

Critics' choice

Life & Arts

Visual arts Jackie Wullschläger

Who's Afraid of Drawing? Works on Paper from the Ramo Collection

Estorick Collection, London

Pino Rabolini, who launched the bright, distinctively rounded costume jewellery brand Pomellato in 1967, believed drawing was a finished art form. And he proved it by amassing an eclectic, exquisite group of Italian works on paper that are as delicate and subtle as Pomellato's stone-studded gold rings and bracelets are conspicuous and chunky.

The connection is modernist elegance — from futurist Giacomo Balla's abstracted drawing of a twisting red staircase (1916) to Giorgio di Chirico's study for the monumental figure "Archeologi" (1928); from sculptor Fausto Melotti's 1970s refined minimalist compositions of sinuous filigree strands to a surprisingly tender "Head" (1974) in tempera and charcoal, white incised on black, by Arte Povera rebel Jannis Kounellis.

The keynote of Rabolini's Ramo Collection is a striking balance of formal grace and expressive intimacy. The highlights, visiting from Milan, form an exhibition that pays tribute to the particular taste and eye of Rabolini, who died last year, and distils 20th-century Italian art history from the understated angle of drawings.



Adolfo Wildt's 'Animantium Rex Homo' (1925) — Ramo Collection, Milan

Rabolini's interests were plural: unfashionable symbolist Adolfo Wildt (the stylised "Animantium Rex Homo" and the fervent "Deposizione", 1920s) as well as his more famous pupil Lucio Fontana (a torn watercolour "Concetto Spaziale", 1951); futurist Gino Severini in return-to-order mode

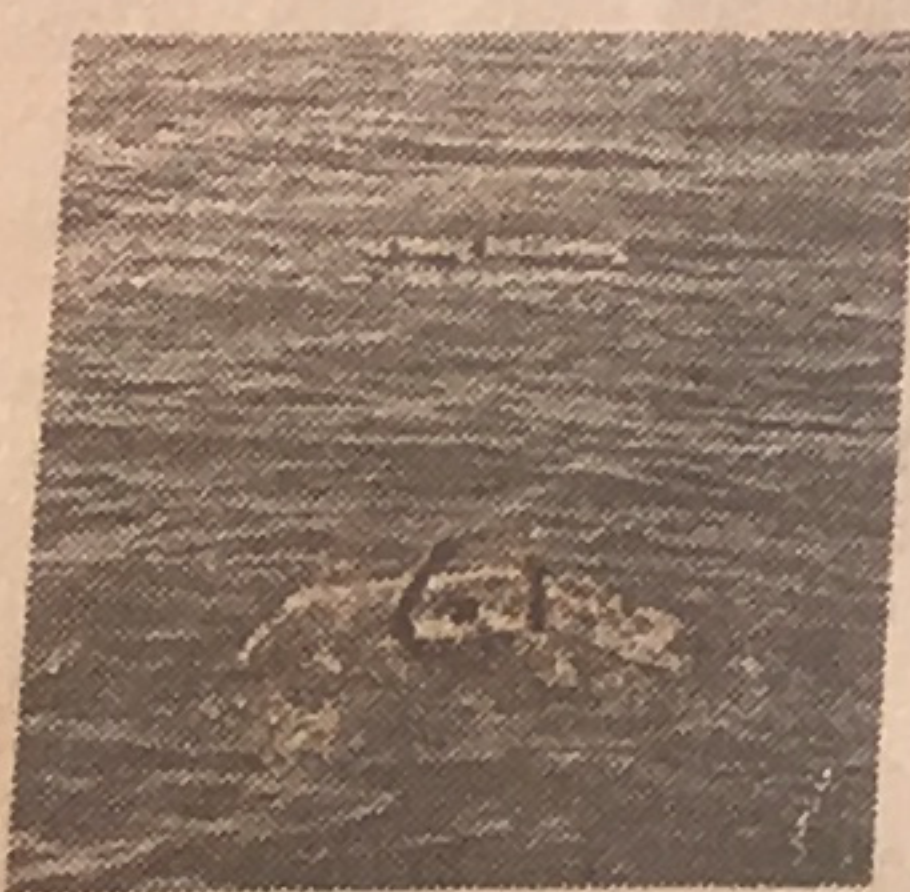
with "Romana al tavolo" (1947), a traditional figure incorporating Cubist elements.

Complementing the Estorick's prewar emphasis, the Ramo Collection's strongest suit is the postwar period when Italian artists were inventing a new painting wrought from destruction. Alberto

Burri's charred "Combustione" glows like a flaming crater; Afro's patches of blues, greys and slivers of orange layered in ink, graphite, wax, tempera and grease pencil on soft cardboard evoke the interiors of crumbling palazzi — like everything here, fragile and precious.

estorickcollection.com, to June 23

Pop Ludovic Hunter-Tilney



Loyle Carner

Not Waving, But Drowning

AMF Records

★★★★★

Loyle Carner's debut album *Yesterday's Gone* was a thoughtful south London coming-of-age tale conducted through the crackling ether of old vinyl samples and classic hip-hop beats. *Not Waving, But Drowning* is the next chapter of memoir.

The album is framed by tracks spoken by Carner and his mother, each addressed to the other. The theme is the son's moving out to live with his girlfriend, a new stretch

south London rap forebear Roots Manuva, in which tribute is turned into a pun: "Roots can't manoeuvre out of nowhere."

The autobiographical material is handled with a touch less control than *Yesterday's Gone*. A falling-out between Carner and his friend and collaborator Rebel Kleff, who produced the previous album, is broached on "Krispy" ("Course money was the source/ I've never known nothing like the force"). Yet Kleff turns up for a guest rap on an earlier track as though nothing were wrong — a rare lapse from the Carner's accomplishment.



the Year" — a designation that does not quite do justice to its sinuous blend of folkloric and modern music.

Wolastoqiyik

Lintuwakonawa is based on field recordings made in 1907 of songs by members of the Tobique First Nation, an indigenous community to which Dutcher belongs. A classically trained tenor, he has reworked them into a powerful variety of chamber music, somewhere between modern classical and pop, closer to the latter than the former. The style is "western" and contemporary, but the lyrics are in the Wolastoqey language, which is in a precarious state of survival: a 2016 survey found 350 people who identified it as their mother tongue.



Kelsey Lu

Blood

Columbia Records

★★★★★

In contrast to the countless US performers whose musical careers were nourished by childhood churchgoing, there is a minority of others whose work has emerged from rejection of their religious backgrounds. Kelsey Lu is one such.

She grew up in North Carolina with a pianist mother and a jazz-funk percussionist father. Both

encouraged her to play music but censored what she listened to: supposedly licentious pop music was not allowed. She trained as a cellist. But it has led Lu (real name Kelsey McJunkins) to the forbidden world of pop. She has collaborated with Solange Knowles and Dev Hynes and performed with Florence + the Machine and Lady Gaga. Her first release was an EP called *Church*, which was recorded in a Catholic church. Now comes her debut album, *Blood*, an impressively atmospheric of songs.

Lu calls her ingenious, self-authored sound "Lutherea". Imagery of being held back recurs, and also the desire to be understood. "Music was my escape," she has said of her religious upbringing.

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