



# British Contemporary

OPERA GALLERY

# British Contemporary

“A Selection of New Works but By No Means Everything...” reads the opening page of The London Police’s website. It is a sensible declaration, and an apt opener to begin our discussion of the British artists on display. Neither distinctly systemized nor entirely arbitrary, this selection presents a snapshot of British contemporary art without reducing it to a status quo. Meandering from YBA superstar Damien Hirst through to the New British Sculpture movement ascribed to Julian Opie, Contemporary Britain approaches its eponymous subject matter with the same tactics considered in the creation of its art:

**Shock.** Pioneered in 1990 by a motley crew of like-minded art students and led by Damien Hirst, Young British Artists – a name coined only retrospectively – spawned a new generation of British artists whose self-led exhibitions sought to jolt and oppose a tired tradition of art. YBA artists made extensive use of found objects, installations and film, emphasizing the notion of artist-as-curator and revitalizing the act of painting. Formally marked by a complete openness to the creation of content and materials, YBA inadvertently succeeded in turning their label into a powerful marketing tool, an outcome that, while concealing diversity, precipitated an important method of widespread, effective and pervasive communication:

**Branding.** In 1998, The London Police headed to Amsterdam to jazz up the lowly street art scene. Their motive, to combine traveling and art, coupled with a highly recognizable and easily marketable style, quickly propelled them into public consciousness.

In a world inundated by consistently shifting stimuli, their mode of artistic execution insists: “remember me”. And remember we do. Technical sophistication aside, TLP succeeded in differentiating themselves through a currency of repetition and consistency. With icons of people and objects being constantly retreated and re-contextualized, what better way to remain relevant than to inaugurate an icon of your own?

**Assemblage.** Joe Black’s ‘War Horse’, constructed with hundreds of Lego pieces, appears as much as a glorification of cowboy folklore as a tongue-in-cheek critique on the act of fable construction through history. An icon carries with it the weight of preconceived notions atop an infrastructure of material ready for commentary in a shifting artistic narrative. Case in point are the assemblage works of Joe Black, Nick Gentry and David Mach. Mach’s Minnie Mouse constructed out of postcards creates an eerie effect of distance and familiarity; his Van Gogh of coat hangers is one part technical genius and two parts newfangled memento mori. Popular culture and modernism coalesce in these artists’ works, suggesting a fetishism of contemporary culture that speak of class struggle, power dynamics and worth-versus-worthlessness of icon and object. Sometimes aggrandizing yet often debasing the icons portrayed, the works in Contemporary Britain shift restlessly between the pleasing sensation bestowed by pop art and the dubiousness of the modern aesthetic.

We could simplify these works to the thematic currents they run on: pop culture, re-imagined tropes, and the aggregation of industrial materials to create a whole. Yet it seems more appropriate to address the air of disillusionment in the consistently post-modern society that has fed artistic expression in Britain from the 1990s until today. The story is told differently – as is the nature of stories, relayed and altered from one audience to the next – but the message is the same. They are bold, branded and resourceful. And you’ll remember them.



# Foreword

In the wake the Young British Artists (YBA) and post-YBA propounding the contemporary art scene in Britain, it is with great pleasure that Opera Gallery hosts *British Contemporary*, a curated exhibition surveying the evolution of British art from the 1990s until today.

Showcasing works from groundbreaking artists of the YBA to the sensational artworks of current creators in the scene, *British Contemporary* focuses on the ingenuity that continues to define one of the world's most potent and influential art scenes. Politically biting, socially engaging and culturally arousing, *British Contemporary* is an exciting platform for the provocative works of some of the newer contenders to the trajectory of art history.

Visually stimulating and intellectually sophisticated, Opera Gallery brings together works from well-known virtuosos Damien Hirst and Marc Quinn to assemblage extraordinaire Joe Black; from Turner Prize nominated sculptor David Mach to the evocative montages of Nick Gentry.

Despite natural changes in creative expression and material over the years, the ideas promoted by the YBAs - that art should be youthful, liberated and a part of popular culture - resonates through the thematic currents of this exhibition. It is with great excitement that Opera Gallery presents such an essential collection of artists to the public in Singapore.

## Marc Quinn

**Antartic Nurseries of El Dorado, 2008**

White painted bronze

H: 83 cm - 32.7 in.

Price on request







Marc Quinn

**Musk Xen in the Seine Valley, 2009**

Oil on canvas

237 x 169 cm - 93.3 x 66.5 in.

Price on request



## Marc Quinn

*Archaeology of Desire*, 2008

White painted bronze, edition of 3  
232 x 295 x 100 cm - 91.3 x 116.1 x 39.4 in.

Price on request





## Damien Hirst

**Butterfly Spin Painting, 2009**

Acrylic on paper

54.6 x 68.6 cm - 21.5 x 27 in.

Price on request



Damien Hirst

**Star Spin Painting**, 2009

Acrylic on paper

54.6 x 54.6 cm - 21.5 x 21.5 in.

Price on request

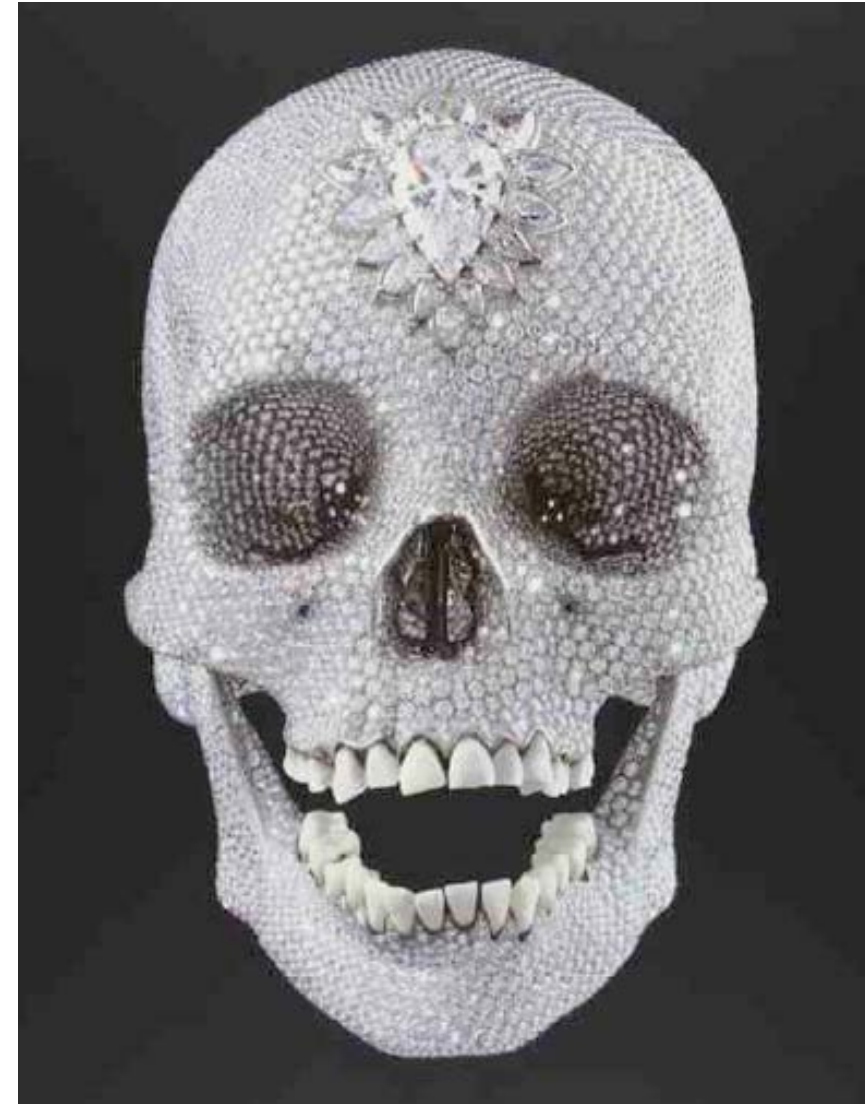


## Damien Hirst

**For the Love of God, 2009**

Silkscreen print with glaze and diamond dust  
100 x 75 cm - 39.4 x 29.5 in.

Price on request

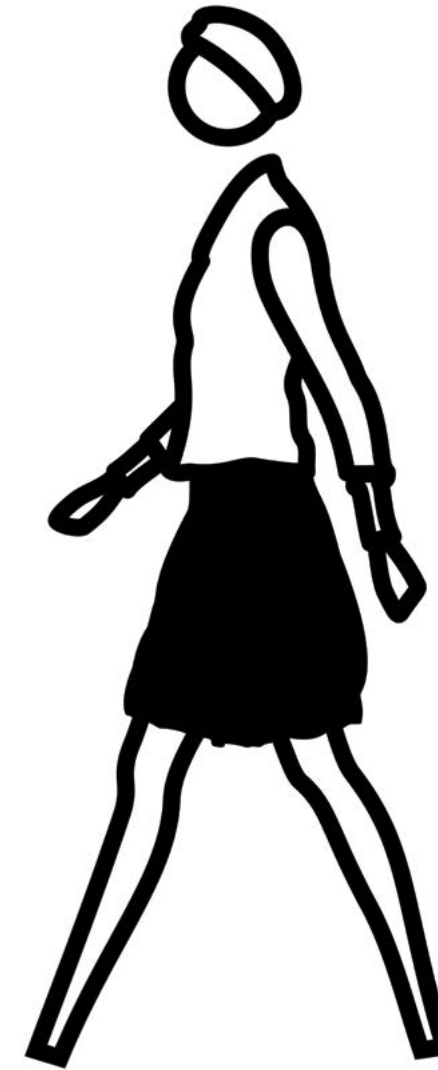






## Julian Opie

**Bruce**, 2006  
Vinyl on painted steel  
200 x 76.2 cm - 78.7 x 30 in.  
Price on request



## Julian Opie

**Jen Walking 2**, 2011  
Continuous computer animation  
128 x 75 x 7.3 cm - 50.4 x 29.5 x 2.9 in.  
Price on request



## Julian Opie

**Caterina Dancing, Pink 6, 2010**  
Silkscreen on painted wood  
29.1 x 28.8 x 8 cm - 11.5 x 11.3 x 3.1 in.  
Price on request

## Julian Opie

**Elly, Gallery Assistant 3, 2001**  
Vinyl on wooden stretcher  
192 x 142 cm - 75.6 x 55.9 in.  
Price on request







Julian Opie

Female nude leaning on both hands, 2000

Vinyl on wooden stretcher

117 x 188 x 3 cm - 46.1 x 74 x 1.2 in.

Price on request



## David Mach

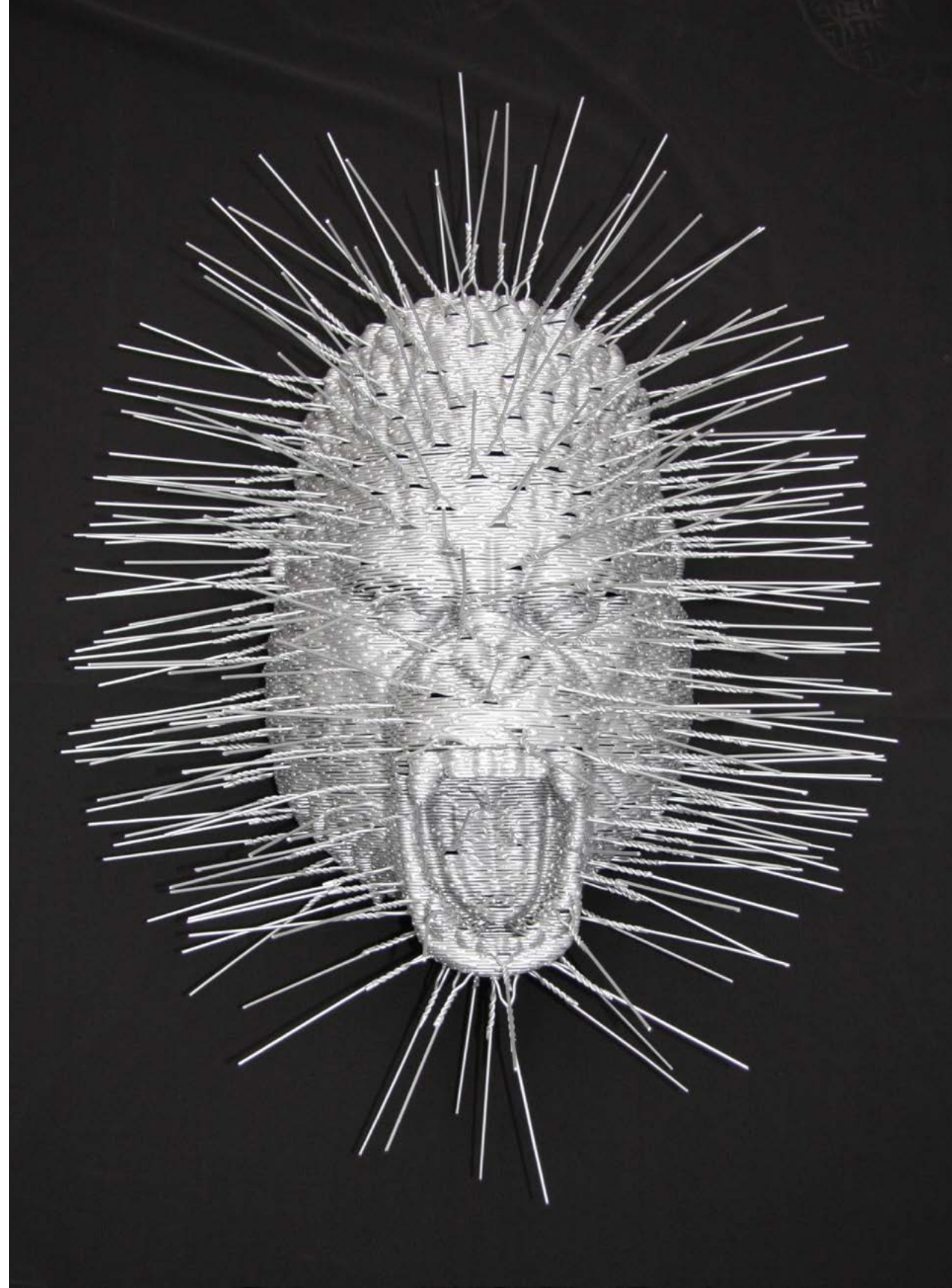
**Van Gogh**, 2011  
Coat hangers, edition of 4  
50 x 65 x 80 cm - 19.7 x 25.6 x 31.5 in.

Price on request

## David Mach

**Gorilla Head**, 2012  
Coat hangers, edition of 4  
60 x 45 x 75 cm - 23.6 x 17.7 x 29.5 in.

Price on request







## Vincent Poole

Catch. London SW3, 2011  
Collage  
176 x 105 cm - 69.3 x 41.3 in.  
Price on request



## Vincent Poole

On the Trap  
Collage  
205 x 125 cm - 80.7 x 49.2 in.  
Price on request

## Vincent Poole

He's late again, London Soho, 2011

Collage

175 x 105 cm - 68.9 x 41.3 in.

Price on request





David Mach

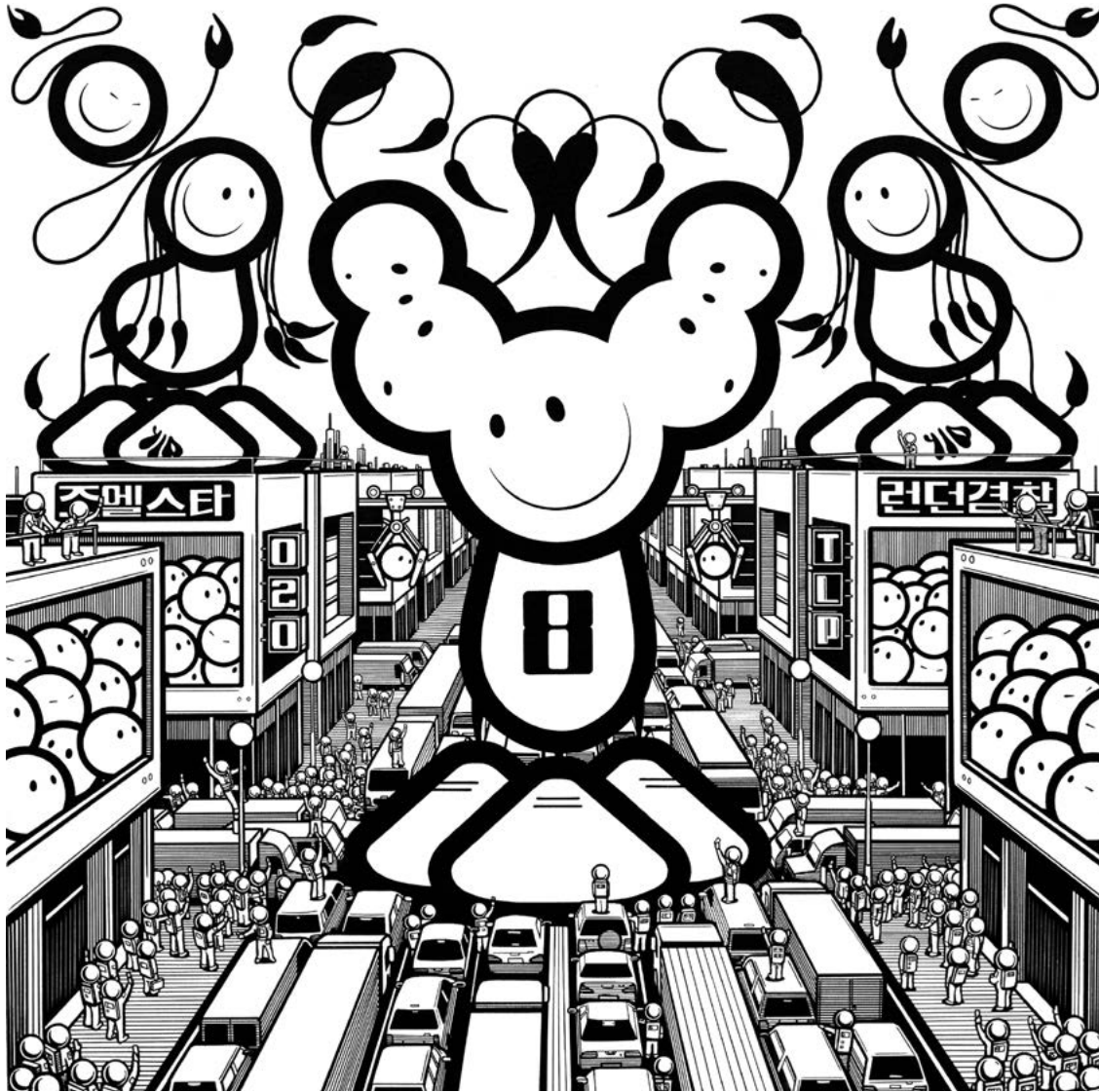
**Green Marine, 2012**

Pin heads on foam, unique piece  
60 x 34 x 34 cm - 23.6 x 13.4 x 13.4 in.

Price on request

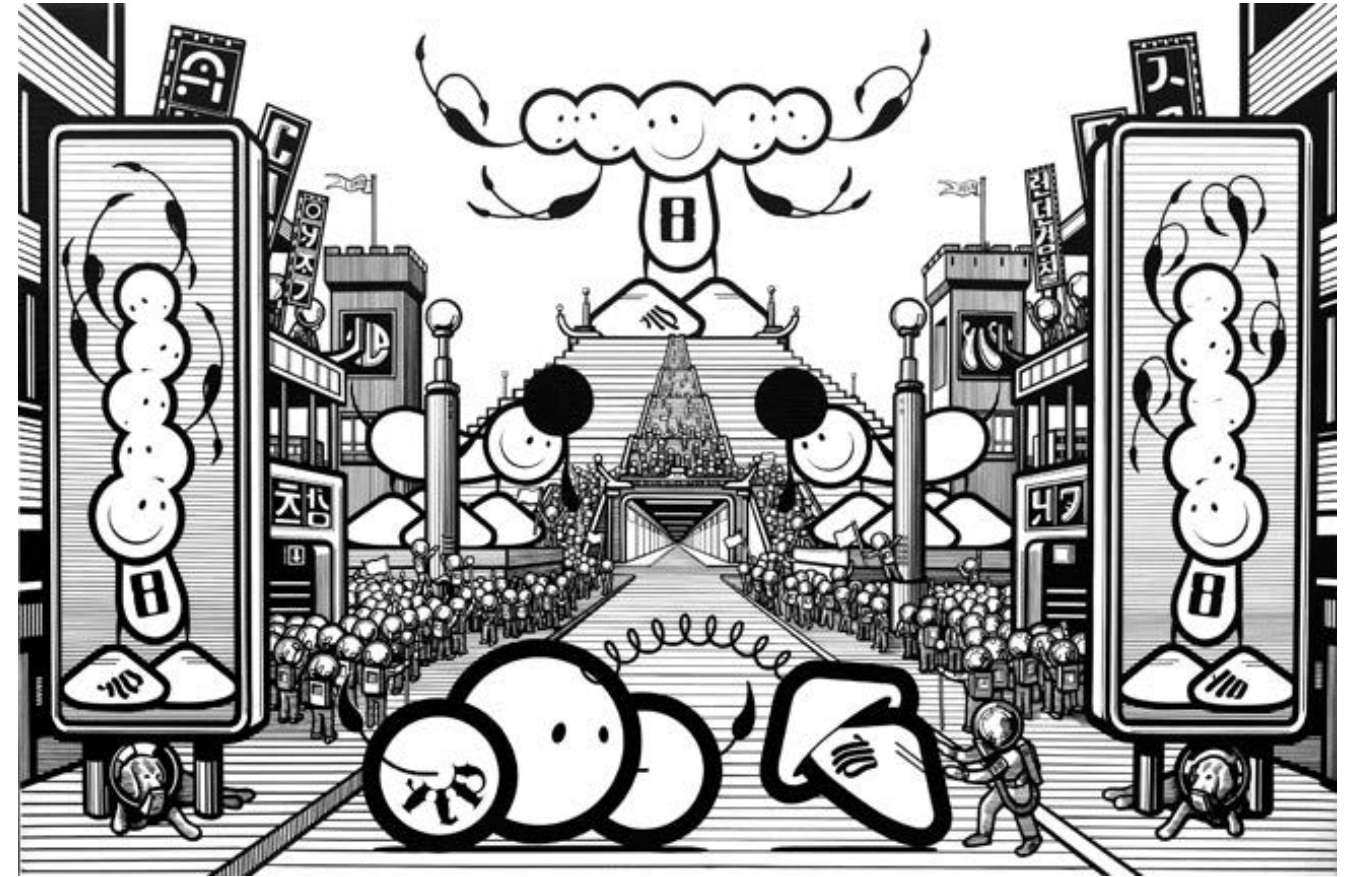






## The London Police

The Kessler Run  
Undelible ink on canvas  
80 x 80 cm - 31.5 x 31.5 in.  
Price on request



## The London Police

The arrival of Gary 8 in the city of ancient Paul  
Undelible ink on canvas  
80 x 120 cm - 31.5 x 47.2 in.  
Price on request





## Joe Black

**War Horse**, 2014  
Spray-painted Lego bricks on aluminium  
195 x 146 x 6 cm - 76.8 x 57.5 x 2.4 in.  
Price on request



## Nick Gentry

**Human**, 2013  
Oil and used computer disks on wood  
131 x 99 cm - 51.6 x 39 in.  
Price on request

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