

Art Review:

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'Artists are just niche-ing their thing and then putting up their big billboards saying "Look at me"' Laurie Anderson

April 2011

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First View

Laura McLean-Ferris goes to New York for the Armory, Oliver Basciano has a look at Matt Golden at Bischoff/Weiss, London, Tiffany Jow reviews *I Know Something About Love* at Parasol Unit, London, and Joshua Mack reports on Alison Knowles at James Fuentes, New York

Javier Mariscal

From devising Cobi, the mascot dog of the 1992 Barcelona Olympics, to conceiving the 2005 sculpture *Crash!*, an oversize reproduction of a seemingly exploding 1959 Chevrolet Impala, Javier Mariscal is a multifaceted, uninhibited force of natural creativity. This Spanish phenomenon is somehow able to dance in the high-pressure orbits of graphics, architecture, design, furniture, movies and art without ever losing his playful exuberance. He's not so much in his second childhood as still enjoying his first.

One of 11 brothers and sisters, Mariscal, born in Valencia, grew up with the sun, the Mediterranean and vivid street festivals. Each year, for the San José festival, he would construct his own miniature *fallas* based on the colourful cardboard sculptures – some realistic, others crazily exaggerated – that Valencians traditionally set on fire during the celebrations. He quit art college in Barcelona after two years, and when he was twenty-three he produced his earliest hippy comics, which were suppressed by General Franco's censors. After the dictator's death, in 1975, comics and other artforms flourished in Spain, and word of Mariscal's versatility started spreading abroad.

His next film project and exhibition, following last year's acclaimed animated movie *Chico & Rita* (now adapted into a graphic novel published by SelfMadeHero), reunite him with his talismanic cartoon critters *los Garriris*: hybrids of Mickey and Miró (or Goofy and Duffy). "This gang of characters was born suddenly, without realising", says Mariscal. "They were uncontrollable. When I draw *los Garriris*, I always feel they are the ones who make the decisions. Out of all of them, the tall one, Fermín, and the short one, Piker, decided that they were enough." The pair like nothing better than to ride their Vespas, hang out with girls and go to the beach with their fishing dog, Julian. "Julian is the most intelligent. He never speaks but he controls the situation. He has his head on his shoulders."

Mariscal likes surprising himself, so he never makes preparatory scripts or sketches for his comics. "There is no pencil in *los Garriris*. There is ink, the pen scratching the paper straight to the open grave, but there's no eraser – you can't 'undo', so any mistake you have to turn into something good." After his intoxicating retrospective at London's Design Museum in 2009, he currently has his first solo show in Brussels, where the two new *Garriris* strips in this issue are showing. "I love *los Garriris* very much", he says. "They are my family, my paper family."

Garriris is at Galerie Champaka, Brussels, 18 March to 23 April

words **PAUL GRAVETT**



Rob Pruitt (*Air de Paris, Paris, 6 April – 7 May, www.airdeparis.com*)

knows something about stretching the definition of art – into an extended insult to the artworld. The Washington, DC-born gadfly's creative career has encompassed controversialist antics, as part of Pruitt/Early, concerning the commodification of black culture; a 490cm line of coke on a winding, shaped mirror (*Cocaine Buffet*, 1998); exhibitions of iPhone photos; the hackles-raising annual Art Awards; and lately, paintings based on Amish quilts suggesting a knowingly puritanical detox from bad-boy behaviour. Can Pruitt reclaim the moral high ground? Did he ever stand upon it? Paris – which has long breathed naughtiness like air – may be the perfect place for him.

Zip through France to a cubist villa on its southeast tip, and you'll reach the 26th edition of

the Hyères International Festival of Fashion and Photography (*Hyères, 29 April – 2 May, www.villanoailles-hyeres.com*),

a maven-thronged barometer of sartorial and aesthetic trends that showcases ten jury-selected fashion designers (the event put

