

ARTS & BOOKS

On stuffed goats, gothic nightmares, trendy crime fiction and rebels with a cause

A Stuffed Angora Goat at The Met

By V. CHABROL & A. CHALVET

Sixty seven works by American artist, Robert Rauschenberg are on display until 2nd April at The Metropolitan Museum in New York. The exhibition focuses on the "Combines" he created between 1953 and 1964. These are a mixture of paintings, pieces of tattered clothes, newspaper clippings, taxidermied animals and other junk that Mr Rauschenberg bought or scavenged from the street. For instance, *Monogram* is a stuffed angora goat surrounded by a car tyre.

Sources: "Spirit Of The Modern Age," *The Guardian Weekly* 17-23 February 2006.

"Art Out Of Anything: Rauschenberg in Retrospect," *The New York Times* 23 December 2005.

Gothic Nightmares at The Tate

By V. CHABROL & A. CHALVET

British romantic culture has blossomed on the dark soil of Gothic fantasies. With over 120 works, the Tate Britain exhibition "Gothic Nightmares: Fuseli, Blake and the Romantic Imagination", explores this supernatural and mythical landscape until 1st May in London. Henry Fuseli's iconic masterpiece *The Nightmare* (1781) influenced many other artists whose works are presented in eight thematically arranged rooms with telling names such as "Gothic Gloom", "Witches and Apparitions" or "*The Nightmare* in Modern culture". This exhaustive atlas of the darker regions of the human mind features works like *The Ghost of A Flea* by William Blake (1819-1820) and James Gillray's caricatures (most notably his subversive version of Fuseli's *The Weird Sisters* or *The Three Witches*).

Sources: "Something Of The Night," *The Observer* 19 February 2006; "Stuff Of Dreams," *The Economist* 16 February 2006; "Creatures Of The Night," *The Guardian* 4 February 2006.

Crime Fiction : a New Trend in British Libraries

By C. GUCCIARDI & C. HAYOT

Welcome to the literary world of violence, crime, scalpel and forensic investigation. British readers' tastes are changing. Romance has fallen off its pedestal and a new darker challenger has appeared: crime fiction. Until 2005, Great Britain was a nation of romantic novel readers. But, nowadays, according to the Public Lending Rights charts, they have turned to crime fiction, more often than not of American origin. Last year more than half of the most popular titles borrowed in British public libraries were crime related. The thrillers by John Grisham, Patricia Cornwell, Kathy Reichs, Ian Rankin or James Patterson are not only top of the best-seller list but also top of the most-borrowed list.

Sources: « End to the romance as library users turn to crime, » *The Independent* 21 February 2006; « Out goes the Aga, » *The Guardian* 11 February 2006; « Crime fiction holds sway in public libraries, » *The Guardian* 10 February 2006; « Whodunit, and why, » *The Economist* 22 October 2003.

Clooney, Rebel with a Cause but Only One Oscar

By C. GUCCIARDI & C. HAYOT

"I was at a party the other night and it was all these hardcore Republicans and these guys are like, 'Why do you hate your country ?' I said, 'I love my country.' They said, 'Why, at a time of war, would you criticise it then ?' And I said, 'My country right or wrong means women don't vote, black people sit in the back of buses and we're still in Vietnam.'" * This is George Clooney's answer to people who criticise his political commitment: according to him, "humour is a much better way to do it."* It seems the 78th annual Academy Awards was not totally won over. The McCarthy era thriller Clooney wrote and directed, *Good Night and Good Luck*, did not receive any awards, and Clooney only came away with the best supporting actor Oscar for his role in political drama *Syriana*.

Sources : *"I've learned how to fight," *The Guardian* 10 February 2006; "Cover Story : Clever Clooney," *Businessweek* 28 November 2005; "The Current Cinema – *Syriana*," *The New Yorker* 5 December 2005; "The Film File – *Good Night And Good Luck*," *The New Yorker* 2005.