



Photo: Antonio

about it, Huxleyan. We use them to get new lines in the work coming. It's for exploring. It's not that frequent and it is extreme. It's lucid. It's not fantasy, it's recoding or assimilating.' Wow. I ask about the images and she speaks of 'their tactile and immersive and concrete imagination-space quality', which I must say describes them rather well. And she's very pleased I didn't see the show as 'druggy'. 'I'm glad you picked up on that because it means it worked.' She said many other interesting things which I would tell you about, had I the space.

There is also about to be a book called *Orphan Drift*, or to give it its correct spelling *O[rphan] D[rift]*. Now this isn't exactly *Kubla Khan*, but it has its lyrical moments, and a kind of queasy lushness, and is vaguely reminiscent of some French Surrealist poetry. Frankly Benjamin Péret is a better read, and won't take so long. But 'Drift' is, as they say, a fascinating subcultural document. I got a proof copy, with pencil marks all over it. 'Oh that was this man who said you



couldn't read it, not realising that this was the point,' explained Roberts. Finally, before I come back to Earth: while I was in the gallery the phone rang. Suzie took a message. Later I went into the office and she pointed to a Post-It note and said, 'that man rang and said he wanted to buy some entities.' 'Some what?' I said. She looked at me and said in her soft voice, 'some strange entities'.

Top: Maggie Roberts/*Orphan Drift* at Cabinet Gallery
Above: Sarah Staton's *Supastore*

Meanwhile, up in Middlesbrough, yes Middlesbrough, 'Sarah Staton's *Supastore*' has set up shop. It's hot from San Francisco, which according to Staton is a very unexciting place. *Supastore* has already been through London. The main thing about it, apart from its sheer extravagance, is the idea, which is to get up a show which is also a shop, and in which all the products are real artworks by real artists (the most famous of whom include Jenny Holzer, Sol LeWitt, Mike Kelley, Damien Hirst) even though some of them might be clothes, or bars of soap. When I saw it in London there were lots of strange objects, most more or less domestic. And lots of clothes, some bizarre, some quite wearable, at least one conceptual: a wall-painted T-shirt by Matthew Higgs, which he will paint on your own wall to order. And a real T-shirt by Alan Kane which read, (if I remember correctly) 'I knew a conceptual artist and all I got was this lousy T-shirt.'

The best bit of my conversation with Staton was her aside to a friend: 'Hang on I'm talking to a journalist. She wants sound-bites.' Which was true. And here they are: 'I've got lots to report from the North East. It's way ahead in terms of fashion. The recession seems to be over here. It's really energised, it's quite extraordinary! This area's going to be the centre for the arts in '96. Here in the gallery there's a Heironymus Bosch and two Turners and a Bronzino. Upstairs Bronzino. Downstairs Sarah Staton's *Supastore*. Write that.' Thank you Sarah. I suggested mischievously that they seem more fashionable because they've worn the same clothes for 15 years and fashion has gone full circle. 'You're just totally patronising and ignorant.' That's the spirit. Do any of these groovy people in the Mecca of art read *Art Review*? Postcards, please. And as the ansaphone message in *Repo Man* puts it, please try to be frank.

Maggie Roberts/Orphan Drift is at Cabinet Gallery, 8 Clifton Mansions, 429 Coldharbour Lane, London SW9 (0171-274 4252) Fri-Sat 12-6 until May 20.
Sarah Staton's Supastore is at Middlesbrough Art Gallery, 320 Linthorpe Road, Middlesbrough (01642 247445) Tue-Sat 10-5.30 until May 27.
Sarah Staton can be contacted on 0171-635 9609.