

# THE SKINNY

Scotland's cutting-edge culture and listings magazine

## RSA NEW CONTEMPORARIES 09

**Written by:** Rosamund West  
**Published:** Fri 13 Feb 2009



The RSA student show has been transformed beyond all recognition, and the much-anticipated reformatting was today unveiled, proving an emphatic success. Instead of the formerly traditional jumble sale approach, we are now treated to a hand-picked selection of the brightest and best of emerging Scottish art, taken in a model of proportional representation from each of the art schools.

With the graduate artists granted the relative luxury of a gallery wall each, the work finally has room to breathe. Fraser Gray's vast painting marks a departure from the more meditative works of his degree show, the colossal spray-painted figure stretching the height of the gallery wall a mélange of signifiers. Pierced with arrows in the trademarked rainbow circle in place of a heart, the man wears a kufiya scarf, the traditional Arab apparel recently appropriated by the fashionistas of the west, signaling a cultural dislocation best evidenced by photos of Lauren Bush sporting the neckwear. Fraser has long dealt with the faultlines between societies, the powerplay implicit in historical and contemporary notions of colonialism. The pierced heart references the Western convention of the depiction of the martyrdom of Saint Sebastian, the kufiya and flag of Palestine inscribed upon his chest adding up to a fairly hefty statement which I suspect may provoke some rather strong reactions from the very vocal pro-Israel lobby. I wish him and the gallery the best of luck, the painting is surely the most powerful work in the show and shows that the promise we noted at degree show time is truly coming to fruition.

Euan Taylor's giant orange crane, a Cloud Muncher and the product of his Inefficient Solutions enterprise, is surely the stand out sculpture work in the show, and the worthy recipient of the inaugural RSA Skinny Showcase Award. Euan's work was another noted highlight of the Dundee degree show, melding workmanship and aesthetic to produce big massive sculptures that can't help but draw a smile. His crane issues the warning "Inefficient solutions and the Royal Scottish Academy do not accept any responsibility of damage to persons as a result of playing on, climbing, admiring or walking past this artwork." The brave can go inside and play with the switches, causing lights to flash and twirl and tinny voices to come through the radio. Some inspired curation means that from a certain angle the Cloud Muncher looks like it's biting the ass of Georgina Porteous's adjoining inflatable foetus. Which will probably be one for the abortion lobby to get het up about.

In all the show brings together an impressive mix of emerging artists, each developing their practice in their own special way in the months since graduation. It's conceptually and practically a vast improvement on the old format, a visual pleasure for the observer, a post-graduate goal and opportunity for the artist, and a chance for the gallery to rid itself of its exclusive image and reach out to build new networks and support structures, and foster the talented young.



Euan Taylor  
Image: [Markus Thorsen](#)

### EVENT REVIEW

**Rating**   
**Event name** RSA New Contemporaries  
**Venue** RSA  
**Date** 14 - 25 Feb 09

Nobody has commented here yet. Why don't you?

## EVENTS

---

## NEW CONTEMPORARIES »

---

Student, Art

Royal Scottish Academy, The Mound, Edinburgh

## VENUE DETAILS

---

## ROYAL SCOTTISH ACADEMY »

---

Gallery, Museum, Arts Venue, Visual Arts, Scottish, Art Gallery, Exhibitions, Tourist

The Mound, Edinburgh

0131 225 6671

## ON THE WEB

---

[www.royal.scottishacademy.org](http://www.royal.scottishacademy.org)

## TOOLS

---

0 comments      

