

Observations



The heat is on for Finnish art festival

BY JO CAIRD

It's not often that an art installation sets your heart race racing and gets you hot and bothered. But that's something that residents of the Finnish city of Turku are going to have to get used to this summer with the arrival of *SaunaLab*, four genuine working saunas that also happen to be installation pieces. Dotted around the city and open to the public throughout the summer, the artist-designed saunas were commissioned as part of Turku's tenure as European Capital of



with the visual experience of the camera obscura. Philosophically, I like to compare *Sauna Obscura* with the human mind: the surrounding world is there all the



Hot stuff: (clockwise from main image) Heidi Lunabba's 'Sauna Obscura'; Will Lunn; a 19th-century pedal harp, one of the many old instruments on display at the Horniman Museum

like to compare *Sauna Obscura* with the human mind: the surrounding world is there all the time, but like the image in the sauna, the thoughts are there on the inside; they are private, though also part of what is shared". 'SaunaLab' is open to the public from 1 June to 31 August. www.turku2011.fi

The project's four saunas each invite sauna-goers to engage with art works in the intimate, shared public space of the sauna, from the environment-responsive sound installation of *The Sounding Dome Sauna* to *Solaris-sauna*, whose transparent walls and ceiling turn the sauna's surroundings into a living panorama. *Sauna Obscura*, by Heidi Lunabba, functions as a camera obscura, projecting images of the world around it on to its interior walls. Integral to Lunabba's design is the fact that the sauna is floating on Turku's Aura river, and thus presenting an ever-changing scenography to those inside it.

Water also has an important role to play in *Hot Cube*, a sauna moored on the river outside Turku's contemporary art gallery, the Wäinö Aaltonen Museum. Unlike the other saunas, which are outward-looking in their perspectives, *Hot Cube* directs its focus towards the sensory elements of sauna culture itself, highlighting the very particular scents of wood, water and fire, as well as the tar that coats the sauna's exterior surface.

Tarja Eskelinen, *SaunaLab's* co-ordinator, stresses that "the project is interactive and experience-based – you can personally try out the saunas. The aim is to give people unique memories and novel experiences".

Lunabba, who says she has always been fascinated by the camera obscura, created *Sauna Obscura* because "Sauna has always been a part of my life. It has something of the same calm atmosphere I find inside the room-sized camera. I wanted to combine the physical experience of sauna

with the human mind: the surrounding world is there all the time, but like the image in the sauna, the thoughts are there on the inside; they are private, though also part of what is shared". 'SaunaLab' is open to the public from 1 June to 31 August. www.turku2011.fi

A glimpse of music's past

BY JESSICA DUCHEN

Side by side sit two instruments once owned by Italian horn player Giovanni Puzzi. In the bell of one, lavish decoration in green lacquer has worn away exactly at the spots on which Puzzi placed his hand to shape the pitch of his notes. The musician's grandson gave it to the V&A in 1926.

The Horniman Museum has brought together the musical instruments from the collections of the V&A, whose instrument galleries were closed last year, with its own, providing an intriguing contrast: its instruments were chosen by Frederick Horniman with utterly different aims.

"The musical instruments in his collection, from all over the world, show his interest in music's anthropological element, focusing on how they were used by musicians and what the social role of music was," says the exhibition's co-curator, Bradley Strauchen. Whereas Carl Engel, a German-born pioneer of organology (the study of musical instruments) was employed by the V&A to build its own collection of instruments with an emphasis on design and craftsmanship.

There is a chance to see

Rossini's oboe; Renaissance viols with carved scrolls; an octagonal ivory recorder; and a Stradivarius violin, made in 1699, confined to a glass case so it remains untouched for further analysis of how it was made and played.

The Art of Harmony, Horniman Museum, London SE23
(www.horniman.ac.uk) ongoing

Mayfair's new art gallery

BY NANCY GROVES

Will Lunn, 22, is barely out of art school – yet next month the so-called "Baby Gallerist" makes the move from Peckham to Mayfair, to launch his very own gallery. Walk down South Molton Street and you could easily miss it: a narrow doorway, shrouded in foliage, wedged between two outposts of dusty old Grays antiques. In three weeks time, Sumarria Lunn will be open for business.

Lunn met fellow gallerist Vishal Sumarria, 26, in 2008 working at south London's William Angel Gallery, part of the resurgent Peckham art scene led by Hannah Barry. Lunn actually staged his first show five years ago on his home turf of Colchester; an experience that left him hungry for a space to call his own.

"Being taken seriously at a young age is tough," says the ex-street artist, who graduated from The Courtauld last summer. "I encountered a hell of a lot of resistance from people who wouldn't believe I was putting on an exhibition. They thought I



wanted to hold a rave or something."

But Sumarria Lunn will not be making a noisy arrival in W1. *Axonometric* showcases the more subtle stylings of Korean artist, Yun-Kyung Jeong, whose fretworks of natural and architectural elements have a refreshing Escher goes East quality to them.

"I'd rather the programme builds momentum than burns out," says Lunn. "Above all else, we wanted to do what wasn't expected of us."

Axonometric, Sumarria Lunn, London W1 (sumarrialunn.com)
11 May to 4 June

A total basket case

BY JAY MERRICK

The newly appointed director of the Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts in Norwich, Paul Greenhalgh, says that craft-based art is at risk of a slow death in Britain unless art schools are better funded.

Speaking at the launch of *Basketry: Making Human Nature*, he cited ceramics as the most startling evidence of this: the number of ceramics degree courses had fallen to three, nationwide, compared to more than 20 two decades ago: kilns, and teaching, are too expensive compared to, say, the "whatevers" of conceptual art.

The basketry exhibition illustrates this tension between the cultural value of craft-based art, and how difficult it is to promote. Basketry expresses functional or imaginative and aesthetic needs, sometimes together, as in the contemporary work from Ueno Masao, Mary Butcher and Laura Ellen Bacon. The finesse of archaic basketry from Japan is even more exquisite, a brilliant counterpoint to Polynesian 'armour' and the brusque geometric grace of East Anglian eel-traps.

Basketry, says curator Sandy Heslop, helped create the deep structure of our thought processes; according to "the neuroscience of metaphor", it may even inform our spiritual beliefs. Perhaps the slow, repetitive processes of basketry also contributes to moral steadiness.

The exhibition offered one inadvertent moment of pure surreality: wandering off to look at the paintings of Francis Bacon, one found that his 1956 *Study for a Portrait of Van Gogh* features a hat like an ochre basket. One wanted more of these glancing connections, and Heslop's exhibition might have attempted to portray more challenging links between the historic craft of basketry and contemporary expressions of basketry in quite different physical and metaphysical fields. *Basketry: Making Human Nature, Sainsbury Centre for Visual Art, Norwich* (01603 593199) to 22 May