

The art of DIY

NICK HACKWORTH | EVENING STANDARD | Thursday 30 September 2004 00:00 |



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The Evening Standard

Prime among the many pleasures offered by this show is the amusingly undignified spectacle of watching fellow visitors disappear head first into small tunnels, leaving their bottoms wiggling momentarily in the air.

For his first major UK exhibition German artist John Bock, 39, has built a labyrinthine DIY cultural theme parkcum-assault course out of acres of chipboard, MDF and tinfoil. Rather than fill it with his own artwork, he has curated a show of his own favourite works and cultural artefacts, from pieces by Martin Kippenberger and Mike Kelly to an unfortunate video of The Cure's greatest hits.

The selection is a sophisticated melange of the absurd, the revolting and, just to be contrary, the mildly tasteful. Of particular importance to Bock is the work of the Viennese Actionist, a group of artists who, in the

Sixties and Seventies, blended group sex, paint and blood into tasteful art performances.

Their influence, as well as that of the US artist Paul McCarthy, is apparent in the few Bock works on show - five very silly, very funny video pieces that rightfully mock the pretensions of art and culture.

Best among them is one of Bock driving an earth digger across a field for a few minutes with mock-braggadocio, all grimaces and theatrical turns of the wheel, shot to make it look as dramatic and exciting as possible.

It ends with the digger triumphantly disappearing over the summit of a nearby hill.

The piece recording a boxing match between Bock and a friend, both dressed in absurd, elaborate and faintly obscene costumes is also of merit. As they smash each other over the head with their foam fists their costumes rip and red cabbage spills across the floor.

A happy antidote to the hollow, worthy attitudes of our public art institutions. ■