



ART | DIARY OF A SOMEBODY

Rebecca Hossack — Day 2

The gallerist gears up for Lapada, the most glamorous art opening of the year



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REBECCA HOSSACK

DAY: 1 | 2

I am woken before seven by the insistent “beeb-beeb-beeb” of a van reversing in the street. It is just one among many irritating instances of noise pollution that assail us every day: burglar alarms, car alarms, sirens. All these things were carried into being on the plausible grounds of increasing safety. But no thought seems to have been given to the real psychological toll that this ever-mounting din takes on urban dwellers. It creates anxiety and destroys peace.

My friend Satish Kumar, the ex-Jain monk and long-time editor of *Resurgence* (an inspirational periodical that has been suggesting “new paradigms for living” for over 40 years) always advocates the virtue of human solutions rather than mechanical ones. And he is quite right. We should celebrate the fact that we are dependent upon each other, rather than trying to escape that dependency. How much better for a van-driver to ask his mate to get out and check that it’s safe to reverse – than to subject us all to the mechanical beeping of his vehicle.

Up and about, I set off for an early-morning run around Regent’s Park. It’s a beautiful time of year, and a beautiful time of day – traces of mist still in the air, the light pale in the trees, the leaves just beginning to turn – and the Nash terraces providing a glorious backdrop of creamy-white classicism. For all this visual loveliness there is one sad lack. I make a complete circuit of the park without hearing a single bird in song. In Melbourne last month, my morning run was always accompanied by a cacophony of merry twittering – the real not the virtual kind. Where are London’s birds?

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Off to the hairdresser to get myself ready for the opening of the Lapada art fair. It is a cross-town trek to Josh Wood's salon in Holland Park. Like me Josh has been running his business for over 25 years and I love the way he constantly strives to keep it fresh and exciting. The salon is always being revamped or reinvented. Today it has been transformed into a sylvan glade, with great birch fronds attached to all the pillars. Josh is aglow from having just carried off yet another prize at some recent award ceremony.

The art fair opens at 11am with a special preview for collectors, press and trade interior decorators. By the time I arrive – half an hour late – Georgia has already made our first sale: a Phil Shaw print depicting a shelf of books. All the books contain the words “The Truth About” in their title, and the image is richly printed in varying shades of grey (more than 50) because “the truth is rarely black and white”. It is a beautiful thing, rich in wit and allusion.

At 6pm, the gala opening proper starts. It is quite the most glamorous art-fair opening of the year: a queue round Berkeley Square, some fantastic frocks and a tide of Lanson champagne carrying everyone along. We sell to American millionaires, Australian doctors, Russian minigarchs and a lovely woman from Lancashire. It is just another reminder of the happy mixture of London life.

Afterwards I have arranged a dinner at EventOracle, the pop-up restaurant attached to the fair. Perched on stilts, it has wonderful views out over the square, and the food is even better. The dinner was to fulfill a long-cherished plan of introducing Griff Rhys Jones and his wife Jo to my friends Nick and Olivia Bloomfield. They all share, among other things, an interest in, and love of, Wales; both couples own cottages on the beautiful Pembroke Peninsula. Connections are soon being made and plans hatched. Griff is currently in the throes of organising a festival in We don't emerge into the autumnal chill of Berkeley Square until after midnight. No nightingales to be heard. Only the distant wail of an ambulance siren tearing through the night air.

Rebecca Hossack studied at Christie's and worked at the Guggenheim in Venice before opening her first gallery on Charlotte Street in 1988. She now has two further galleries – on London's Conway Street and on Mott Street in New York. Born in Melbourne and serving at the Australian cultural attaché in London between 1993 and 1997, hers was the first gallery in Europe to exhibit aboriginal art. The Lapada Art & Antiques Fair takes place in Berkeley Square, London W1, from September 24 to 28 2014. www.rebeccahossack.com. [@RebeccaHossack](#).