

Critics' choice

Life&Arts

Visual arts Jackie Wullschlager

Gilbert and George

Lévy Gorvy, London
Marking 50 years ago this month since Gilbert and George met at St Martin's art school, Lévy Gorvy celebrates an early body of work, "The General Jungle or Carrying on Sculpting": 23 monumental multi-panel charcoal on paper pieces featuring the duo, first presented in New York in 1971 as a backdrop to the legendary performance "The Singing Sculpture". This is their first UK showing. levygorvy.com, 020 3696 5910 September 13 to November 18

OO A Fantasy

DRAF, London
The 10th anniversary group exhibition at collector David Roberts' foundation takes as its subject the boundaries between public and private spheres, and the point at which individual and collective engagements become political, in the work of some 50 contemporary and recent artists including Helen Chadwick, Theaster Gates, Julian Opie, Wolfgang Tillmans, Danh Vo, plus

performances during Frieze week by Laure Prouvost and Marvin Gaye Chetwynd among others. davidrobertsartfoundation.com 020 7383 3004, to October 7

Robert Longo

Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac, London
First London show for the American artist whose intricate large-scale charcoal drawings about power and authority take mass media and historical iconography — here including Turner's abolition painting "The Slave Ship", Manet's "A Bar at the Folies-Bergère", a native American headdress and an American flag — as their starting point. The subtitle is Macbeth's pessimistic "let the frame of things disjoint". ropac.net 020 3813 8400 September 15–November 11

Matisse in the Studio

Royal Academy, London
Marvellously enjoyable, revelatory exhibition reuniting Matisse's "palette of objects" — Moroccan gueridon tables, Ming vases, Cambodian bronzes, Giwoyo masks from Congo, a



Jean Dubuffet: Théâtres de Mémoire

Pace Gallery, London
Dubuffet was in his seventies, by then under 5ft tall and moving with difficulty, when he began working on the huge cut-and-paste canvases that became his optimistic, quizzical late series "Théâtres de Mémoire" (1975-79). He called

them "picture-assemblages", and cut them out from his paintings on paper, arranging and glueing disparate elements — portrait heads, figures, graffiti scribbles, snippets of architecture, trees, clouds, patches of roughly brushed monochromatic colour — in jumbled, overlapping layers of interlocking parts.

Forty-two such elements create the frenzied, scattergun three-metre collage "Dramatisation". Faces, individuals and groups of figures tumble down the 11-section vertical pink-grey "Localisation". A pair of blocky cartoon personages, like old men chattering, stand among a whirl of diagrams, patterns, figurative

Jean Dubuffet's 1978 work 'Les commentaires' — never before seen in the UK
ADAGP, Paris/
DACS, London

fragments in red and black in "Les commentaires". Swift transitions from a roughly outlined head on white paper to an inky doodle on turquoise ground to painterly red zigzags gives "Les données de l'instant" a dreamlike quality: intense, discordant and irrational.

All these works come to the UK for the first time here. Appearing spontaneous, they are in fact deliberated and intellectual, inspired by Dubuffet's belief that "visual memory is more vivid than merely cognitive memory". So he set out to reproduce the nature of recollection itself: meandering forms, entangled lines, incompatible subjects, the alternation of clarity with illegibility, all imitate the random flurry of memory: *art brut* was always concerned with this sort of unconscious dredging.

But in revisiting his own lexicon of marks and figures, Dubuffet also summed up his lifetime's work, and in repeating and rearranging familiar material, he brings a quality of nostalgia, almost sweetness, which sits paradoxically and fascinatingly with the rawness of the original images. pacegallery.com, 020 3206 7600, September 13–October 21

Venetian rocaille chair, a silver chocolate pot — with the paintings, at different degrees of abstraction, which they inspired. Exceptionally recreated is the milieu of lavish oriental fabrics, rugs, Moorish screens, an interior world shaped by the all-over conception of Islamic aesthetics. royalacademy.org.uk 020 7300 8000, to November 12

Portrait of the Artist: Käthe Kollwitz

Ikon, Birmingham
Master of graphic art in a man's world, Käthe Kollwitz created self-portraits and portraits of working women of extreme emotional intensity and empathy, especially those concerned with grief and memories of her younger son killed in the first world war. Her treatment of social injustice — "Ein Weberaufstand" (A Weavers' Revolt, 1897) and "Bauernkrieg" (Peasants' War, 1908) — are also showcased. ikon-gallery.org, 0121 248 0708, September 13–November 26