

## THOMAS DANE GALLERY

Nosheen Iqbal, 'Exhibition of the Week: Alexandre da Cunha', *Time Out*, September 2012

Art

# Alexandre da Cunha

**EXHIBITION OF THE WEEK**

★★★★★

Thomas Dane Galleries Central

British-Brazilian artist Alexandre da Cunha has built a reputation for subverting everyday, found objects such as mop heads, rubber tyres and kitchen utensils, into playful assemblages. This show is no exception and features industrial concrete mixer drums and beach hats, which on paper might sound gauche but in person are simply absorbing. Da Cunha manipulates these steel, iron, brass and stone cauldrons into uniform structures, with contrived touches of rustic wear and tear; paint peels on the rims, the work-worn steel is dented and cracked. The drums are supposed to represent the drudgery of manual labour and the overall effect is curiously unsettling.

The second gallery is much more uplifting; beach hats – in all manner of straw, hessian, felt and wicker material – are tacked on to canvases of equally diverse fabrics (cotton, suede, linen, towelling, leather) and protrude from their supports like nipples. The rims of the hats are meticulously flattened into hypnotic spirals, while the crowns pop out, almost inviting you to touch them. In contrast to the works in the first gallery, these are bright and deeply funny, skipping from calm and restful to daft and buoyant. 'Nude IX' features a single canary yellow hat on a yellow canvas, while 'Nude VI' recalls a crude, child-like interpretation of a solar system, with the hats orbiting each other like planets. Each canvas also suggests an individual holiday story, broken down in to fragments and then stitched back together again, poking gentle fun at the rites of relaxation.

Nosheen Iqbal



'Nude IV', 2012

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