



**The Dolls Day:** amazing self-portraits of red-haired Anderson

# Alice and her looking glass

## EXHIBITION

**Alice Anderson**

Artprojx Space, SW3

★★★★☆

## BEN LEWIS

IT IS RARE to find such precision and originality in the work of a contemporary artist as one does in the fragmented fairytales of Alice Anderson. The 33-year-old London-based French artist, who is instantly recognisable with her long red hair, has shown her films in the Tate and the Pompidou and last year held simultaneous exhibitions at a trio of national French museums, in which she laid out more than 3,000 metres of autobiographical red hair through all three spaces in a gigantic installation called Rapunzel.

In David Gryn's temporary Knightsbridge gallery, she works to a more modest scale but to no less amazing effect. Upstairs there are a series of maquettes as delicate as they are extreme. A tiny self-portrait of a doll with long red hair lies face down at the bottom of a phallic cylinder of white leather punctured by hundreds of tiny white pins. At the base of another transparent glass cone lies another half-visible naked doll, shrouded in ghostly white cotton wool, on a bed of white quilt. Around the walls are drawings in blood, some of which are of medical instruments, while others appear abstractly sexual.

Like her fellow French female artists Sophie Calle and Annette Messager, Anderson's work is saturated in psychoanalytic reflections and carries an aura of unflinching self-examination. Her themes? The vulnerability and violence in the feminine psyche.

Downstairs you can see the latest of her short films of self-written fairy stories; the story of a girl searching for her name, who becomes a life-size doll in her father's hands before herself destroying Barbie dolls in the likenesses of her parents. This is like video artist Matthew Barney meets minimal surrealist Robert Gober — only the miniature female version.

■ *Until 31 January.*

*Information: 020 7584 0717, [www.artprojxspace.com](http://www.artprojxspace.com).*

The art market may be reeling in the face of recession but there will still be plenty of exciting shows this year. Our critic rounds up the best

BEN LEWIS



**ALICE ANDERSON: THE DOLL'S DAY**

8-31 January, Artprojx Space, SW3 (020 7584 0717, [www.artprojxspace.com](http://www.artprojxspace.com))

I'm highlighting this small private gallery show because Alice Anderson, for my money, is one of the five most interesting artists working in Britain today. Anderson explores female violence and vulnerability — psychological waters that have been rarely chartered in art.

Often using her long red hair as a motif, her beautifully made films tell weird, dark fairytales of her own invention and reinvention. Her most recent film, in which she dissects a doll of herself, is mesmerisingly disturbing.

She also makes neat maquettes, often mostly ghostly white, like models for a



**Sights to see:**

Marcus Coates's Firebird, Rhebok Badger and Hare at the Tate Triennial (right); self-portrait, 1640, by Van Dyck at Tate Britain

film that hasn't been made. This is intense and difficult art, with intimations of autobiography, which is actually about something that hasn't been done to death by a thousand other artists already.