



Visual arts Jackie Wullschlager

Hans Josephsohn

Southwood Garden, St James' Church
London W1

Facing East: Recent Works from China, India and Japan/Ron Mueck

Manchester Art Gallery

What is 21st-century sculpture? Hans Josephsohn's outdoor exhibition showcasing 50 years of grappling with the human image, from abstracted Egyptian stele-like forms to monumental, agitated figures half-buried in their own bulk, is modernist in its abstracting, distorting impulse and individual expression, classical in references and formal purity. Its final few weeks as an oasis of contemplation in Piccadilly should not be missed.

89-year-old Josephsohn recently lamented that "one day sculpture might be over... When someone attaches five wires to the ceiling and hangs something on them, then this may be something but it is not sculpture." I wonder if he has seen Ron Mueck, who unnervingly continues the figurative, humanist tradition with hyper-real, out-of-scale mixed media sculptures depicting not only physical but emotional states with terrific technical skill and tenderness.



One of Hans Josephsohn's monumental outdoor figures, in snow

Mike Bruce

"Spooning Couple", small and uneasily together but distant, the outsize "Wild Man", and the ambiguous "Mask III" go on show as part of Artist Rooms this week. In the same museum, 10 works lent by collector Frank Cohen, mostly three-dimensional, address contemporary art's global diversity: Bharti Kher's floppy life-size baby elephant with skin made of bindis, Indian women's forehead decoration, called "The Skin Speaks a Language Not Its Own"; Ravinder Reddy's huge fibreglass "Gilded Head"; Chen Lei's

absurdist upside-down polar bear balanced on the nose of a small boy, "The Big Kiss". Like most of Cohen's choices, they are defiantly figurative, often funny, use unexpected materials, delight in popular references and are very lightly conceptual: the sort of works which Josephsohn would see as beyond sculpture.
www.hauserwirth.com
+44 (0)20 7287 2300, to February 27
www.manchestergalleries.org
+44 (0)161 235 8888, from Thursday to April 11;