



Traditionally, tapestries chronicled great moments in history in a wildly luxurious form, which helped warm chilly castles. They were also used to display the colours of trade unions and, of course, for hiding Polonius. As far as I know, nobody since William Morris, Picasso, Matisse and Chagall has taken tapestry seriously. Now comes *Demons, Yarns and Tales at The Dairy*, 7 Wakefield Street, London WC1 (from 10 to 22 November), an exhibition of 14 tapestries by international artists, including several YBAs. Each tapestry is hand-made in a limited edition of five (the weaving was done in Shanghai). How do contemporary artists respond to a medium that naturally lends itself to narrative, graphic shapes, colour and carefully worked texture? Peter Blake has done a characteristic 'Alphabet', which translates well into a Pop art tapestry sampler. Paul Noble's pencil drawing, 'Villa Joe', took a year to weave into a vast cloth in 50 shades of grey. The work was copied into a scaled-up cartoon, the wool hand-dyed and approved before the weaving began. Yet the surface is almost too perfect — as if mechanically made. Grayson Perry's marvellous 'Vote Alan Measles for God' features his favourite teddy straddling the Twin Towers, with Bin Laden, oilrigs and other 9/11 memorabilia in classic Oriental carpet colours. His is the only piece in needlepoint stitches rather than woven tapestry, giving it touching signs of humanity. Gavin Turk's 'Mappa Del Mundo' is an atlas with detritus forming the continents (see above), and Kara Walker's tapestry, with a background depicting the American civil war, has a disturbingly beautiful silhouette of a woman hanging, as racial violence erupts.

Jenny Wilhide

wink. No Speedos, no plays on Martinis being shaken or stirred, no Omega moments and, as for the theme music, it doesn't strike up until the final credits roll, which is a bit weird, considering it has to be the most rousing, iconic, film theme music of all time. I do think director Marc Forster (*Monster's Ball*, *Finding Neverland*) has rather thrown the baby out with the bathwater, and while I am all for throwing babies out with the bathwater generally — babies are a lot of work, after all — the result here is an unengaging, cold and mechanised affair without heart. It's also quite boring. And there isn't enough sex. Not nearly enough sex. Hell, let's be honest, I'm never going to have sex with Daniel Craig, unless he happens to be passing and I can get the rugby tackle in quick enough, so I'd have liked my Craig fantasy to have received a little nourishment at least. But it did not. Indeed, as my fantasy said on our way out, 'Well, that was a waste of time, wasn't it?' And I could not have agreed more.

The film opens in Italy, then travels to Panama, Chile, Mexico, Austria... more countries than any previous Bond film,

apparently, which is a shame, as concentrating on the narrative journey rather than the glossier, geographical one might have made for a better film but there you have it, and what do I know? So, Italy then, with Bond speeding away from cops in his Aston Martin and with sinister 'Mr White' tied up in the boot. This is a true sequel, with the action picking up minutes from where *Casino Royale* left off, so if you didn't really get sinister Mr White then, you so won't get him now, and if you did get him then, you so won't remember now. It's a big ask, I think, demanding audiences recall a plot from two years ago, and while normally I don't mind a big ask — ask me and ask me big, I will often say to people — this particular ask utterly defeated me. Oh, age and increasing forgetfulness... I can start searching for a word at breakfast and not get it until well after supper, by which time I don't need it anymore. I did this just yesterday with 'lamentable' which is now going spare, if anyone wants it. First come, first served.

My point here? My point, I think, is that while *QOS* may make some sense to you, it made absolutely none to me. All I can

properly tell you is there are goodies and baddies, M (Judi Dench) gets irritated with Bond, is then proud of him, and, along the way, there is Mr Greene (Mathieu Amalric), who is plotting nasty things beneath his cover as an eco-philanthropist, and an exiled Bolivian dictator (Joaquín Cosío) who also appears to be up to no good. Throughout, Bond is meant to be seeking revenge for the betrayal and death of the woman he loved, Vesper — if I ever knew who killed Vesper or why, I certainly don't now — but you never get any sense of him as some kind of wounded man seeking the closure that may, one assumes, bring him a quantum of solace. In many ways, this Bond is a return to almost Roger Moore-ish non-form; just a shooting, fighting, stunt-ing action figure jumping and racing his way from one set piece to the next. There are a lot of set pieces: a shoot-out at the opera, a high-speed boat chase, a jump from a plane, a fire-ball of a finale, but nothing to match the adrenaline and beauty of *Casino Royale's* free-running sequence. Nothing even comes near it.

I don't blame Craig, who still has the same physical presence and the face like a hammered pumpkin which shouldn't work, but does. But the script gives him nothing to work with: no humour, no emotional truthfulness; no vulnerability, no human touches at all. And as for the totty, well. The one played by Gemma Arterton is entirely regressive — just eye candy, basically, and of no narrative value whatsoever — while the one played by Olga Kurylenko is extremely beautiful but has nil chemistry with Craig who, in turn, does not strip at any point and barely gets a kiss. This is no good; no good at all. Or, as my fantasy says, 'Unless he does something really sexy soon, I think we are just going to have to go back to Colin Firth.' Again, I could not disagree.

It's as if all the lessons learnt when Craig first took over the role — that audiences are as interested in emotional engagement as exploding buildings — have been unlearned, and it's all rather... yes... lamentable. Sorry, it's gone now. But there will be more very soon, I promise. □

Television

Dickens delivers

James Delingpole

About 25 years ago, during a particularly bad acid trip, I had my soul stolen by Mister Migarette, an evil glowing man with a huge hat, like the mad hatter's, who lived in the ash on the end of my cigarette. It put me off smoking for a while and I considered giving up. But then I realised, 'If you're not careful, you're going