

ART: observation OR inspiration?

A friend of mine sometimes works as a model for a life-drawing class and says she is always surprised about how differently each artist interprets her on paper. Clearly none of them is copying her exactly, each introducing instead an element of subjective focus. This set me to thinking how necessary – or not – it is for an artist to work directly from what they see. I asked a couple of the many artists exhibiting in Cloth Road Arts Week for their view.



or clay, or cast in plaster, resin or concrete, are remarkably, hauntingly realistic. So what is his secret?

He said: "I have had a life-long interest in anatomy and bodywork therapies, and I've studied a variety of massage techniques and Shiatsu. In my sculpture, I draw from my practical, 'hands on' experience of treating muscular and skeletal issues, and from my detailed knowledge of anatomy. "I sculpt mainly from touch, using my fingers as eyes."

Kat Fletcher

Cloth Road Arts Week, 1st–9th May.
www.clothroadartists.com

Steve Hall's work can be seen at Leigh Grove Barn, Leigh Grove, Bradford Leigh. Tel: 01225 868086.

Ecstasy, a sculpture in plaster with rusted iron resin finish, by Gareth Leake.

Gareth Leake is exhibiting at Glove Factory Studios and upstairs at The Fat Owl. Tel: 07507 066052.



International watercolour artist Steve Hall says he does "go out and paint from nature", but also works from sketches and photos and admits that "it's also quite easy to sit and make things up".

"You are informed by nature – you see shapes and colours, they lock in your mind, and then you go back and reproduce them," he said. "It's true though that I want to record the things around me, the things that thrill me. Usually they are the effect of light – and that can be something quite mundane, even just a shaft of light through a doorway."

Gareth Leake, a self-taught sculptor and artist, says he does not work from what he sees at all, in spite of his work being heavily inspired by the beauty of the human form.

But his life-size torsos, whether worked in wood

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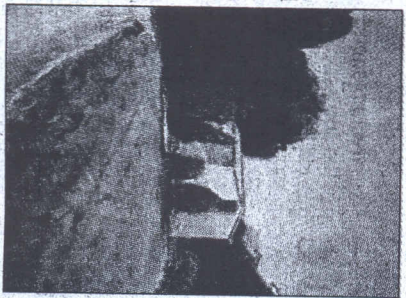
Going Out What's On Around Town

Tuesday, June 23, 2009 **metro** **life** **2**

Art Review Bath Society Of Artists 104th Exhibition ★★★★★

Regency streets and meadows of sheep? It must be Bath Society Of Artists' annual show. It's still the gallery's biggest crowd-puller, doubtless for its appeal to the I-know-what-I-like brigade. And yet there seems to be a little more edge this year.

The usual handsome scenes by the likes of Bob Ballard (Scene In Languedoc, pictured) and Ben Hughes are balanced by those of less picture-postcard environments: London Road, Bath, and Victoria Bridge, Bath, both by Simon Hopkinson, and Andrew Brownsword Prize-winner Rebecca Cains' Gasworks, Bath. Carl



Johnson's Sarah I takes a Lucien Freud-style, varicose-veins-and-all approach to its female subject. The quirky, stylized human figures of David Brooke and Eileen Cooper also impress

wonderful Matisse-style paintings of longtime BSA member Diana Sylvester who died this year.

Of the notable sculpture and ceramics, Anne Claxton's Housebox Six is an intriguing series of small, white,

windowed boxes painted inside with glossy, warm colours; Jane Skuse's The Way Home casts Hogarthian legs in ceramic raku and covers them in an Ordnance Survey map; and armless tree woman Lost Soul by Gareth Leake deservedly bags the Bristol Guild Prize. Also, as you leave, don't miss the gallery's collection of Art Deco-influenced railway posters from the 1920s and 1930s.

Anna Britten

Until July 25, Victoria Art Gallery, Bridge Street, Bath, Tue to Sat 10am to 5pm, Sun 1.30pm to 5pm, free. Tel: 01225 477233. www.victoriagal.org.uk

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