



Extreme TB:
The World's
Hidden Pandemic

Siege Mentality:
Islamabad's
Baghdad Days



Blue-Eyed Soul:
Robert Redford on
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TIME

The New Hard Times



**No, this isn't Depression 2.0.
How history can help us avoid it**

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The End of the American Era?

BY MICHAEL ELLIOTT

The Virtues of Thrift

BY NANCY GIBBS



Reading the Nudes

IN THE HISTORY OF ART, SKIN HAS ALWAYS been in. What's new, however, is the growing trend among women with high-powered jobs and luxury lifestyles to peel off their designer frocks for art's sake. One person that many of them choose to sit—and strip—for is Natasha Archdale. The London artist specializes in pen-and-ink renderings of the undraped female form—but with a twist. Archdale enhances her drawings with collages made from shredded pieces of the *Financial Times*, using the salmon-colored newsprint to represent hair, shadows and muscular definition.

The effect is sublime: from a distance, the collages resemble watercolors; up close, you can pick out bits of sentences, headlines and photos. Archdale, 32, calls it “bespoke art that's linked to sex and money.” She developed her style 12 years ago while recovering from injuries suffered in a car wreck, and perfected it in her free time while working as a model. She turned professional artist in May 2007 with a successful show at a London gallery, where all 17 of her displayed pieces sold within two hours.

The people who buy her work “tend to be high-profile types,” she says—successful businesspeople, politicians and serious art collectors. Charging between \$18,500 and \$27,750 per commission, Archdale researches all of her clients and often personalizes a piece by incorporating *FT* stories about her subject.

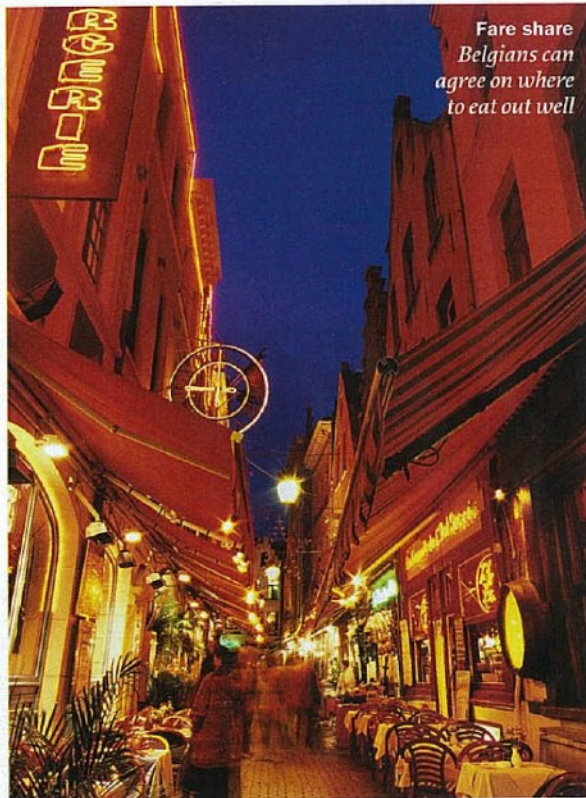


Clip job Archdale uses scraps of the *Financial Times* to delineate shadows and describe muscles



These days, she's keeping busy turning gloomy news into a thing of beauty. Julian Parker, head of equities at London International Bank, and his wife Abigail bought one of Archdale's works at her first exhibition. Now Parker has commissioned Archdale to produce a portrait of his wife—though he's leaving it up to Abigail to decide just how much she's willing to bare. “We want something cool and sexy, but I don't expect it to be hugely intimate,” he says. Many clients likewise opt for demure poses, says Archdale, “but some want poses that are downright raunchy.” Call it the shock of the nude.

—BY THOMAS K. GROSE



Fare share Belgians can agree on where to eat out well

AMUSE-BOUCHE

Take a Bite of Belgium

SPLIT INTO TWO INCREASINGLY HOSTILE language communities, Belgium has little that unites it as a country. There is one thing, however, that the people of Flanders and Wallonia still have in common: their love of food. Belgian sommelier and food writer Eric Boschman argues that the only remaining link between his country's divided citizens is how, where and what they eat. “We Belgians like to spend time at the table,” he says. “Restaurants are always full, even in the smallest towns.”

It helps that, unlike in most other European countries where eating out well means spending a lot of money, Belgium is filled with restaurants serving top-quality cuisine at reasonable prices. If you're in Brussels, get a table at **La Canne en Ville** (www.lacanneenville.be), a typical local restaurant where the steaks are always excellent, and entrées include such Belgian classics as artichoke vinaigrette. A little outside the city center, there's **Le Pigeon Noir** (www.lepigeonnoir.be), a quaint bistro in a former pigeon fanciers' club that serves authentic—and delicious—local dishes. Try the rabbit stewed in Kriek (cherry beer).

And the good eating isn't limited to Brussels. In the forested Ardennes, **Le Grand Ryeu** at Grandrieu (www.legrandryeu.be) is the place to go for a flavorful meal of foie gras with Guérande salt. Or take a trip to the Flemish coast and the **Si Versailles** (www.siversailles.be) in Knokke, where fish dishes such as mussels in white wine are served in traditional surroundings of dark wood and red leather, with a view of the sea.

What it comes down to, according to Boschman, “is that eating here is still a real culture.” And perhaps a way for Belgians to forget their differences—at least until after dessert. —BY BRIGID GRAUMAN

WHEN IN BELGIUM, TRY ...

★ **Mosselen-Friet or Moules Frites**
Mussels and fries

★ **Waterzooi**
Fish or chicken stewed with carrots, celery, onions and leeks

★ **Stoemp**
Potato mashed with other vegetables, often served with sausage

★ **Filet Américain**
Raw beef minced with spices, best served with fries and mayo

FINANCIAL TIMES

how to spend it

A diver in a dark underwater cave, looking up at the surface light. The diver is silhouetted against the bright blue light coming from the opening of the cave. The cave walls are dark and jagged, with some greenish algae or mineral deposits. The water is clear and blue, with ripples on the surface.

HIDDEN DEPTHS

THE BONUS ISSUE FRIDAY APRIL 11 2008

NO FT, NO PORTRAIT

An artist who “paints” nudes using fragments of her favourite newspaper is in big demand, says Emma Crichton-Miller.

Natasha Archdale is an artist who, almost inadvertently, has stumbled upon a seam of work so immediately accessible and so neatly directed at a target audience that she is in hot demand. For seven years she had incubated her idea, slowly refining her method. Then last May she was invited to hold a show of work at The Gallery, on London's Charing Cross Road, which has also shown Banksy, Rankin and other fashionable names. Within two hours her show was entirely sold out and she was inundated with commissions that will take her through the next eight months. Her secret? A steady hand, a lifetime's life drawing and the *Financial Times*. Until recently her oeuvre has been almost entirely nude portraits of women – either herself or friends or patrons. Where the shadows that delineate limbs and contours should be, Archdale sticks torn-up

just watching people.” At the age of 10 or 11 Archdale returned to England and was sent to Bedales, an experience she describes as “heavenly”. After GCSEs she went on to Cambridge Arts College, where she began to use photography and film. The human nude was always her primary subject. But then she was involved in a car accident and broke her back. “I could hardly move for a very long time, and I was so bored. So I put a mirror in front of myself and started to draw a self-portrait, but I didn't have any paint. I've always read the *Financial Times*, and a copy was beside my hospital bed. I think, with the mixture of loving the *FT* and it being pink and not having any paint, I just started to create a collage on my self-portrait. And it kind of worked.”

For the next six years, however, this work took a back seat while Archdale returned to a successful career in modelling. Television commercials were interspersed with Archdale's speciality, underwater shoots, including one in a dolphin conservation zone, swimming with 300 dolphins. Modelling has given Archdale an acute appreciation of how important posture can be and, perhaps because of her accident, she is also particularly appreciative of how expressive movement can be. This interest has fed back into her “paintings”, as she calls them. Her sketch book is full of different nude postures, reveling in the beauty of the human body. Besides drawing, her work is strongly shaped by photography – not just her own, but that of her heroes, Bill Brandt and Henri Cartier-Bresson. The almost monochrome *FT* newsprint readily evokes black-and-white photography, especially when mounted and framed in the delicate dove greys and blues Archdale chooses.

Since last May, Archdale has been able to focus on her painting full time. Commissions have flooded in from collectors, financiers and significant figures in business and politics in several countries. Archdale does not just use the *FT* as raw painting material; she researches the clients' backgrounds and, if they have been featured in the *FT*, she calls up articles, even whole editions, that feature them or their business. This means that her commissioned pieces are usually more heavily collaged than her self-portraits. A key part of the impact for the onlooker is to move from the distance, where what impresses is the way the collage effectively builds three-dimensional form, to close up, where you can read snippets of relevant articles.

You might imagine that the bulk of Archdale's clients were men seeking to have their wives portrayed, with newspaper testimony to their lives and interests imbedded in the painting. Curiously, Archdale reports that while this is a large proportion

of her work, the largest single client group is women wanting nude portraits of themselves: “There is a kind of coolness about it at the moment, a trend to have your naked portrait done, which I am starting to pick up on.” While she herself is very lithe – part of the pleasure of her self-portraits being the way she can effortlessly create a pose that would have most of us creaking – she prefers to draw curvaceous women, finding them more beautiful. She is also careful to work closely with subjects

to find the most flattering pose and, if the subject is left up to her, to choose models who match the commissioner's aesthetic preferences.

The current whirl of excitement about her work has opened new possibilities. She is about to embark on a male nude portrait, and has also been asked to try children's portraits. She has also conceived the idea of making portraits of major world figures – Nelson Mandela, for instance – using significant clippings where appropriate from newspapers other than the *FT*.

Loyalty apart, though, I cannot help thinking that the *FT* is particularly suited to Archdale's technique. The pink allows the material to hover ambiguously between flesh and print, to hold in suspense our simultaneous desires to see the painting as a body and to read it as a text. It is this trick, when most successfully brought off, that gives energy and life to her work. ♦

Natasha Archdale, 07976-407 373; www.natashaarchdale.com. Commissions cost from £10,000 to £15,000.

Main picture: portrait for a New York financier, 2008. Inset: Archdale in her studio with a selection of self-portraits.



fragments of the *Financial Times*. The technique is surprisingly effective. The inkiest parts of the paper, perhaps from photographs or ads, provide the patches of tumbling hair. Fragments thick with text work like the dense cross-hatching on etchings to build up shading on the backs of knees or under the armpits. Lighter bits of the paper printed with smaller font sizes provide flesh-coloured patches that evoke the play of light.

While Archdale undoubtedly has a gift for drawing the female form in a variety of graceful poses, what makes the work stand out, what gives it a touch of class that lifts it beyond mere gimmick, is the *FT* in all its subtly various hues of grey and pink. It may be humbling for a journalist to see so much nuanced phrasing or bold analysis appreciated solely for its evocation of a belly or spinal column but, as an occasional contributor to the *FT*, personally I feel honoured.

Archdale's discovery of her means was accidental. She had always drawn from childhood. An only child, she has never known her father, and accompanied her mother on one foreign adventure after another: “I didn't have a base. I lived in Kenya for a while, where my mother set up a school, and Switzerland for a bit. The rest of my family lived in Monaco, the South of France and Spain, so I travelled a lot and saw different cultures.” Drawing was the natural adjunct of her only child's habit of constant observation: “I spent a lot of time

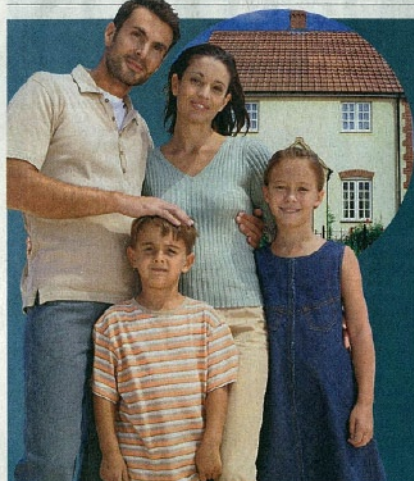


ANDY CANTILLON

how to spend it



THE SUNDAY TIMES



HOW TO BEAT THE BANKING CRISIS

SURVIVAL GUIDE TO MORTGAGES, PENSIONS AND INVESTMENTS
MONEY SPECIAL

OUR ECONOMICS EXPERTS ASSESS HOW BAD THE CRASH WILL GET

DON'T CALL ME BABE

'BEING A GLAMOUR MODEL DOES NOT MEAN I AM DUMB'
KELLY BROOK. STYLE



WAYNE LIFTS ENGLAND

ROONEY GOALS SEAL VICTORY AGAINST KAZAKHSTAN
SPORT

IMF warns of global meltdown

The International Monetary Fund warns that markets could collapse by another 20%, say David Smith and Dominic Rushe in Washington

THE world is on the brink of financial meltdown, the head of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) said last night. His bleak warning came as finance ministers tried to calm the frenzy in markets that saw share prices crash by more than

Separately, the IMF's chief economist predicted that shares could slump by another 20% before stabilising. G7 finance ministers pledged to take all necessary steps to support the banking system and stave off an economic slump.

head of the IMF, warned that the measures so far "have not yet achieved the goal of stabilising markets and bolstering confidence".

He said: "Intensifying solvency concerns about a number of the largest US-based and European financial institutions have pushed the global financial system to the brink of systemic meltdown." Countries would need to take further measures, including interest rate cuts and steps to bolster the banks.

Olivier Blanchard, his chief economist, said stock markets had further to fall. "At the worst, the governments will need another few weeks

the stock exchanges could fall by another 20%; then there will be a turnaround," he said.

The warnings came as G7 finance ministers, including Alistair Darling, met George Bush at the White House. "We are in this together," the president said. "We will come through it together." Other experts warned that the instability was likely to continue.

Mario Draghi, governor of the Bank of Italy and chairman of the Financial Stability Forum, which advises the leading economies, said he was "amazed" by what was happening and that it was "very diffi-

"I don't have my crystal ball here," he said. The panic in the stock markets was partly due to the "roar psychology of major investors all over the world. You are not going to change that in a day".

Simon Johnson, until this year the IMF's chief economist, said he was disappointed the G7 had not produced a fully worked-out plan to fight a slump. "The financial system just got nuked and they don't understand the full extent of it," he said.

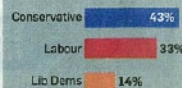
George Magnus, senior economic adviser at UBS, said stabilising the system was still possible but that countries had to act fast: "The most

set out a framework and we will see countries filling in the details over the next three to four days. If that happens we could still be okay."

Gordon Brown will travel to Paris today to urge European leaders to copy the British bailout programme and agree a Europe-wide plan to "re-capitalise" struggling banks by taking equity stakes in them. America said this weekend it plans to do that.

In an unusual move, President Nicolas Sarkozy has invited Brown to join a meeting of eurozone heads of government to explain the merits of the UK model. A source close to the French presidency said eurozone

State of the parties



SUNDAY TIMES-YOUGOV POLL

FOCUS SPECIAL

Why you will feel the pain, pages 11-14

BUSINESS

Crash of 2008, 10-page special

A portrait made of strips torn from the Financial Times by Natasha Archdale, right



That's no old FT, that's my naked wife

Maurice Chittenden

VANITY is not yet dead in the City. Financiers have been commissioning nude portraits of their wives made from collages of newspaper clippings telling the stories of their own financial conquests.

Natasha Archdale, a model turned artist, tears strips from the City news pages that tell of the big deals to incorporate into paintings that cost up to £15,000 a time.

Archdale, 32, began using pink shreds of newspapers to match her own flesh tones when she was stuck in hospital for six weeks after a car crash and, as she was bored, decided to create a self-portrait.

With no paint at hand, she ripped up a copy of the Financial Times, borrowed glue from her nurse and stuck the pieces on her picture to give shading and contours. From this bedside doodling has grown a

lucrative career in which she uses newsprint to turn her paintings into collages using the likes of the Financial Times and The New York Times pasted onto nudes.

In one commission Dorrit Moussaieff, the wife of the president of Iceland, was seated naked apart from a pair of gloves and a hat created from cuttings showing banknotes.

Archdale is finding that the City crash has brought a new form of financial schadenfreude from bankers keen to celebrate the demise of rivals.

"I am getting new commissions from people who want to mark these times," she said last week.

"One wants all the cuttings about the collapse of Lehman Brothers imposed on a picture of a naked model. I can't possibly mention names but he is a rival banker.

"For a British banker who deals in Latin America I found

articles ranging from the price of tortillas rising in Mexico to the fall of a bank in Brazil."

She added: "I suppose it is the ultimate ego boost for some of these guys to have a picture of their wife naked with stories about their boardroom successes pasted over the nude.

"But with the current status of the markets there is an incredible amount of material for me. It is fun for me to make the pictures topical."

Sometimes the client hands Archdale a file of cuttings to be incorporated in the picture. Otherwise she uses internet search engines and newspaper archives to find cuttings, although old editions can cost her as much as £30. Each picture takes about a month to complete.

She is preparing a picture of Nelson Mandela at 90 to be auctioned in aid of charity and is about to embark on a portrait of James Blunt, the singer.



Archdale, who works from a studio at her home in Notting Hill, west London, is being courted by art dealers including Harry Blain, who sells some of Damien Hirst's work.

Blain, who co-founded the Haunch of Venison gallery in central London, said: "It is very interesting, particularly with what we are going through right now."

Archdale's clients include Moussaieff, the Israeli-born British socialite who married

Ólafur Ragnar Grímsson, the president of Iceland, in 2003. She has her own naked picture and also commissioned an Archdale portrait as a gift for Stephen Schwarzman, the billionaire chairman of Blackstone Group, the American private equity firm. It featured his wife Christine.

Moussaieff said: "I have yet to meet someone who does not want a naked picture of their loved ones with text about themselves."

David Yarrow, founder of Clareville Capital, a hedge fund, commissioned a naked portrait of himself to hang in his weekend cottage in Devon.

He said: "What good use of the newspapers. She put the FT cuttings about me in some very naughty parts. It makes a good present for people but maybe they will never want to read the FT again. I am glad to see the price of her work is going up. I might have to flog mine. I might need to."

Roller.

FREE METRO

Wednesday, July 9, 2008

www.metro.co.uk

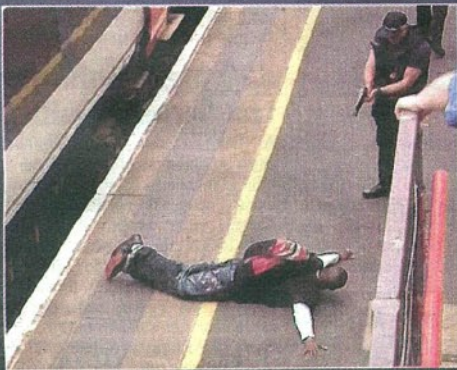
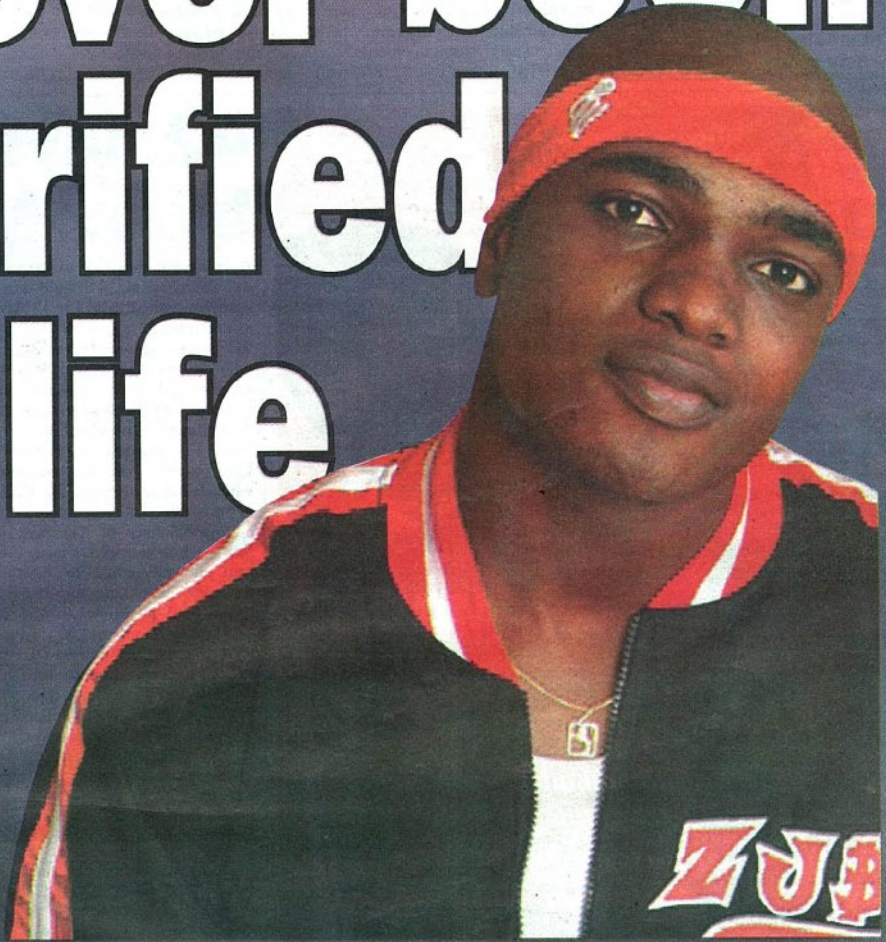
A bat in the belfry? No, it's in my bra



Page 8

Innocent rapper tells of police gun ordeal at station

I've never been so terrified in my life



Relieved: Zubey, right, is recovering from the shock of the armed arrest, as shown on the front page of Metro yesterday

A RAPPER held face-down at gunpoint by police in a case of mistaken identity told yesterday of his 'terrifying' ordeal.

Hip hop musician and Oxford University graduate Zubey, who was confronted as he stepped off a train, said: 'I've never been so traumatised in my life.'

'It took me a couple of seconds to realise it was me all those guns were aimed at. I felt

BY AIDAN RADNEDGE

like I'd stepped off the train and into a really bad dream.'

The 21-year-old, who had been to Southampton to sell his CDs and T-shirts bearing the slogan 'I'm Down With Zubey. Are You?', was faced with a posse of armed officers as he arrived at Bournemouth station.

Police had been tipped off by a plain-clothes officer on the train that a man who had been

threatening people with an imitation firearm was on board. They were told he was wearing a dark T-shirt with orange writing on it.

Zubey - real name is Nzube Udezue - said he was picked out because he was wearing one of his own black T-shirts.

He said he was 'happily listening to my iPod' when police ordered him to the ground. 'I was shocked, confused, scared and embarrassed all at the same time,' he added.

Zubey was dragged off to a toilet cubicle,

handcuffed and searched for a gun before being taken to a police station. 'It didn't take them too long to realise they got the wrong guy,' said the rapper, from Bournemouth.

Afterwards, he was able to make light of the incident, writing on his MySpace site: 'And to think I was going to wear a blue T-shirt.'

Dorset Police have apologised for the mistake. The incident, which happened on Saturday evening, will be investigated by the Independent Police Complaints Commission.

'I felt like I'd stepped off the train into a bad dream'

Sex and money prove an irresistible combination for new art star

Nudespaper girl



What's the story? Natasha Archdale uses the Financial Times

BY RHIANNA KING

SOME say today's newspapers are tomorrow's fish and chip paper – but for artist Natasha Archdale they help form her next masterpiece.

She combines the winning themes of sex and money by creating nude drawings using pages of the Financial Times newspaper.

The print is made into a collage to create a shaded, 3D effect and has made her the new darling of the London art scene. Wealthy businessmen, politicians and art collectors are queuing to snap up one of her 'newspaper nudes'.

'To put it crudely, it's sex and money,' the 32-year-old said. 'It's always something which grabs people's attention.'

And her reputation has earned her a major commission – a portrait of Nelson Mandela.

'I'm really enjoying it, he's got

such an interesting face and he's one of the true, great, iconic, brilliant men left alive and it feels like a great honour,' she said.

She did not get to meet 90-year-old Mr Mandela but based her work on photographs of the Nobel Peace Prize winner.

It will be sold at an auction in aid of The Africa Foundation.

Ms Archdale, from London, developed the unique technique ten years ago when she broke her back in a car accident. 'I started drawing myself in the mirror and I didn't have art

materials so I just used newspapers and magazines,' she said. Her work begins as a pencil line drawing before sections of the paper are glued on.



Naked ambition: Natasha was inspired while recovering from a broken back

Pictures: Natasharchdale.com

METRO weather

London Today
It will be cloudy and grey with outbreaks of rain, possibly heavy, especially during the afternoon. Cool with a moderate south-westerly wind. High 18C (63F).

Wednesday AM		15°
Wednesday PM		18°
Thursday AM		19°
Thursday PM		22°

Outlook
Tomorrow will be mostly dry with sunny intervals developing later. Friday will be mostly cloudy with the chance of a shower. Warmer.

South-East and the Home Counties

Oxford	Luton	18°
17°	18°	17°
Chelmsford	Dover	17°
17°	17°	17°
Portsmouth	Brighton	17°

Today
It is going to be cloudy and wet with outbreaks of rain, heavy at times during the morning and afternoon. A moderate south-westerly breeze. High 15-18C (59-64F).
Sunset: 9.15pm Air pollution: Low

Oxford	Luton	20°
21°	22°	21°
Chelmsford	Dover	21°
21°	21°	21°
Portsmouth	Brighton	21°

Tomorrow
A cloudy start with light rain. Sunny spells developing later, but also the chance of heavy showers. Warmer. Moderate south-westerly winds. High 19-22C (66-72F).
Sunrise: 4.57am Air pollution: Low

Britain Today

North	18°	South	17°
N.West	18°	S.Wales	18°
Yorks	19°	N.Wales	17°
W.Mids	17°	Scotland	20°
E.Mids	17°	N.Ireland	18°

Around Britain yesterday

Aberdeen	16° Cloudy	Leeds	14° Fair
Belfast	15° Showers	Liverpool	15° Cloudy
Birmingham	16° Sunny	London	19° Sunny
Cardiff	14° Showers	Manchester	15° Showers
Edinburgh	18° Sunny	Newcastle	17° Sunny
Glasgow	16° Sunny	York	16° Cloudy

Europe Today

Athens	36°	Geneva	27°
Barcelona	27°	Madrid	36°
Berlin	22°	Moscow	23°
Brussels	19°	Paris	25°
Dublin	17°	Rome	29°

Around the World yesterday

Amsterdam	16° Rain	Madrid	29° Sunny
Athens	27° Sunny	Miami	24° Rain
Barbados	29° Sunny	New York	26° Cloudy
Cape Town	11° Showers	Paris	18° Cloudy
Hong Kong	28° Cloudy	Sydney	16° Cloudy
Los Angeles	23° Fair	Tokyo	26° Sunny



THE SUNDAY TIMES

Sunday Nov 21 2010



A portrait of Gordon Brown made from old pieces of the FT by artist Natasha Archdale.

At least you still get your face in the papers, Gordon

Many people have been tempted to rip up a newspaper after reading about Gordon Brown. But the artist Natasha Archdale is surely the first person to fashion the pieces into a portrait of the former prime minister.

Natasha, a former girlfriend of the singer James Blunt, created this image using bits of the Financial Times. She uses the paper for many of her portraits, but in this case it's more appropriate than usual. Like Gordon, Natasha's copy of the FT once enjoyed an unimpeachable financial reputation. Now it's in tatters.

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/atticus-the-nights-widdy-turned-a-kebab-shop-into-a-ballroom-wr6cvds90j9>

VOGUE

<https://www.vogue.co.uk/article/nuba-art-exhibition-launch>

1 December 2011

The Travelling Art Show

INNOVATIVE art initiative Nuba is opening its debut pop-up exhibition tomorrow, entitled *It's A Material World* - an exploration of the use of different materials in art and the effect they have when used in unusual ways - from taxidermy to plasticine to felt tips. Created by the project's co-founders Robert Sheffield, VOGUE.COM contributor and model Florence Brudenell-Bruce, Caro Hodler and Nati Blaskovicova, the three-day showcase features a varied collection of contemporary work from UK-based emerging names such as Polly Morgan, Alistair Mackie, Henry Bruce and Oliver Clegg.

"A lot of the art is very technically difficult, such as Alastair Mackie's chess set and Polly Morgan's witty taxidermy," Robert Sheffield told us. "Some of it is irreverent and fun and other pieces are more intellectually taxing and visually engaging. The overarching effect of the show will be an impressive and eclectic mix that promises to rouse curiosity and be a visual feast for the eyes. This is a dynamic young show exhibiting original, visually stunning and dramatic art - you may never see another display like it and you'd be mad to miss it."

Nuba was born six months ago from each of the founders' desire to showcase art in a more democratic, original way. Each of the group's exhibitions will be held in a different location with the aim of bringing the work of Britain's best young artists work to different audiences.

"We wanted to show great and new art in an accessible place and also give people great works at realistic prices," Brudenell-Bruce told us. "We knew that it would be tricky to do what we wanted to achieve in a recession, so the pop-up idea seemed a good solution."

Viewers can expect to see a wide variety works from all over the country.

"There's a really interesting contrast between the London and country-based artists - their work develops in a different way," explained Brudenell-Bruce. "Each of the artists showing is really fun, young and cool. I really think what we're doing here is quite exciting and unique. It's a good feeling when everything you're showing you want on your wall."

It's A Material World is on display from December 2 - December 5 at the West Bank Gallery, 133-137 Westbourne Grove, London, W11 2RS



Natasha Archdale

December 16 2011

Party animals

In this season of peace and goodwill I am hosting a reception for my garden's local wildlife

In this season of peace and goodwill I am hosting a reception this evening for my garden's local wildlife. Readers will know what an act of godless generosity this offer represents on my part. I am inviting animal delegates to a reception in my drawing room to celebrate its latest hanging. The hanging is not one of a badger or a grey squirrel. It is the hanging of every father's ideal present, a specially commissioned artwork of himself, given to him by his daughter. I am sure the animals will twitter with delight when they see what I have been given by my matchless daughter Martha, our National Digital Champion.



First I must explain why I call them "delegates". In each Christmas season the animal kingdom sends reps to a summit meeting which they call the B20. Twenty Beastly reps gather outside my garden shed and debate the animal world's affairs, naturally to no effect. I know they have this meeting because I see their tracks in the mud on the morning after. They are less inhibited about their true desires than our human delegates to the G20, let alone to recent meetings of the IMF. There are bloodstains on the gravel and the only way to explain some of the footprints is to realise that their owners have been having sex in public. Furry young chambermaids, I gather, are not even invited.

This year I know exactly what is under debate. I know it because I belong to the fabled Chipping Norton Set. I shop in my local Chipping Norton (twinned with Magny-en-Vexin). On horseback, I have even eaten a sausage offered by Rebekah Brooks' fair hand. So I am applying Chipping Norton's widely reported tactics in order to snoop in private.

I have located the one mole left alive in my garden and bribed him to hack into his fellow-animals' network. He has done it with his usual professionalism and is passing to this column the subjects under discussion. They are so fascinating that I will be sitting by the telephone and ignoring the garden all day.

For a start there has been a quarrel about eligible members. My one living badger is presiding but he has just snarled at a stoat who turned up with a placard saying ECB. He believes that it stands for "Encourage Culling of Badgers" and contravenes the pre-Christmas spirit. Meanwhile a white female ferret has turned all the male heads by arriving in a provocative T-shirt which says Go Pussy. She says she was sent it from Berlusconi's Italy and that it means Cats Keep Out, but three male weasels have read it differently. Their excuse is that a white ferret is the star turn in London's Leonardo show at the humans' National Gallery. Leonardo painted a white ferret smirking in the lap of the under-age concubine of an Italian political leader. If humans keep on doing it in Italy why cannot British weasels join in?

One of the rats has just insulted the cock pheasant by calling him a "failed peripheral". The reason is that he is artificially maintained by humans so that a party of visiting Germans can shoot him dead on Boxing Day in return for their downpayment. Order has only been restored by the traditional Animal Press Awards for 2011.

I think the FT should be very proud. It has taken the top two slots, both the "for" and "against". The "against" was a unanimous vote by the hawks at the meeting to cull [Sir Max Hastings](#) for his printed opinions this summer about feathered predators' behaviour on his bird table. If they cannot savage a little finch when Sir Max is looking on, how ever will they survive the winter without starving? The "for" has been more controversial. The rooks wanted to vote it to Matthew Parris on The Times for describing Mrs Thatcher's walk, when not played by Meryl Streep, as being timid "like a partridge". The partridges promptly blocked the motion. They are no longer Old English partridges, because modern Cotswold farming has exterminated them. They are French partridges with red legs and euro-sympathies.

Attention then returned to the FT's very own Gideon Rachman, cat lover though he is. I am pleased to report that he has just been voted first place. The real pussies in the audience are sharpening their claws but Gideon's recent proposal for escape from the financial crisis has had the vote of every feathered delegate in the B20. He observed, you remember, that it makes economic sense to insure one's cat, kill it and claim the over-insurance because there is no shortage of homeless kittens and a replacement will cost much less than the sum assured.

If I hear the hacking clearly, there has been some ugly biting in the back row. A fox has turned up paw-in-paw with a biddable young male rabbit who says he is a special adviser. Nobody recognises the invitation card which the adviser has been brandishing but he has now vanished down a burrow. Without him the debate has turned to the main agenda.

It is nothing less than contagion. The Guernsey cow has tabled it despite the squirrels' insistence that cows like her never pay their animal taxes. The motion is a warning to the animal kingdom that they are only fiddling at the edges of a massive hazard. The threat is not euro debt: it is TB. With truly human slowness last year's B20 accepted a cull of badgers among cattle but Miss Guernsey regards it as a peripheral distraction. The urgent need is a cull of every single hedgehog. Fuzzypeg is as much a carrier of TB as any badger in bovine company and unless the entire species is wiped out there will not be a living cow left. The world markets will seize up without drinkable milk.

I cannot describe the animal furore which this proposal is provoking. Hedgehogs are as sentimental a subject as Paris is to Woody Allen and even the B20 cannot bring itself to grasp it in their claws. Contagion may be sapping human Europe but it is also rampant in its animals' grassy meadows.

What can I offer instead? The B20 will break up without positive results, but I am then inviting the delegates for a private view indoors. Naturally the white ferret is included.

What Martha has given me is my very own portrait by our genius of a British artist, Natasha Archdale, widely admired in the press this summer. Natasha makes portraits from ingenious montages of bits of the financial papers, recombined into animal form. Of course mine is made of pink clippings taken from the FT. They are not any old clippings. They are bits of my gardening columns at significant dates in the past 41 years, including the day of Martha's birth. In the middle is the clipping from the January FT in 1970 which announced the arrival of the new gardening columnist, the one who has been with you weekly ever since. She has even recycled my accompanying FT photo. Above all, she has woven the collage into a brilliant picture of a dog fox. I have never hunted a bolder one. There is not a special adviser in sight.

Tonight as the stars come out I will be inviting the B20 to admire the new masterpiece. The drink on offer? Milk, of course, TB tested and served in saucers. I promise I have not laced it with Prozac nor even with garden weedkiller. In the name of art and Christmas, even animal hostilities are suspended.

<https://www.ft.com/content/427a60d4-201f-11e1-8462-00144feabdc0>



THE ARBUTURIAN

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Natasha Archdale's Financial Animals

Aah, remember those days of making collages in art classes in primary school? Cutting up magazines and pasting pictures together to create Picasso faces, cityscapes, animals? Chances are it's not a skill you carried into adulthood, let alone kept any of those seminal artworks, but Natasha Archdale not only creates pictures in this way, she sells them for thousands of pounds apiece. Her subjects are a little more pointed these days – her medium is the Financial Times, among others – and the execution is considerably more advanced – the collage is only really evident in the detail – but, ultimately, the principle is the same.

Garnering much critical acclaim and a sell-out in two hours for her first showing of nudes in 2007, Natasha's latest exhibition, currently on at the Royal Exchange is, topically, 'Financial Animals' and focuses on the creatures that dominate our financial landscape.

Each piece is a fantastically rendered animal, often in some apposite repose – The Bear, for example, is rolling playfully on its back – and taken from editions of a suitably fitting publication; The Donkey, the symbol of the Democrat party, is created from editions of The New York Times while The Elephant is cut from the Wall St Journal. The obvious sense of irony running through the series doesn't end there. The venue for the exhibition, The Royal Exchange, is the beating heart of London's financial district. Each easel-mounted piece is exhibited around the imposing atrium-capped courtyard of restaurants and boutique shops; they sit among the gathered diners of City brokers and bankers, almost peering over their shoulders, conscience-like...perhaps I'm reading too much into it.

A graduate of Cambridge Arts, Archdale came to this characteristic technique whilst recovering from a serious car accident back in 2000 where, bed-ridden for weeks with a broken back, she began to draw but had no access to paint with which to elaborate on her sketches. The only other materials were her daily read, the Financial Times, and a Pritt-Stick borrowed from the nurses' station. The different shades of print, each piece quite roughly hewn from the page, create *chiaroscuro* – a Renaissance technique of creating visual effect with strong contrasts between light and dark – which add a three dimensional degree; thus, from afar the image is exquisitely rendered, up close lies the detail, the context of which becomes apparent. Cuttings and images all bear relevance to the whole.

"I work with cuttings that provide the right flesh and fur tones for my subjects," explains Archdale, "and, whenever possible, I include relevant words and sentences in every cutting." In The Bear, the flower that's incorporated into the image is made up of the BP oil platform explosion. In The Pig, the picture is made up of extracts from Chinese newspapers in reference to the Chinese horoscope symbol of fortune. It's always been a conscious decision to mirror the subject with the material and the global financial crisis

has been a constant source of inspiration. "I recreated Gordon Brown's resignation face using clippings from articles about his political downfall on the day he stepped down." How fitting.

The final work in the collection, *The Fox*, was created on site, during the exhibition, and made up from contributions people brought along. Lucy Allen, head of art procurement at The Royal Exchange, says, "Working in the heart of the city, the financial media is a huge influence in business...it's thrilling to see it turned into art and even more exciting that we can invites companies and City workers to contribute to one of Natasha's final pieces."

The day I visit, the day Natasha was completing *The Fox*, it was absolutely hurling it down with rain. And the character the fox represents in the banking world? The rainmaker. How fitting, indeed.

The Financial Animal exhibition runs at London's Royal Exchange, Bank, until Friday 15th July. For more information on Natasha Archdale, visit her [website](#).

<https://www.arbuturian.com/culture/art/natasha-archdale-financial-animals>

TATLER



NATASHA ARCHDALE WEARS A DRESS SHE MADE HERSELF. HAIR AND MAKE-UP BY MARK COOK. USING GIORGIO ARMANI

Bloomberg

Natasha appeared in the following video, produced by Bloomberg

<https://player.vimeo.com/video/85397759>