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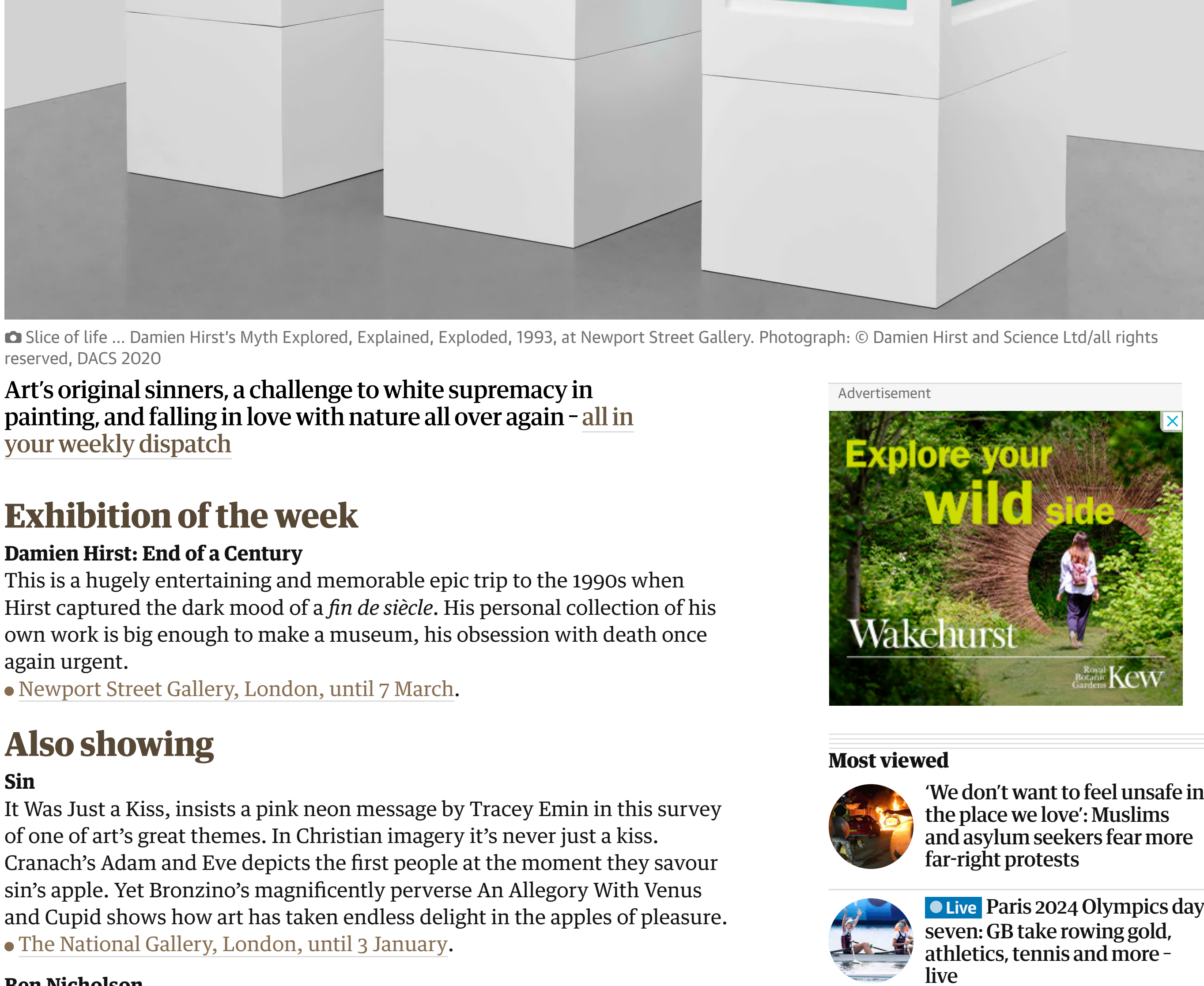
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Tracey Emin steals a kiss and Damien Hirst resurrects the dead - the week in art



Jonathan Jones
Fri 9 Oct 2020 16.03 BST

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Slice of life ... Damien Hirst's Myth Exploded, Explained, Exploded, 1993, at Newport Street Gallery. Photograph: © Damien Hirst and Science Ltd/all rights reserved, DACS 2020

Art's original sinners, a challenge to white supremacy in painting, and falling in love with nature all over again - all in your weekly dispatch

Exhibition of the week
Damien Hirst: End of a Century
This is a hugely entertaining and memorable epic trip to the 1990s when Hirst captured the dark mood of a *fin de siècle*. His personal collection of his own work is big enough to make a museum, his obsession with death once again urgent.
● Newport Street Gallery, London, until 7 March.

Also showing
Sin
It Was Just a Kiss, insists a pink neon message by Tracey Emin in this survey of one of art's great themes. In Christian imagery it's never just a kiss. Cranach's Adam and Eve depicts the first people at the moment they savour sin's apple. Yet Bronzino's magnificently perverse An Allegory With Venus and Cupid shows how art has taken endless delight in the apples of pleasure.
● The National Gallery, London, until 3 January.

Ben Nicholson
Abstract art was arguably invented in Britain in the 1840s, when JMW Turner left pictorialism behind in mists of ethereal light. But it has rarely been a national strength since. The art of early-20th-century abstractionist Ben Nicholson has an uptight prissy rationalism that can't quite dive into the spiritual ecstasy of Piet Mondrian or the romantic sublime of Jackson Pollock and Mark Rothko. But that's my view: take a look for yourself.
● Piano Nobile, London, from 15 October until 29 January.

White Psyche
"White dominance ... has been the norm and the ideal in European art," says this gallery. "Here, as part of our work to shift this unconscious bias, we focus our gaze on the aesthetics of white supremacy." The oppression they claim to expose is the ancient myth of Cupid and Psyche, as represented in art. What's striking is that the mottled complexity of skin tones in old paintings is anything but monotonously white.
● The Whitworth, Manchester, until January.

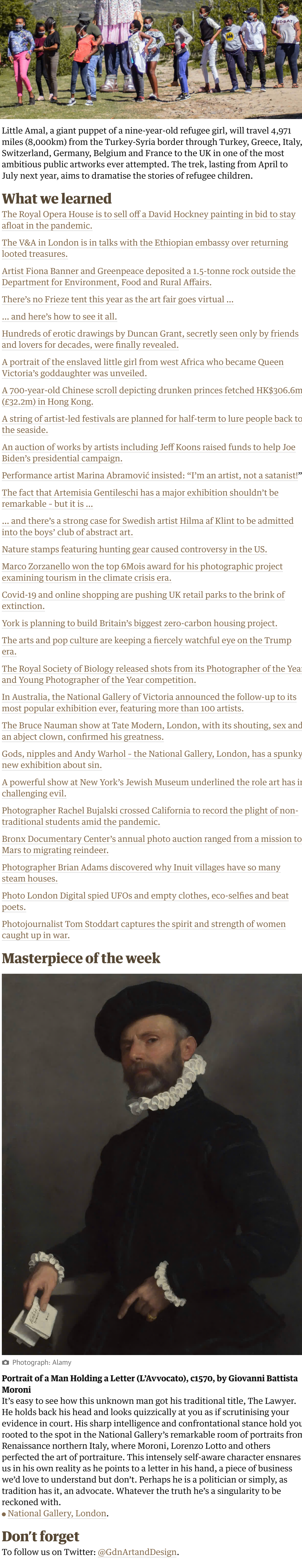
Kai Althoff Goes With Bernard Leach
Who are the really important British artists? Presumably those who excite and influence people beyond these shores rather than just being a topic of national pride. Twentieth-century ceramicist Bernard Leach is a lifelong hero to the German artist Althoff. In his first British show, he chooses to "go with" Leach, meditating on how painting can be as useful as a pot.
● Whitechapel Gallery, London, until 10 January.

Natural Encounters
For many people, the pandemic year has been a time to reconnect with nature and find solace in landscape. This show explores ways of doing that in works by Helen Chadwick, Tacita Dean, Nii Obodai and more, while paintings by Gainsborough and Turner show how the modern love of nature was shaped by the Romantic age.
● Leeds Art Gallery, until 20 February.

Image of the week
European odyssey ... Little Amal. Photograph: Bevan Roos/PA

What we learned
The Royal Opera House is to sell off a David Hockney painting in bid to stay afloat in the pandemic.
The V&A in London is in talks with the Ethiopian embassy over returning looted treasures.
Artist Fiona Banner and Greenpeace deposited a 1.5-tonne rock outside the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs.
There's no Frieze tent this year as the art fair goes virtual ...
... and here's how to see it all.
Hundreds of erotic drawings by Duncan Grant, secretly seen only by friends and lovers for decades, were finally revealed.
A portrait of the enslaved little girl from west Africa who became Queen Victoria's goddaughter was unveiled.
A 700-year-old Chinese scroll depicting drunken princes fetched HK\$306.6m (£32.2m) in Hong Kong.
A string of artist-led festivals are planned for half-term to lure people back to the seaside.
An auction of works by artists including Jeff Koons raised funds to help Joe Biden's presidential campaign.
Performance artist Marina Abramović insisted: "I'm an artist, not a satanist!"
The fact that Artemisia Gentileschi has a major exhibition shouldn't be remarkable - but it is ...
... and there's a strong case for Swedish artist Hilma af Klint to be admitted into the boys' club of abstract art.
Nature stamps featuring hunting gear caused controversy in the US.
Marco Zorzanello won the top 6Mois award for his photographic project examining tourism in the climate crisis era.
Covid-19 and online shopping are pushing UK retail parks to the brink of extinction.
York is planning to build Britain's biggest zero-carbon housing project.
The arts and pop culture are keeping a fiercely watchful eye on the Trump era.
The Royal Society of Biology released shots from its Photographer of the Year and Young Photographer of the Year competition.
In Australia, the National Gallery of Victoria announced the follow-up to its most popular exhibition ever, featuring more than 100 artists.
The Bruce Nauman show at Tate Modern, London, with its shouting, sex and an abject clown, confirmed his greatness.
Gods, nipples and Andy Warhol - the National Gallery, London, has a spunky new exhibition about sin.
A powerful show at New York's Jewish Museum underlined the role art has in challenging evil.
Photographer Rachel Bujalski crossed California to record the plight of non-traditional students amid the pandemic.
Bronx Documentary Center's annual photo auction ranged from a mission to Mars to migrating reindeer.
Photographer Brian Adams discovered why Inuit villages have so many steam houses.
Photo London Digital spied UFOs and empty clothes, eco-selfies and beat poets.
Photojournalist Tom Stoddart captures the spirit and strength of women caught up in war.

Masterpiece of the week



Portrait: Alamy

Portrait of a Man Holding a Letter (L'Avvocato), c1570, by Giovanni Battista Moroni
It's easy to see how this unknown man got his traditional title, The Lawyer. He holds back his head and looks quizzically at you as if scrutinising your evidence in court. His sharp intelligence and confrontational stance hold you rooted to the spot in the National Gallery's remarkable room of portraits from Renaissance northern Italy, where Moroni, Lorenzo Lotto and others perfected the art of portraiture. This intensely self-aware character ensnares us in his own reality as he points to a letter in his hand, a piece of business we'd love to understand but don't. Perhaps he is a politician or simply, as tradition has it, an advocate. Whatever the truth he's a singularity to be reckoned with.
● National Gallery, London.

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