

Collecting

Sale of the week

Banking on pieces of Scotland

Sale: Scottish contemporary art

Location: The Fleming Collection, 13 Berkeley Street, London W1. Tel: +44 (0)20 7409 5730; www.flemingcollection.com

Date: until September 3. Open Tuesdays-Saturdays, 10am-5.30pm

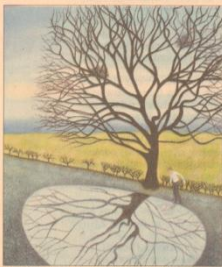
Need to know: The Fleming Collection of Scottish art was begun in 1968 by a descendant of Robert Fleming, the Scottish founder of the eponymous merchant bank, and now runs to more than 1,000 oils, watercolours and drawings dating from 1800 to the present.

The collection was sold to the Fleming-Wyfold Art Foundation after the bank's takeover by Chase Manhattan in 2000, since when the ethos of only allowing works by Scottish artists has been strictly maintained. As the sole UK museum devoted to Scottish art, the Fleming Collection has come to be regarded across the world as an "embassy" for the genre and last year it staged its inaugural summer exhibition to sell works by some of Scotland's leading contemporary artists. Set to become an annual event, this year's edition features 48 pieces at prices ranging from £495 to £10,000.

Highlights: At £10,000, the priciest piece on offer is Della Baillie's abstract, "Once Upon a Time in the North North-East", painted in acrylic and pen on a piece of giant-sized board measuring almost 8ft by 10ft. For those who appreciate strong drawing, Adam Kennedy's "Breaking Point", a powerfully executed mixed media study of a partly dismantled ship's hull is both more affordable (£2,400) and of a more manageable size. Kennedy, 23, and just two years out of art school, won this year's £25,000 Aspect prize for Scottish painting with his studies made at the Clyde shipyard, near where he grew up.

A more whimsical take on a nautical theme is found in Louise Higgins's "Paper Boat" (£350), while Helen Flockhart's "Green Bird" (£2,800) is loosely reminiscent of the work of Simon Palmer. The exhibition also features photographs, including two large-scale seascapes by Graham Fagan at £4,500 apiece, and three bronzes by Bill Scott, president of the Royal Scottish Academy. A percentage of all sales goes towards supporting the Fleming-Wyfold foundation.

Simon de Burton



Playful 'Paper Boat' by Louise Higgins

Dare in the community

The Art Market: a fully functioning 'social resource' in London's West End, visions of the past and future from Greece and tax relief in France. By Georgina Adam

While long queues are forming at the Venice Biennale to visit Mike Nelson's building-within-a-building in the British pavilion, an even more extraordinary project has been built right under Londoners' noses – and very few people even know what it is. Gallery Hauser & Wirth's space, a Litvins-designed former bank on Piccadilly, has been transformed into a fully functioning "Community Centre" by Swiss artist and sometimes prankster Christoph Büchel.

The space has been completely rebuilt and divided up into meeting rooms and workshops. Every day it offers a full range of activities, from "knit and natter" to "renaissance fencing" and "hula hooping". A fully functioning charity shop (all proceeds to the blind) sits upstairs; there is a reconstruction of a squat in the attic and in the basement is a faded bar with worn plush chairs and a squalid "janitor's room" packed with the detritus of a party life, from dirty rags in a bucket to a collection of dusty cuckoo clocks and a cache of porn in a corner.

Nowhere is the artist's name mentioned; if visitors ask, they are told that it is a project by Christoph Büchel, but no more. The accuracy and detail of the reconstruction is amazing, down to scraps of half-torn sticky tape on the doors, the ubiquitous green "fire escape" signs and reproductions of famous paintings on the walls. And it works – when I visited, members of a mother-and-child group were happily playing on the floor, while an instructor was teaching computer skills in another room; the Friday tea-dance in particular is a great hit.

All this must have cost a fortune to install (Hauser & Wirth won't go into details) and nothing is for sale, except for a flag and the "squat" in the attic (price undisclosed). Büchel is notoriously anti-media and anti-publicity and does not explain his work. Nevertheless, the project certainly reads like a critique of the current government's "Big Society" policy, and there is an old Conservative party booth on one floor.

Büchel's work does also sell – a pair of his sweaty socks was offered for £20,000 at the Frieze art fair in 2009, while another installation, "Training Ground for Democracy", was sold by Hauser in 2007 for \$250,000, going to the Berlin-based Flick Collection.

Greece's dramatic financial situation has not stopped London gallery Fagionato putting on a major show of modern and contemporary Greek art – the first of its kind in the UK.

Entitled *Dirty Humanism*, it is curated by Nadja Argyropoulou, who insists: "The show has nothing to do with the Greek economy; it's about what's going on in the country and its culture."

More than 50 works in the show span almost a century, starting with a wall of drawings and photographs by architect Dimitris Pikionis (lent by the Benaki museum), as well as photographs by "Nellys" – including one of an almost naked dancer on the steps of the Parthenon, a photograph that provoked great outrage in 1928.

Strikingly relevant to today is a German flag with the Greek one roughly tacked over it, a 1974 work by Vlassis Caniaris, ("Coexistence", not for sale). A giant cockroach by Stelios Fafalakis – whose work decorates the



Danish pavilion in Venice at the moment – is titled "Kakerlaken sind die Zukunft" ("Cockroaches are the future", 2009, €32,000). Particularly attractive is a wall of paintings made of car paint on aluminium by Thanassis Totsikas (€30,000), while the performance/music/installation collective The Callas (Lakis & Aris Ionas) have installed a corner of the gallery with drums, lights and brightly coloured tapestries – keeping it in the family, these were embroidered by their mother to their designs. The exhibition runs until 12 August.

Outfit Owners of art in France are breathing a sigh of relief after a bill to tax artworks was thrown out by the French Assemblée Nationale this week. The proposal was to include art in France's wealth tax (*impôt sur la fortune*, or ISF) and has regularly come up for debate – and has just as regularly been rejected. This latest attempt was backed by France's socialist opposition, but resisted by the right-wing majority.

France's president Nicolas Sarkozy dismissed the idea as "triple stupid" – "can you imagine state employees going into people's homes to check on their paintings... what about the art in religious buildings?" he asked, before saying, "This could lead to the collapse of the art market."

Guillaume Cerutti, president of Sotheby's France, told me: "As France has just voted to allow auction houses to make private treaty sales, it would have been totally paradoxical for them to include art in the ISF; they would be encouraging the market with one hand, and handicapping it with the other. Fortunately, wisdom has prevailed."

Time-share for a timepiece: Christian Marclay has just won the Golden Lion for best artist at the Venice Biennale for his 24-hour video *The Clock* (2010), which uses snippets of film to keep real time.

The compulsively watchable piece has been a massive hit and comes in six editions; all are now "committed", according to New York gallery Paula Cooper. According to the *Los Angeles Times*, one has been bought by the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, funded by film producer and football team owner Steve Tisch to the tune of \$450,000.

Paula Cooper says this price is "not correct" but won't elaborate further. Another has been "time-shared" between the Boston Museum of Fine Arts and the National Gallery in Canada... Tate and MoMA are also rumoured to be interested, but the galleries said that they could not comment "while negotiations are ongoing".

Chinese artist Sanyu (1901-1966) works in a western style, painting simplified nudes or flowers on plain backgrounds. While he is little-known in the west, he is immense in China and Taiwan and has just scored a new record at an auction by Taiwanese auction house Raveland. In Raveland's spring sale, held in Hong Kong to catch the crowd attending the art fair, Sanyu's "Five Nudes", painted in the 1950s, rocketed over a starting bid of US\$10m to make \$16.5m, accounting for more than half the sale total of \$25m. Interestingly, the work last sold in Taipei in 1983 for just £119,268, by Sotheby's, which operated there at the time.

Georgina Adam is editor-at-large of *The Art Newspaper*