

**Royal Academy Annual Summer Exhibition**  
**Time Out magazine, London, England**  
*June 26 – July 3 1991*

The Summer Exhibition may not be the high point of the season it once was, but it's still jolly edifying to get in a spot of culture between Ascot and Biarritz. So here we go again, for the 223rd time.

A fabulous 'DeKooning', a weird 'Jasper Johns' and a 'Balthus' in the first room raise enormous hopes; but, prepare yourselves, there are a further 1,289 paintings, sculptures, prints, drawings and architectural models to go. From David Mach's zebra's head made of burnt matches to farmyard frolics on vellum by Marcelle Loney, it's a zoo. There's a vignette of cuddly-toys at bedtime and several Howard Hodgkins, none by Hodgkin himself. Weedy abstractions, a priest vesting up, a photo of a plate of jam-tarts, acres of landscape, huge things and horrible things and indescribably dull things everywhere; a lifetime's supply of Degas ballerinas and enough metaphysical-cum-geometric sculpture to deck-out the world's Masonic Temples. Every genre, every mode, mistake, tendency and rip-off is represented ad nauseum. And there's Elizabeth Frink.

But it's not all bad. The Academy have provided gorgeous flower arrangements and Braille labeling for the sculpture. Buried in the nightmare metropolis of the Architecture gallery, is a great section on Lubetkin. Elsewhere [Linda Davidson's somber drawings of sea and sky](#) and Neil Jeffries' cartoon-constructions devoted to loneliness and failure at games don't try to be arty or twee, and calm the urge to run from the galleries and book that boat-train.

*Adrian Searle*