

ann
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pismo iz
londona

letter from
london

▼ Ovog će se mjeseca u Londonu otvoriti prvi muzej moderne i suvremene umjetnosti - Tate Modern. Povod je to za pravo slavlje koje, međutim, dolazi sa zakašnjenjem. Nicholas Serota, direktor muzeja i pokretačka snaga njegova stvaranja, naglasio je kako London zaostaje više od 70 godina za New Yorkom i 30 godina za Parizom u otvaranju institucije koja bi se ravnopravno nosila s Muzejom za suvremenu umjetnost i Centrom Pompidou. Njegova je poruka da London, ali i čitava Britanija, trebaju još mnogo toga nadoknaditi. I dok otvaranje ovog značajnog dodatka suvremenoj umjetničkoj sceni predstavlja važno postignuće od kojeg će svi koji se bave umjetnošću bez sumnje imati koristi, Serota s pravom upozorava na opasnost uživanja na lovorikama. Koliko god da je porastao interes javnosti za britansku umjetnost posljednjih godina, on se, protivno uvriježenom mišljenju, nije dogodio preko noći. Za veliku većinu umjetnika i osoba kao što je Serota, ali i administratora, kustosa, trgovaca, profesora i pisaca koji su svi doprinijeli oživljavanju britanske umjetnosti, bila je to teško izvojevana bitka. Sada je potrebno učvrstiti ovu poboljšanu situaciju i nastaviti poticati inovativnost i raznolikost u kontekstu rasprave na globalnoj i lokalnoj razini.

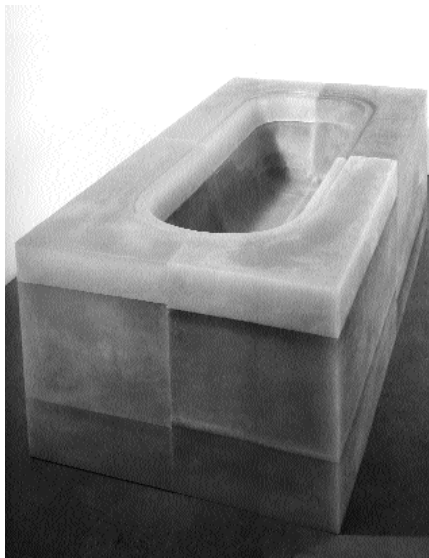
Otvaranje Tate Modern korisna je prilika za procjenu promjena koje su se zbile na britanskoj umjetničkoj sceni u posljednja dva desetljeća. Do osamdesetih je godina britanski sektor suvremene umjetnosti bio ozbiljno zanemaran i iznimno loše financiran s obzirom na relativno bogatstvo zemlje. Za to se vrijeme ostatak Europske zajednice, kojoj je Britanija tvrdila da pripada, bavio u drugoj polovini dvadesetog stoljeća osnivanjem Kunstvereina, Kunsthalles i podizanjem značajnih umjetničkih institucija u gotovo svakom većem gradu. Mogućnosti izlaganja inovativne ili eksperimentalne umjetnosti u državnim galerijama bile su ograničene, kako u Londonu, tako i u čitavoj zemlji. Prodajno tržište, koje je do današnjeg dana ostalo ograničeno na London, uspjelo je poduprijeti tek mali broj umjetnika. Od kraja "ludih šezdesetih" britanska umjetnost nije bila naročito isplativa roba - prodaja uz pomoć trgovaca i aukcije smatrale su se u svakom slučaju sigurnijim i dostojanstvenijim rješenjem. Uspješne su galerije trgovale s renomiranim međunarodnim imenima i često predstavljale domaćoj javnosti važne radove, ali nisu bile kadre upustiti se u rizik s nepoznatim imenima. Jedina je iznimka bila galerija Lisson, koja je izložila djela

● This month London's first museum of modern and contemporary art, Tate Modern, opens its doors. A cause for real celebration and not before time. Nicholas Serota, the Tate's* overall director and the driving force behind the creation of the new museum, has pointed out that London is over 70 years behind New York and 30 years behind Paris in opening an institution to rival the Museum of Modern Art and the Pompidou Centre. His message is that London, and indeed Britain, still has a lot of catching up to do. While the establishment of this major addition to the contemporary art scene represents a significant achievement that will undoubtedly benefit the sector as a whole, Serota is right to caution against complacency. Whatever upturn there has been in public interest in British art in recent years has, contrary to popular belief, not occurred overnight. It has been a hard won struggle for the vast majority of artists and figures like Serota and other administrators, curators, dealers, teachers and writers who have contributed to the revitalisation of British art. The concern now is to consolidate this improved position and to continue to encourage innovation and diversity within a context of global as well as local debate.

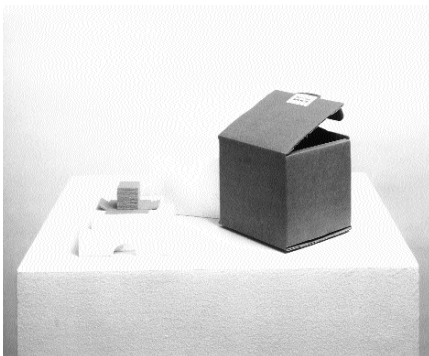
The opening of Tate Modern however provides a useful juncture at which to evaluate the changes that have occurred within the British art scene in the past two decades. By the eighties Britain's contemporary arts sector was seriously neglected and desperately under-funded in terms of the relative wealth of the nation. Meanwhile the rest of the European Union, to which Britain professed to belong, appeared to be spending the latter half of the twentieth century establishing Kunstverein and Kunsthalle and building major art institutions in almost every regional city. Opportunities for exhibiting innovative or experimental art in public galleries were limited, both in London and throughout the country. The commercial market, which was and remains to this day confined to London, also failed to support more than a tiny proportion of artists. British art had not been a particularly marketable commodity since the end of the 'Swinging Sixties' - the secondary dealing and auction market was in any case considered safer and more respectable. The successful galleries were the ones who dealt in established international names, often introducing important work to a local audience, but unable to take risks with unknowns. One exception was the Lisson Gallery which showed most of the

sl. 1: Herzog & de Meuron, Tate Modern, Bankside, London





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sl.2: R. Whiteread, *Untitled (Orange Bath)*, 1996.
sl.3: M. Creed, *Work No. 78*, 1992.
sl.4: C. Ofili, *Painting with Shit on it*, 1993.

većine kipara “predmeta” (u ovoj su se slobodnoj grupi umjetnika nalazili Tony Cragg, Richard Deacon, Anish Kapoor, Richard Wentworth, Alison Wilding i Bill Woodrow), a koji su kasnije stekli međunarodno priznanje. Brojne manje poduzetne galerije, koje su izlagale inovativne radove mladih britanskih i međunarodnih umjetnika, bile su prisiljene zatvoriti svoja vrata za vrijeme recesije osamdesetih godina. Onima koje su preživjele, kao što su Interim Art i Anthony Reynolds, postupno se pridružila brzo rastuća skupina novih galerija, kao rezultat povećanja tržišta u devedesetima, koji je uslijedio kao odgovor na sve veći optimizam i osjećaj sigurnosti.

Umjetničke inicijative i inicijative manjeg razmjera u obliku organizacija kojima je zadatak bio pronaći radne prostore povoljnih najamnih cijena, neprofitne galerije i udruge, odavna već predstavljaju alternativno rješenje opterećenom lancu državnih galerija u Britaniji. Nažalost, samo ih je relativno malo uspjelo održati entuzijazam i energiju koja je bila potrebna da bi se preživjelo u situaciji kakva je postojala sve do kraja osamdesetih. Od onih koji su u tome uspjeli, posebno je posebno spomenuti galeriju Matts u Londonu, Locus + u Newcastleu i galeriju Transmission u Glasgowu. A onda je došlo da iznenađujućeg porasta aktivnosti koji je dijelom bio potaknut potpunim razočarenjem postojećim sustavom, kao i domišljatom primjenom vladajuće političke opsjednutosti privatnim poduzetništvom. Na tržištu se našlo mnoštvo jeftinih, često i besplatnih uredskih i skladišnih prostora u samoj gradskoj jezgri, što je bila cijena koju je britanska industrijska infrastruktura platila za politiku Margaret Thatcher. Mnogi od ovih prostora koje su preuzeli umjetnici rade i danas, a neki su od njih prerasli u renomirana mjesta koja dobivaju javnu potporu. Mnoga su zamišljena tek kao kratkoročni projekti. Sada već legendarne izložbe *Freeze* koje su se održavale u upravnoj zgradi londonske luke organizirala je skupina studenata s Goldsmiths' Collegea među kojima su se nalazili Angela Bulloch, Mat Collishaw, Angus Fairhurst, Anya Gallaccio, Damien Hirst, Gary Hume, Michael Landy, Sarah Lucas i Simon Patterson. Jedan od organizatora, Damien Hirst, priznaje da je za ove izložbe jako zaslužan model nedavno otvorene galerije Saatchi, nekadašnje tvornice boja, u kojoj je željna londonska publika mogla razgledati najznačajnija djela svih američkih i europskih “zvijezda” o kojima su

‘object’ sculptors (a loose group which included Tony Cragg, Richard Deacon, Anish Kapoor, Richard Wentworth, Alison Wilding and Bill Woodrow) who went on to receive international acclaim. Many smaller enterprising galleries, who showed innovative work by young British and international artists, were forced to close in the late eighties recession. Those who survived, such as Interim Art and Anthony Reynolds, have gradually been joined by a rapidly growing group of new galleries, as the market has expanded throughout the nineties in response to an increasing optimism and confidence.

Artists’ and small-scale initiatives, in the form of organisations to secure reasonably priced studio rents, non-profit galleries and collectives, have long provided an alternative structure to the beleaguered state gallery circuit in Britain. Sadly relatively few succeeded in sustaining the dedication and energy needed to survive in the situation that existed up until the end of the eighties - of those who did Matts Gallery in London, Locus + in Newcastle and Transmission in Glasgow deserve special mention. Then a startling increase in activity in this area began to take place, driven partly by total disillusionment with the existing system and by a resourceful appliance of the prevailing political obsession with private enterprise. There was also a plentiful supply of cheap, often free office and warehouse space in inner city areas, as Margaret Thatcher’s policies took their toll on Britain’s industrial infrastructure. Many of these artists’ run spaces continue to operate and some have grown into established venues receiving public support. Many were only ever intended to exist as short-term initiatives. The now legendary *Freeze* exhibitions held in the Port of London Authority Building were organised by a group of Goldsmiths’ students and included Angela Bulloch, Mat Collishaw, Angus Fairhurst, Anya Gallaccio, Damien Hirst, Gary Hume, Michael Landy, Sarah Lucas and Simon Patterson. One of the organisers, Damien Hirst, acknowledges that these shows owed much to the model of the newly opened Saatchi Gallery, a converted paint factory where an eager London audience viewed major works by all the American and European ‘stars’ they had read about in the art magazines. The scale of the gallery and the unusually spare installations of these mostly vast works were something these ambitious young artists sought to emulate. The radical cross-disciplinary structure and

čitali u umjetničkim časopisima. Ono što su ovi ambiciozni mladi umjetnici htjeli nadmašiti bila je veličina galerije i način na koji su ova, uglavnom ogromna djela, u galeriji bila postavljena. Sigurnost njihova nastupa potaklo je iskustvo temeljitog interdisciplinarnog pristupa i naglasaka na kritičkoj raspravi koje su stekli na Goldsmithsu. Predani profesori, koji su se i sami istakli kao umjetnici izlagači, dali su im toliko potrebne praktične informacije o tome kako preživjeti u svijetu izvan sveučilišnih zidova. Njihova su meta stoga bili kolekcionari, kritičari i kustosi koji inače posjećuju samo već poznata mjesta. Rezultat je bio taj da je njihovim radovima dan publicitet, da su se prodavali i da se o njima pisalo. Nije bilo važno to što svaki rad nije bio remek djelo; te su izložbe izgledale sjajno i stvorile su energiju koja je umjetničkom svijetu Londona dala toliko potreban podstrek.

Ovoj "generaciji 88/89." posvećena je znatna pažnja, iako su nekoliko godina ranije s istog koledža također došli umjetnici Julian Opie i Mark Wallinger, koji su odmah stekli priznanje, kao i neki drugi umjetnici sa Slade Collegea (među njima Douglas Gordon, Mona Hatoum i Rachel Whiteread). Zanimljivi umjetnici s ova dva londonska koledža i dalje su vrlo uspješni (među njima Steve McQueen, Gillian Wearing i Jane i Louise Wilson s Goldsmithsa, te Martin Creed, Tacita Dean i Georgina Starr sa Sladea), kao i neki s koledža Chelsea, St Martin's i Royal College of Art (uključujući Tracy Emin i Chrisa Ofilija). Glasgow School of Art dala je također iznimno velik broj međunarodno priznatih umjetnika (uključujući tu i Christine Borland, Roddya Buchanana, Davida Shrigleya, Rossa Sinclaira i Simona Starlinga). Izložba *The British Art Show*, koja se organizira svakih pet godina i predstavlja pregled britanske umjetnosti nastale u proteklom razdoblju, a trenutno se nalazi u Edinburghu i do kraja godine ide za Southampton, Cardiff i Birmingham (iako ne i London) obuhvaća čitav niz različitih umjetnika. Umjetnici s Goldsmithsa su predstavljeni, ali ni u kojem slučaju nisu u većini, niti je izbor, kao što smo navikli, usmjeren uglavnom na London. Zastupljeni su umjetnici iz cijele Britanije i različitih generacija. Čini se da se promijenio čak i izgled umjetnosti kroz desetljeće - nestale su velike kretnje i usredotočenost na velike filozofske teme života i smrti. Veće su nijanse u pristupu i neformalnost u izvođenju.

emphasis on critical debate they had experienced at Goldsmiths' College encouraged a confident approach. Dedicated teachers, who were themselves prominent exhibiting artists, provided much needed practical information on how to survive in the world beyond the educational establishment. These students therefore targeted the collectors, critics and curators who would normally frequent only established venues and as a consequence their work was publicised, sold and written about. It did not matter that not every work was a masterpiece, these shows looked great and the energy generated gave the London art world a much needed jolt.

Considerable attention has been devoted to this 'class of 88/89' but a few years earlier artists Julian Opie and Mark Wallinger had also emerged from Goldsmiths' to immediate acclaim and other artists from the Slade were also developing considerable reputations (including Douglas Gordon, Mona Hatoum and Rachel Whiteread). Interesting artists emerging from these two London colleges have continued to enjoy success (including Steve McQueen, Gillian Wearing and Jane and Louise Wilson from Goldsmiths' and Martin Creed, Tacita Dean and Georgina Starr from the Slade) as well as from Chelsea, St Martin's and the Royal College of Art (including Tracy Emin, Chris Ofili). Glasgow School of Art has also produced an extraordinary number of artists who are gaining international recognition (including Christine Borland, Roddy Buchanan, David Shrigley, Ross Sinclair and Simon Starling). In the five yearly survey exhibition *The British Art Show* currently being held throughout Edinburgh and touring to Southampton, Cardiff and Birmingham (though not London) for the rest of the year, the range of artists is extremely diverse. Artists' from Goldsmiths' College are represented but are by no means in the majority, nor is the selection quite so predominantly London-centric as we have come to expect. Artists from all over Britain and from a range of generations are included. Even the appearance of the art seems to have changed over the decade - gone are the grand gestures and the concentration on grand philosophical themes of life and death. There appears to be a greater subtlety of approach and informality in execution.

Whilst the British public has a reputation for being rather conservative in its tastes in art, an indication of a transformation in this attitude is the current reception to the arrival of Tate Modern. The ecstatic welcome





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sl.5: Tate Modern, Bankside, London



* Tate Modern, otvorena na mjestu nekadašnje električne centrale na južnoj obali Temze, izlagat će međunarodnu umjetnost od početka dvadesetog stoljeća. Originalna Tate Gallery, koja sada nosi naziv Tate Britain, prikazivat će, kao što joj i samo ime kaže, britansku umjetnost do današnjih dana, dok će se u Tate Liverpool i Tate St Ives izmjenjivati izložbe iz zbirke muzeja. Svi će muzeji Tate nastaviti s organiziranjem privremenih izložbi.

* Turnerova nagrada utemeljena je 1984. godine, obustavljena 1990. i ponovno pokrenuta 1991. u svom sadašnjem obliku prema kojem u užu izbor ulaze četiri umjetnika koja izlažu izbor iz svog djela u Tate Gallery. Pobjednik dobiva 20 000 funti na svečanoj dodjeli nagrada koju snima i uživo prenosi sponzor nagrade Channel 4.

Iako je britanska javnost poznata po svom konzervativnom ukusu u umjetnosti, pokazatelj promjene ovog stava trenutno je prihvaćanje otvaranja muzeja Tate Modern. Oduševljena dobrodošlica koja ga je zatekla u očitoj je suprotnosti s reakcijom na druge velike milenijske projekte u Londonu, poput daleko popularnijeg, iako uglavnom prezrenog Domea. Nedavno osnovani Fond državne lutrije pokrio je 50% građevinskih troškova (ostatak je sakupljen privatnim donacijama i drugim javnim doprinosima), no nije bilo puno prigovora da su javna sredstva uzalud potrošena. U posljednje dvije godine isti je fond bio zaslužan za osnivanje novih galerija u Birminghamu, Dundeeju, Walsallu, Milton Keynesu i Salfordu kao i za preuređenje mnogih drugih, među njima i galerije Serpentine u Londonu. Svi ovi raznoliki dodaci arhitektonskom pejzažu izazvali su osjećaj građanskog ponosa koji je nekad bio rezerviran isključivo za podizanje srednjovjekovnih katedrala, viktorijanskih gradskih vjećnica ili velikih trgovačkih centara u osamdesetima. Transformacija Britanije u kulturno svjesnu naciju začuđujući je fenomen. Ovo bi, naravno, bilo neostvarivo bez lutrijskog novca, ali se taj novac nije trošio rastrošno. Bila je potrebna velika upornost da bi neki projekt uopće ispunio uvjete za nagradu te da bi se onda prikupilo još preostalih 50% sredstava. Upornost je još uvijek potrebna, jer se sretni dobitnici svake nove prekrasne zgrade sada moraju boriti kako bi uvjerali odgovorne odbore da su im sada potrebna odgovarajuća sredstva kako bi ti isti prostori funkcionirali.

Jedan od najočitijih pokazatelja povećanog interesa javnosti za suvremenu britansku umjetnost je veliki je broj posjetitelja zabilježen na izložbama Turnerove nagrade, kao i na putujućoj izložbi radova u vlasništvu renomiranog kolekcionara i reklamnog mogula Charlesa Saatchija pod imenom *Sensation*. Pojačan interes medija za "senzacionalne" aspekte britanske umjetnosti s druge je strane utjecao na trivijalizaciju velike većine radova i na prikazivanje svih mladih britanskih umjetnika kao ciničnih u njihovim namjerama i ponašanju. Jedan manji broj slavni umjetnika danas doista živi životom zvijezda filmske i muzičke industrije i redovno se pojavljuje u žutom tisku i na stranicama modnih časopisa. No bilo bi pogrešno pretpostaviti da su bogatstvo ili financijska neovisnost postali stvarnost za više od nekolicine sretnika. Osim što redovito izlaže i prodaje svoja djela, znatan broj umjetnika dodatno zarađuje podučava-

it appears to be receiving is in marked contrast to the reception of London's other major millennial project, the infinitely more populist but largely despised 'Dome Experience'. The newly established State Lottery Fund financed 50% of the building costs (the remainder was raised through private donations and other public grants) but there has been little complaint of it being a waste of public funds. In the past two years the same fund has also been responsible for the initial funding of new galleries in Birmingham, Dundee, Walsall, Milton Keynes and Salford and for the refurbishment of many others including the Serpentine Gallery in London. These varied additions to the architectural landscape have engendered a sense of civic pride once reserved for the erection of medieval cathedrals, Victorian town halls or eighties shopping malls. It is a puzzling phenomenon - the transformation of Britain into a culturally aware nation. It would of course have been impossible without the provision of hard cash in the form of lottery money, but that cash was not bestowed with any degree of largess. Considerable tenacity was required for each project to reach the award stage and then to raise the remaining 50%. It is still required now as the happy recipients of each spanking new building struggle to persuade the relevant committees that what they now require are sufficient funds to run it.

One of the clearest indicators of the increased public interest in contemporary British art have been the vast audience numbers recorded visiting the Turner Prize* displays and the touring *Sensation* exhibition of works belonging to the high profile collector and advertising mogul Charles Saatchi. The intense media focus on the 'sensational' aspects of British art has, on the other hand, served to trivialise much of the work and represent all young British artists as cynical in their intentions and behaviour. A handful of celebrity artists do now live the lifestyles associated with stars of the film and music industry, appearing regularly in the tabloid newspapers and the pages of fashion magazines. But it would be a great mistake to assume that financial wealth or even independence has become a reality for more than the lucky few. A considerable number of artists are however not only exhibiting regularly but contributing to their income from teaching and other jobs with sales of their work. The existence of a lively structure of small scale galleries and revitalised public institutions means that artists are choosing

jući i obavljajući različite poslove. Postojanje žive strukture malih galerija i oživjelih državnih institucija znači ostanak umjetnika u gradovima kao što su Glasgow, Edinburgh, Liverpool i Newcastle. No, jedna od velikih prepreka koja se u takvim gradovima tek treba prijeći jest poticanje prodajnih aktivnosti.

Velika većina galerija nalazi se danas u Londonu u njegovom sjeveroistočnom i jugoistočnom dijelu gdje su niske najamnine oduvijek privlačile umjetnike. Tate Modern nalazi se na južnoj obali Temze, dok je na sjeveru poznati trgovac umjetninama Jay Jopling otvorio drugu galeriju White Cube u popularnom Hoxton Squareu. U njihovoj se blizini nalaze brojni prodajni i neprofitni prostori, ogromni i sagrađeni uz velike troškove, ili polovična rješenja kojima se upravlja iz nečijeg dnevnog boravka. Nevjerojatno, no umjetnost koju izlažu bilo poznati, bilo nepoznati umjetnici, mladi ili ne, uglavnom je svježija i uzbudljiva i svi se nadaju da će takvom i ostati. Ako se cijeli fenomen prenapuše, najamnine će tako naglo porasti da će se iz ovih dijelova grada morati iseliti ne samo umjetnici, već i svi ostali, osim najbogatijih galerija. Za to je vrijeme u zapadnom dijelu Londona galerija Saatchi, koja i dalje privlači mase u dio grada koji niti je naročito popularan niti je poznat po niskim najmninama, otvorila novu izložbu u vrijeme otvaranja Tate Modern. Njen naziv, *Ant Noises*, anagram je riječi *Sensation*, a izložba je i doista ponovno izlaganje starih i novih radova umjetnika koji su izlagali u sklopu izložbe *Sensation*. I dok novine raspravljaju o tome kolika je stvarna vrijednost Damiena Hirsta za čije je najnovije djelo u svom fundusu galerija Saatchi platila milijun funti i je li bilo mudro izlagati najnovije radove Sarah Lucas kupljene samo nekoliko tjedana ranije od jedne čuvene prodajne galerije, opći je stav da je galerija ovim marketinškim potezom ipak otišla predaleko. Ovim umjetnicima nije potreban skandal poput svade s gradonačelnikom New Yorka ili još jedno izlaganje u prostoru galerije Saatchi - štoviše, to kod javnosti izaziva osjećaj iritacije i zamorenosti britanskom umjetnošću. Jer kad se situacija jednom toliko znatno poboljša, britanskoj umjetničkoj zajednici bit će doista teško održavati ravnotežu i poticati vitalnost koja uistinu postoji, a s druge strane izbjeći osjećaj samozadovoljstva.

London, 28. travanj 2000. ▼

to remain in cities such as Glasgow, Edinburgh, Liverpool and Newcastle. The major hurdle still to be overcome outside the capital is to generate enough commercial activity.

In London it is in the areas to the north and south-east, where cheap rents have traditionally attracted artists to live and work, that most of the galleries are now to be found. The new Tate is situated on the south bank of the Thames, while to the north celebrity dealer Jay Jopling has opened a second 'White Cube' gallery in fashionable Hoxton Square. Around these areas are numerous commercial and non-profit spaces, large and built at huge expense or makeshift and run out of somebody's living room. It is overwhelming but the range of art shown by artists established or unknown, young or not, is mostly fresh and exciting and everybody hopes it will stay that way. If the whole phenomenon is over-hyped, rents will rise so steeply that not only artists will have to move out of the area, but all but the richest galleries too. Meanwhile over in West London the Saatchi Gallery, which continues to draw crowds in an area which is neither particularly fashionable nor is known for its cheap rents, has opened a new exhibition to coincide with the opening of Tate Modern. Its title, *Ant Noises*, is an anagram of *Sensation* and the show is indeed a rehash of old and new works by artists who featured in the *Sensation* exhibition. While the papers debate the merits of Saatchi's latest million pound Damien Hirst acquisition and the wisdom of displaying recent works by Sarah Lucas bought only a matter of weeks ago from a prominent commercial gallery, there is a sense that this is a marketing exercise too far. These artists do not need the scandal of a row with the mayor of New York or another airing in the Saatchi space - on the contrary it provokes a sense of irritation and fatigue with British art. When things have changed some much for the good it is going to be a difficult balancing act for the British art community to encourage the vitality which truly does exist and avoid complacency.

London, April 28th 2000 ●

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* *Tate Modern, a converted power station on the South Bank of the Thames, will show International art from the beginning of the Twentieth century. The original Tate Gallery, now rebranded as Tate Britain, will as its name suggests, show British art up to the present, while Tate Liverpool and Tate St Ives accommodate changing displays from the Tate collections. All the Tates will continue to hold temporary exhibitions.*

* *The Turner Prize was founded in 1984, was suspended in 1990 and resumed again in 1991 in its present format, in which 4 artists are shortlisted and exhibit a selection of work at the Tate Gallery. The winner received £20,000 at an award ceremony, which is televised and broadcast live by the sponsors Channel 4.*

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