' of 'meaning' (a subtle strategy indeed for relying their persona as 'post-modern' artists). This is clear evidence of a very 'black' humour. The duo know that since Roland Barthes proclaimed his own 'death' (and that of authors in general) it has been the 'task' of the 'reader' to project 'meaning' into any given (art) 'work'.

To a proletarian Hannah and Glyn are parodying the very idea that there is any 'natural' or 'universal' basis to the 'dichotomies' induced by social separation, such as the spurious oppositions between 'mother nature' and 'urban man'. Such activity is intended to deconstruct dialectics revealing their common origin in the mind of 'man'.

That their 'murals' should often depict 'ruined urban landscapes' 'illustrates' that humanity and its 'creations' are just as subject to decay as any other part of the 'natural' world. Nature 'appears' to have returned with a vengeance but away from the spectacular representations the 'truth' is that 'nature' is a social construction no different from the most desolate urban landscape.

Karen Eliot

Extract from "Art in Ruins" catalogue