

# **Exhibition Reviews, 2011**

by Suzanna Raymond

## ***Gabriel Orozco at the Tate Modern***, until 25<sup>th</sup> April

The Gabriel Orozco show looks interesting to visit for students of contemporary conceptual art. It is a mixture of found objects, assisted readymades, photographs and prints.

It seems that there is a fine balance to be sought between the strength of a concept, its execution, its aesthetic qualities and the way it is displayed in a gallery. Whether that balance was reached in this exhibition rather depends on your love of conceptual art. If that is not your favourite type of art you may want to put this show further down your list of things to do, otherwise it is a useful marker of current critical opinion.

Some of the most engaging works included the room of obituaries displayed together with a decorated skull. The dark humour of an artist working on such subject matter after a stay in hospital seemed like an intriguing concept. There was a similarly disturbing comedy in the manner in which our life's efforts can be summarised into a couple of lines or the formal qualities of our skeletal remains.

In room 3, the walls were covered with eye-catching photographs of scooters, which appealed to me for the playful way Orozco searched for and recorded the twin of his own scooter. I also enjoyed looking at La DS, with its Futuristic lines emphasising the beauty of the machine, whilst simultaneously removing its functionality in a way that would frustrate our ability to use it. This could be seen to be an attempt by the artist to return the manufactured car to the ideal of its concept drawing on the drawing board but with the added tactile beauty of the materials it was constructed with.

Room 6 had some lovely photographs which show that dimension to his work but it did feel like the work lacked a depth of context to bring out their relationships. Likewise, the Carambole display seemed incomplete without the other two balls and the cue, making me wonder if that was the gallery being spoilsports. If I was the artist, I would have liked that exhibit to have remained more interactive.

The final room, with its lines of dryer lint, was quite intriguing to walk through. I'd thought the hanging lint would be quite disturbing with its associations of bodily residues but my experience was more about the fragility of the piece, reflecting the fragility of life, which seemed a fitting counterpart to those obituaries.

## ***The British Art Show 7 - Hayward Gallery, London***

(Until 17<sup>th</sup> April)

[www.britishartshow.co.uk/](http://www.britishartshow.co.uk/)

Subtitled, '*In the Days of the Comet*', the current show has had favourable reviews from various art critics. This touring exhibition started out in Nottingham last year and has now reached London. For anyone interested in contemporary and conceptual art it's a must-see. However, I only found a few of the works directly engaging. Possibly this is due to the way they are displayed, since one installation I was looking forward to seeing looked less impressive than I'd hoped but others seemed well suited to the Hayward space. This show has been hailed as one of the best of the series, so it's still worth a look, but allow plenty of time as there are several video

installations and a performance piece which quickly ate up the two hours I spent there.

## **ERIK VAN LIESHOUT: *HOW CAN I HELP YOU?***

**Hayward Gallery Project Space** (12 JAN - 27 FEB 2011)

<http://haywardprojectspace.blogspot.com/2010/12/erik-van-lieshout-how-can-i-help-you.html>

This was my favourite exhibition at the Hayward. By now it's over but I think it was worth my trip to the Hayward to see his video installation. It's a mixture of art, comedy and wry observation that questions 'the socio-political powerlessness of people and of art' via the artist's interactions with various individuals based in a Dutch shopping center. There's an excellent write-up of the exhibition in the Guardian: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/artanddesign/2011/jan/10/erik-van-lieshout-how-help>