

The Independent Review Tuesday 23 March 2004

ART FOR SALE

Ansel Krut
@ DomoBaal

AT FIRST glance they could be characters from a children's book, illustrations for a new *Mr Men* series. But look more closely, and a pile of eyeballs sits in the centre of one of the drawings like a pyramid of gory profiteroles; a man nails another's head to a board; a small naked figure irons his own cock flat on an ironing-board. Part Bosch, part Wallace & Gromit and influenced, no doubt, by Goya, these strange images, on show in the first floor gallery of DomoBaal's elegant Georgian house in Farringdon, central London, form an installation of works on paper entitled *it could be suicide...* by the Jewish South African painter Ansel Krut.

Krut's protagonists, rendered with a brush in black inks and painterly washes of colour on prepared paper, are deceptively simple, at once comic and cruel, horrendous and humorous. Cannibalism, torture and other unsettling acts are illustrated with a graffiti-like playfulness that owes much to the comic strip. This is a scatological viewpoint: turds, anuses and vomiting dominate; a



man up a tree eats his own foot; a decapitated carrot spurts blood (*Carrot and Head, above*). The work has antecedents not only in the images of illuminated medieval manuscripts, but also in the biting imagery of a political satirist such as James Gilray.

To accompany the exhibition, the gallery has produced a tabloid of his work, accompanied by a short story. While Krut's images are arresting, his short story is banal and not well written.

Works cost £750 plus VAT. Framing by arrangement.

SUE HUBBARD

Ansel Krut, DomoBaal Contemporary Art, 32 John Street, London WC1 (020-7242 9604; www.dombaal.com) to 17 April

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