

An artist's view: Gavin Turk

Gavin Turk first made his name in 1993 with a waxwork self-portrait in the guise of Sid Vicious posed in the stance of Elvis Presley as immortalised by Andy Warhol. The former YBA now has an international reputation with a solo show at Kunsthau Baselland, which closes this evening.

The Art Newspaper: It must be frustrating that your show had to end because the Kunsthau is near the football stadium where the European Cup starts on Saturday and there were security concerns.

Gavin Turk: It's very annoying, especially as England isn't even taking part.

TAN: The title of the show was "Burnt Out". Was this in any way a comment on the current bonfire of the art market vanities?

GT: I'm not doing it on purpose but I could be doing it subconsciously.

TAN: What do you feel about the current state of the market?

GT: I do feel quite jaded about it. I realise that it is really important to sell your work as part of the process of getting it shown, but I think I all too often find that when I am in that market industry space that some of the ideas and the joy of it is being taken away.

TAN: It's often said that art fairs are bad places for artists. Do you agree?

GT: Why do they say that? Because the artist is going to get distracted and probably going to get quite depressed. But why are they getting depressed? If the galleries are saying that the artists shouldn't come, and if they are worried that the artists are going to get depressed then does that not mean that possibly they are doing something wrong?

TAN: You have recently stopped working with White Cube, after some 15 years with the gallery.

GT: We are just working on a project-by-project basis for the time being. I'm still working with



Sean Kelly in New York with Ursula Krinzinger in Vienna and having other conversations with other galleries. I can't really give any more detail at the moment, as it's still a bit delicate.

TAN: How does it feel to be showing in a public space at the same time as Art Basel?

GT: The Kunsthau Basselland is a real, local, working art space where students and artists and people who are more interested in the local scene will go as well. It isn't a grand Schaulager-like, show-off institution. I like the fact that it's not huge and it's different to the art fair context. You're entering into a different part of Basel, you're entering into Baselland, which is apparently something quite different and distinct from Basel-city.

TAN: The Kunsthau has a stand at the Liste art fair. Will the work there be for sale?

GT: I'm going to put a [golden] apple core sculpture in there, just as a teaser. Blink and you'll miss it.

TAN: At an art fair the subtext is always commercial, in all its sections, even Art Unlimited.

GT: [Art] Unlimited is wonderful [and] wonderfully limited by the fact that it is completely associated with the fair. You can't show your work in Unlimited if are not represented by a gallery, which is being represented in the fair—so if you don't have gallery representation then you can't be included.

Interview by Louisa Buck

