



it all you come across phrases like 'who wants to die in an ugly place?' Shelter for a warzone is a good starting point but so far Boden's designs don't seem to know if they are a gag, an allegory or a marketable product.

Nick Crowe's cheesy web page designs for well-regarded galleries combines comedy and critique with the veneer of commodification without tearing itself apart. On the contrary, the work is entirely convincing. Sweetly, the room is filled with a plinky-plonky version of The Cure's *Love Cats* emanating from Crowe's cheap and cheerful website for the Lisson Gallery. The page overdoses on cute, like all the other pages here, displayed on a circle of Apple Macs. Violence lurks within these adorably naff substitutes for the authority of the commercial gallery. It is the violence of resistance camouflaged as the cloying homage of an amateur. Their unofficial welcome obliterates the authorised version, if only in fantasy. And, anyway, the fantasy is a painful symptom of the authority of the gallery. It says that the gallery is closed, but it knows that the economies of culture do not require the gallery to be physically closed in order that the damaging distinction between the legitimate and illegitimate be established and imposed. ■

Dave Beech teaches at University of Wolverhampton and is co-director of Floating IP gallery, Manchester.

■ Ugo Rondinone

Sadie Coles HQ London September 10 to October 12

■ Rachel Feinstein

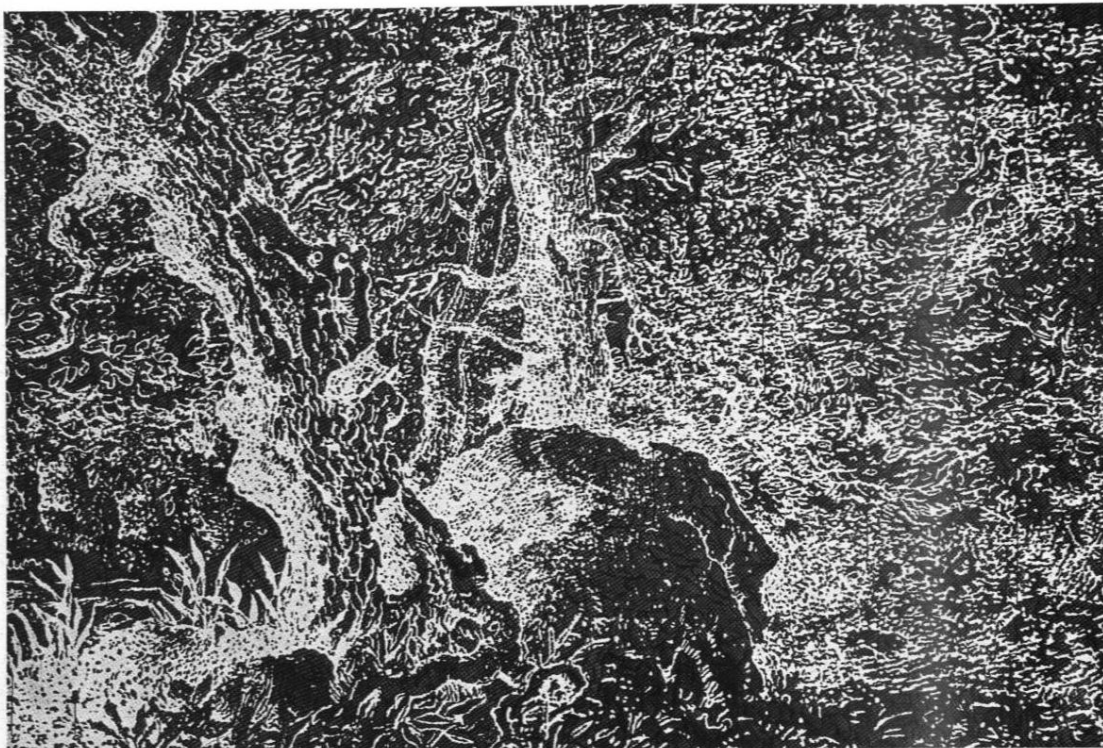
Corvi-Mora London September 10 to November 2

A forest is a strange and contradictory symbol. It is at once darkly tenebrous – like Dante's 'wood of err' in which the Italian poet confesses that he'd found himself, morally lost, in the opening line of the *Inferno* – or sweetly innocent, home to the noble and pure of heart,

like Robin Hood or Bambi. It's a strange coincidence that two such different artists, Swiss Ugo Rondinone and American Rachel Feinstein, should both happen to choose this very same, if ambiguous, setting for their recent London shows. The two exhibitions are nevertheless as different as night and day, quite literally. Rondinone's painting installation of inky forest pictures is dark and introspective, with all the natural light blocked out of the gallery space behind wall-to-ceiling, felt and hessian coverings. Feinstein's work instead is all lightness and whiteness, with a reclining white unicorn no less, a most extreme symbol of candid purity, at its centre (titled *H*, 2002). The unicorn, as myth will have it, can only be captured by an uncorrupted maiden, and it is a cleverly ironic image for Feinstein to choose, given that she is at least as famous for her art as she is for her New-York-It-Girl extravagance and all-round sophistication and fabulousness. With its long shapely legs and provocative posture, this comely unicorn, poised beneath flat plywood trees – *Arbor*, 2002, more school-play enchanted forest than untamed wilderness – seems a kind of veiled self-portrait. The lovely Feinstein seems to be seductively teasing her London audience, literally playing the 'babe in the wood', so to speak. Feinstein is said to be attracted to the stagey voluptuousness of the German Baroque and Rococo, with its sugar-icing finish and shameless excess, as much as she is to Disneyworld (she is a Florida native) and trash culture. With these as her sources and her personal fame preceding her, the show here is rather demure in comparison to some of her previous exhibitions, with their disintegrating disco balls and lavish, chariot-like constructions. This is a coherent show, but probably more a sampler of her art than a key moment in its unfolding.

Feinstein has also included, in an unexpected departure from her three-dimensional work, the image of an 18th-century gentleman entitled *Aunt Pittypat*, 2002, all ringlets and rouged cheeks, saluting us with a glass of his favourite tipple, painted on an oval mirror. With this piece Feinstein's forest overlaps in epoch, if not in spirit,

Ugo Rondinone
Untitled (Landscape)
 2002



with Rondinone's, whose black and white images of an Arcadian, wooded landscape recall 18th-century engravings of the unspoiled woodlands in which Rousseau's noble savage was said to live. Rondinone is a more layered and experienced artist than Feinstein, and so too is his exhibition. Rondinone is noted for the extreme variation of form in his work since he began exhibiting in the late 90s, swinging from performance-like, photographic self-portraits to giant, rainbow-like, illuminated street signs, video installations, hyperreal, figurative sculpture, large, colourful circular paintings and sound works. This show, titled 'cigarettesandwich', is made up of four large, richly worked pictures in black ink on paper set in a cocoon-like environment, and revisits some of his early work,

similar landscapes from 1997 which were black on white, while these are reversed white-on-black. The forest is obviously a potent symbolic setting for Rondinone, as witnessed in his artist's book *Hell Yes!*, 2000, with its sequence of photographs of a woman emerging from a winter forest, with mysteriously varying levels of illumination and sharpness.

Somehow the more Rondinone varies his work, the more the really unusual and unsettling consistency of his work becomes apparent. There is a recurring craving, and fear, of isolation throughout, whether in the lonely messages that ring out from his signs bearing enigmatic messages ('Cry Me a River'), or the depressed and lonely figure sitting forlorn along the wall of an earlier installation



Rachel Feinstein
 Installation view 2002