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Chim-Pom Make Clever Art Without the Elitism

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The sex-positive illustration Instagrams
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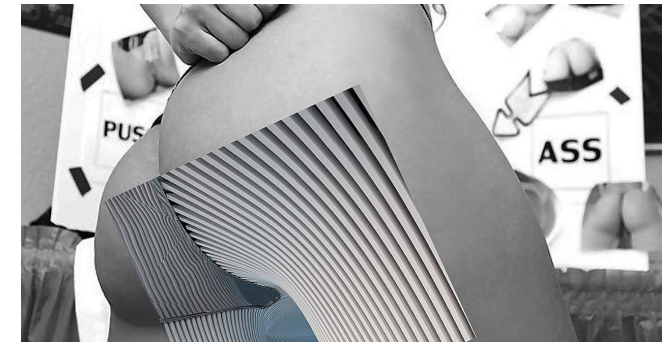


The Best Smutty Instagrams to Follow
Now



– Chim-Pom
Courtesy of MUJIN-TO Production, Tokyo

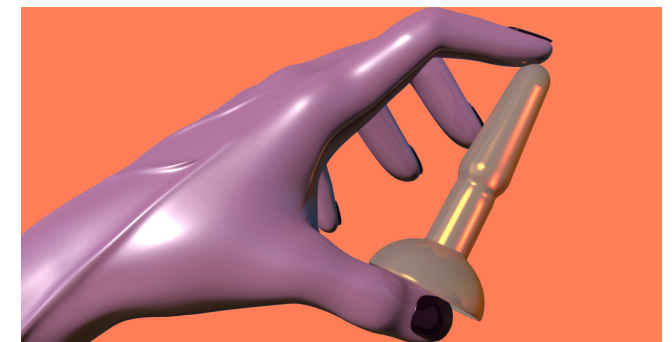
An art fair in blue-blooded Chelsea might seem an odd place for Tokyo collective Chim-Pom to have their first UK solo show. The group, which turned ten this year, is better known for grappling with the grubby side of contemporary life in Japan,



The Collages Merging Bodies with Buildings to Challenge the Male Gaze



Luis Sanchis is the Forgotten '90s Fashion Photographer Ready to Be Rediscovered



Meet The All-Female Tech Collective Taking Sex Toys into the VR Realm

and its cosy seat on capitalism's lap. Favourite motifs include rats and crows, and they've blown up Louis Vuitton handbags with Cambodian landmines, a retort to the plush charm of Superflat art movement and its Hirst-like leader Takashi Murakami.

Even so, here they are – part of START, an art fair at the Saatchi Gallery with an emphasis on international, particularly Asian, contemporary artists, and a suggestion, perhaps, that the Japanese art market is set for a return.



The Nail Artists Behind Berlin's Latest Obsession



– Chim-Pom, Super Rat, 2006. Courtesy of MUJIN-TO Production, Tokyo

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**BUY WORK FROM
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The glassy gaze that greets you as you enter cheekily sums up their dissident stance towards pop culture – meet “SUPER RAT”, a taxidermied rat trussed up like Pikachu, a bizarre Frankenstein of Japanese consumerism, who gives the show its name.

Painted a sickly yellow, the group originally caught it on a street in Shibuya, Center Gai, a popular haunt for local teenagers. The area is so riddled with rats, pest control have now found them resistant to the poison they put down. Super rats – soldiering on in the face of chemical warfare.



– Chim-Pom, Making the sky of Hiroshima “PIKA!”, 2009. Courtesy of MUJIN-TO Production, Tokyo

It's this resilience that first brought the rats to the group's attention. The long shadow of nuclear disaster is a peculiarity in Japanese existence. Chim-Pom return to over and over, and both Hiroshima and Fukushima loom large in their work. At START, quite literally so. The main room is dominated by a large rainbow pile of peace cranes, symbols of hope in the wake of the atomic bomb. Like Felix Gonzalez-Torres' piles of brightly coloured candy, the installation, entitled “The

History of Humans”, invites an exchange with the viewer. One member of the collective, Ellie, sits atop the pile of origami cranes hypnotically unfolding. Each was sent to the city of Hiroshima by well-wishers, and throughout the course of the show, visitors are asked to refold them. Only through this cycle, the work suggests, can we begin to make sense of our trauma.



– Chim-Pom, Realties, 2011. Courtesy of MUJIN-TO Production, Tokyo

In the next room, “*KI-AI 100*” returns to this notion of healing, and perhaps most poignantly addresses this idea of coming to terms with the wounds left by nuclear

power. An improvised film shot in one take, it features a circle of teenagers, a group of friends. Huddled in the Fukushima disaster zone that was once their home, a tight knot of survival amid the rubble, they shout 100 ki-ai, a Japanese fighting cry. Though their surroundings are disfigured beyond easy recognition, their defiant shouts are immediately familiar. Let's keep going, they yell, so we can eat tasty soba noodles, and look at cute girls in bikinis. In the middle of a gallery, alongside imagery of the region's near total desolation, there are strikingly quotidian statements – little snippets of what resistance might look like in the day to day.

It's details like these that make Chim-Pom's work so refreshing. It's political without earnestness, clever without elitism. Their film, "Black of Death", is a fine example. It doesn't ask you to be a Hitchcock fan for you to find it unnerving, simply showing the artists conducting a swarm of crows through a network of deserted streets. It's effective art, not exclusive.



– Chim-Pom, Downtown Paradox, 2014. Courtesy of MUJIN-TO Production, Tokyo

The art gallery, as its own exclusion zone, is treated explicitly in another central work in the START show. In “It’s a wall world”, an ongoing project, the artists extract puzzle pieces of white gallery walls and swap them with sections cut from everyday partitions – from shops, cafes, factories – all over the world. The

resulting puzzle, a patchwork of disparate pieces, confronts us with the problem of these two separate realities. Slotted together, they neatly embody art's awkward relationship with the real world. The two don't always fit together and make a bigger picture we can recognise.

It's here, it feels, that you start to get to the heart of what Chim-Pom want to do as interventionists, slotting art into real life, and real life into art. Through their performances and provocations, they make you look at life beyond the secluded gallery walls. And while so much of contemporary art trades in obfuscation, Chim-Pom are here to make you understand.

Text by Imogen Greenhalgh

START art fair takes place in London from 10 to 13 September

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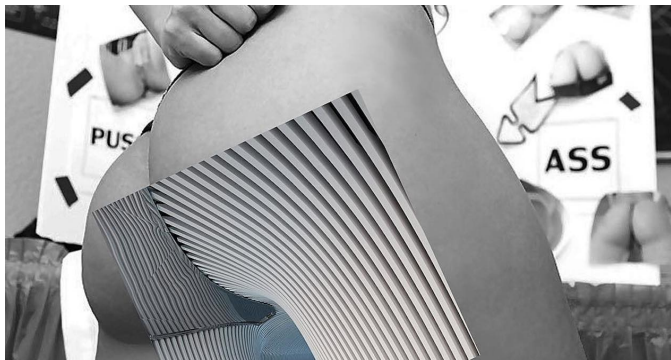
Imogen Greenhalgh

– Imogen is a freelance arts and culture writer based in London,

where she has lived for her entire life, except for an autumn she spent in Berlin. She has an MA from UCL ambiguously titled 'Issues in Modern Culture', which probably pretty much covers the things she likes to think about. Except for her cats – she thinks about them a lot, too.

#imogengreenhalgh

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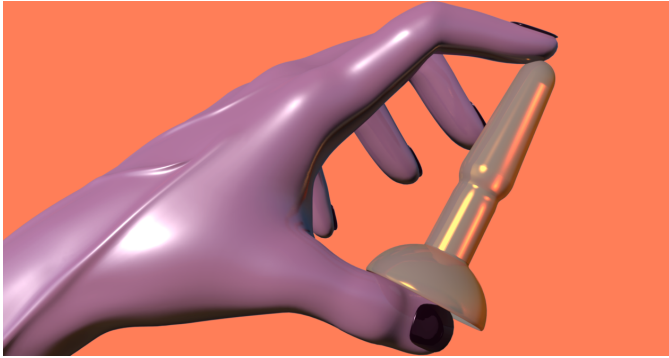
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All of Quentin Tarantino's Filmic Foot Fetish Moments

From Elmer Batters to Andy Warhol, Marilyn Manson to Dita von Teese, there's a string of cultural heroes who think toes are a turn-on, and Quentin Tarantino is no exception.

