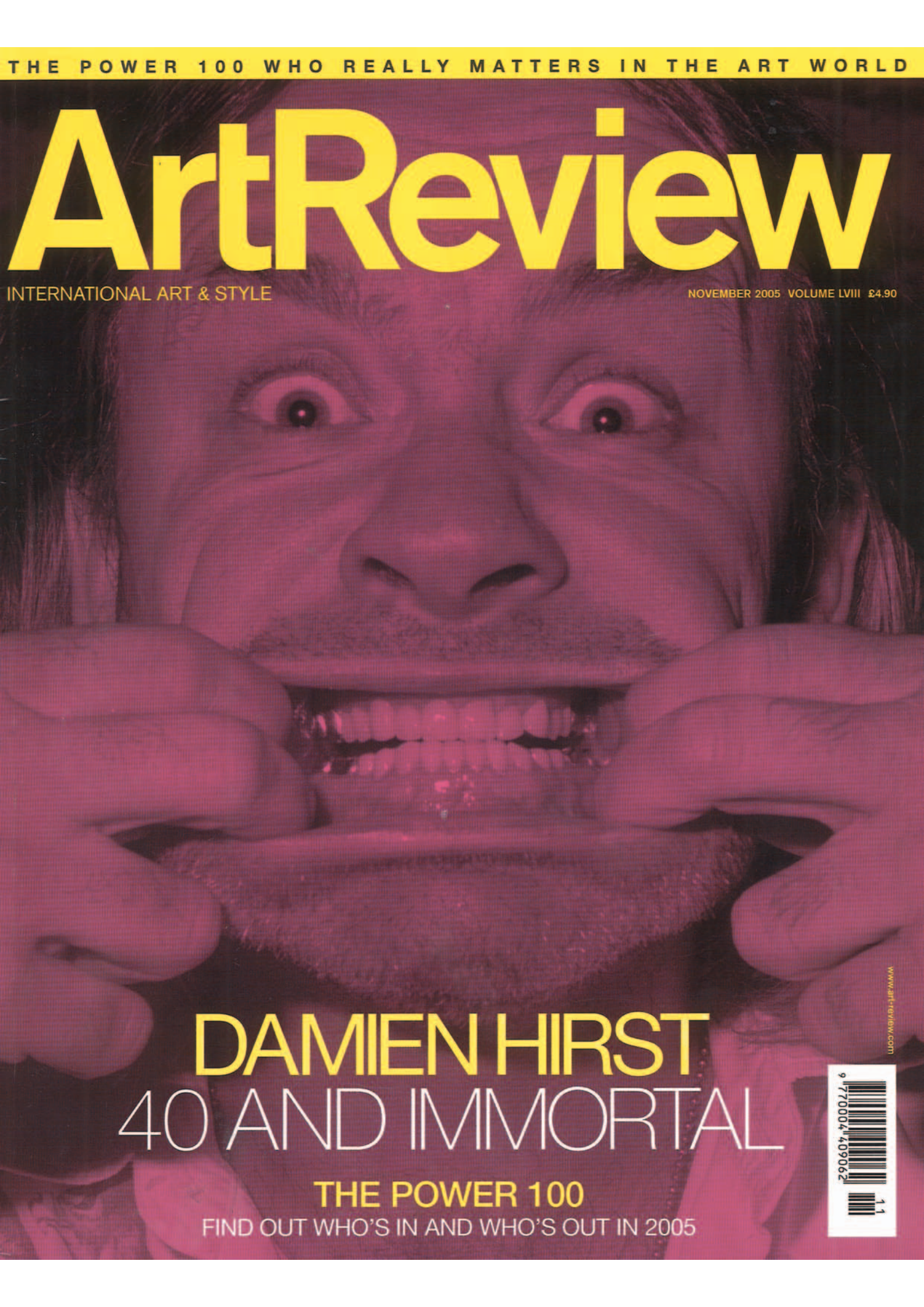


THE POWER 100 WHO REALLY MATTERS IN THE ART WORLD

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## DAMIEN HIRST 40 AND IMMORTAL

**THE POWER 100**

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# Skeleton crew

Interior-design company Showroom Dummies has taken inspiration from the Mexican Day of the Dead festival for their macabre new range. By **Rebecca Wilson**. Photography by **Coco Armodeil**





The writer Octavio Paz once remarked that the Mexican, unlike most Westerners, has no qualms about getting close to death: 'He chases after it, mocks it, courts it, hugs it, sleeps with it; it is his favourite plaything and his most lasting love.' The Day of the Dead, traditionally celebrated throughout November in Mexico, is one of the inspirations behind an exhibition being launched this month by Showroom Dummies, the interior-design company founded in 1993 by YBA artist Abigail Lane, Brigitte Stepputtis, the head of couture at Vivienne Westwood, and Bob Pain, who runs a printing company called Omnivore. Playing on our fear of the macabre, Lane and her partners create exquisitely produced 'objects of obscure beauty', as Abigail Lane refers to them – tables and chairs, cashmere blankets, wallpaper, Perspex screens and silk cushions that are adorned with skeletons, insects, reptiles and other terror-inducing images.

On Halloween they will open for the first time a shop-cum-exhibition where for just one month you will be able to purchase products specifically designed around the theme of death, incorporating imagery associated with the season of All Souls. Crochery, jewellery, painted eggs, flickbooks, T-shirts and leather jackets, decorated with skeletons, skulls and puns such as 'Get a Head' and 'Bone of Contention', will be on sale alongside more conventional works of art such as prints, lenticulars and film stills. Every night during the exhibition Lane's film of a skeleton – which juggles with, yes, you've got it, skulls – will be projected on the shopfront.

Towards the end of the exhibition there will be an auction of works by Abigail Lane and her friends and collaborators, such as Peter Blake, Don Brown, Mat Collishaw, Tracey Emin, Gary Hume, Rebecca Warren, David Harrison, Sarah Lucas, Damien Hirst, Gavin Turk and Tim Noble and Sue Webster. If you're lucky, you'll be able to gnaw on a stick of bony confectionery as you place your bids.

*'Bone Idle' by Showroom Dummies, Charing X Gallery, London (+44 (0)20 7287 1779; [showroomdummies.com](http://showroomdummies.com))*

Left: The Showroom Dummies shop, 2005