

ELLE *preview*

OUR EDIT OF THE ROYAL ACADEMY'S UP-AND-COMING ART TALENT

THE CLASS OF 2010

Alison Taylor meets five young artists exhibiting at London's Royal Academy this summer. Remember their names

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From left: Jonathan Trayte, Katharina Stoeber, Juliette Losq, Sarah Poots and Michael Armitage in the Royal Academy's Drawing Room



(art)

Whether it's the giant silver baubles that dominated the famous courtyard at Anish Kapoor's 2009 show or Tracey Emin's controversial *Summer Exhibition* offerings, you can always rely on London's Royal Academy of Arts to cause a stir. Today, ELLE heads there to interview some of the art world's brightest new talents.

The Royal Academy Schools – a magical rabbit warren of studios – has been an integral part of the institution since its foundation in 1768. Past students include the master painters JMW Turner, William Blake and John Constable. Then there are today's governing members, known as Royal Academicians, who include Tracey Emin and painters Peter Blake and Gary Hume, bringing Britain's oldest art institution up to date.

The *RA Schools Show*, which showcases its graduates' efforts, is one of the hottest dates in the calendar. This is, of course, due to the incredible standard of work on view, but is also thanks to the attention it attracts. The man who has launched a thousand art careers, Charles Saatchi, has been known to buy entire collections on opening night.

We caught up with five of the most promising talents from the class of 2010. Coming your way soon... ➤

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Stoever exhibits Peles posters alongside her striking photo-collage work

project, along with friend Barbara Wolff, in Frankfurt in 2005. After winning the coveted Deutsche Bank Prize last year, she now also has a permanent gallery in north London.

The project takes its name from a lavish Romanian castle, with Stoever and Wolff recreating its rooms using giant wallpaper photocopies and inviting fellow artists to exhibit in the space. 'It's inspiring to work with other artists and introduce them to new audiences,' says 28-year-old Stoever.

After her final show, Stoever is heading to Rotterdam to exhibit with artist Karl Orton. Then she plans to introduce the Peles concept to New York. The variety suits this talented German artist just fine; as she puts it: 'You can dance at many different weddings.'

'The feedback was pretty POLARISED – people either LOVED it or hated it, which is a GOOD place to be'

JULIETTE LOSQ

Enter the corner of the Royal Academy that's showcasing the work of Juliette Losq (pictured previous page) and be submerged in a captivating landscape. The 31-year-old London artist's photographic-in-their-detail pieces depict overgrown derelict spaces using print-making and etching techniques more commonly found in Victorian paintings.

'I'm interested in places that are neglected and suggestive that something has gone on – whether it's children making dens or crime scenes,' says Losq. Her ink drawings earned her the prestigious Jerwood Drawing Prize in 2005 and she has had shows at London's Fred gallery, the GS Tower in Seoul and Theodore: Art in New York.

For her postgraduate show, Losq will debut her atmospheric paintings of dilapidated interiors. This isn't a move away from her love of landscapes – something of a lost art in modern circles. 'There are artists that still use them, but it is hard to shrug off that TV *Watercolour Challenge* reputation,' she says.

KATHARINA STOEVER

German conceptual artist Katharina Stoever (above) established the Peles Empire

MICHAEL ARMITAGE

The graphic artwork of Slade graduate Michael Armitage (below) – giant colourful motifs layered onto woven mats – is informed by his home country of Kenya. Armitage comes from Nairobi and the mats he uses as canvases are made in a village called Kipungani on a tiny Kenyan island called Lamu. 'The village makes these mats,' he explains. 'And I keep getting my family to bring them over.'

Armitage combines painting and airbrushing techniques with beading and other craft techniques. African symbolism and pop art are his main influences. 'I look at pop artists like Tom Wesselmann and Dieter Roth, as well as African artists,' ►



Armitage uses canvases sourced from the Kenyan island of Lamu

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he says. The 26-year-old's work was in the Simon Oldfield Contemporary Art show *Ascension 2008*. 'The feedback was pretty polarised – people either loved it or hated it, which is a good place to be.'

Post RA show, Armitage is considering a trip to Kenya to exhibit his work out there and also to hone the production of the mats, before setting up shop in London.

SARAH POOTS

'I'm really interested in overlooked spaces and fleeting moments that people don't necessarily notice in such a big city,' says Sarah Poots (below), 27. The artist's bittersweet works beautify unlikely urban snapshots, like the plastic ribbon curtain of a Soho sex shop. 'I start with a photograph and then I sketch it, often from my bathtub, before moving onto oil paints,' she says.

Originally from Northern Ireland, Poots started out at the Glasgow School of Art, but the Royal Academy has been her biggest career highlight so far. 'I love that I can nip in to the library and see Goya prints,' she says.

Looking ahead, Poots will be part of a show for emerging artists at the Ormeau Baths Gallery, Belfast's contemporary art exhibition space. She is also hoping to set up a studio in east London, close to many of her Glasgow School of Art friends, including fellow rising star and former flatmate Caroline Walker.

'I'm really interested in overlooked SPACES and fleeting moments that PEOPLE don't notice in a BIG city'

Poots' oil paintings depict small, unnoticed details of urban life



Trayte with his wax sweet-like 'Humbug' sculpture

JONATHAN TRAYTE

Jonathan Trayte (above), 29, has been up since 5am drinking in the sights and smells of London's Smithfield meat market. A food obsession feeds this Yorkshireman's sculptures – lovingly crafted from wax.

'Humbug' is Trayte's name for one sweet-like sculpture. 'It's very silly,' he explains. 'I was envisaging a watermelon and thinking, "What can I do to make it mine?"'

Trayte was an assistant to the painter Gary Hume and now works at the AB Fine Art Foundry in London, which casts work for sculptors Marc Quinn and Anish Kapoor. But his focus on food began when he worked at a restaurant to fund his fine-art degree at the Kent Institute of Art & Design in Canterbury.

It's a formula that seems to be working. All his mid-course exhibition pieces were bought by collectors, and he recently exhibited at London's Saatchi Gallery.

RA Schools Show is at the Royal Academy of Arts, London W1, from 16 to 27 June 2010; enq royalacademy.org.uk ■

