

With Damien Hirst's palette-cleansing sell-off, Saatchi's new London gallery and a suddenly shaky financial future for all, a wind of change is buffeting British art. Time Out tests its direction and pick – in no particular order – our 40 most exciting talents under the age of 40

We've been reviewing shows in London for 40 years, so we know a thing or two about spotting artistic talent. We also know how quickly the fickle wind of fashion can blow through the art world – who remembers YBA painters Brad Loree or Stephen Adamson, who showed in 'Sensation' more than a decade ago? So, with key members of that group, including Chris Ofili, Martin Creed and Wolfgang Tillmans, reaching their fortieth year in 2008, we thought it only right to look ahead to artists rising through the post-YBA ranks. Despite their youth, most of our 40 artists under 40 are well into their careers by now, all busily engaged in proving they will be around long after the British art boom years are but a distant memory. In other words, they're not only outstanding but credit-crunch proof too.

1. Anne Hardy 38, spooky set designer. Photographer whose charged images of people-less interiors suggest locations for strange goings-on (shows with Maureen Paley).
2. Matthew Weir 31, ceramic scene-maker. Richly romantic compositions of unsettling porcelain figurines at play (Alison Jacques).
3. George Henry Longly 30, ambiguous object maker. Familiar objects and materials become cleverly reconfigured in Longly's abstract sculptures and installations (Dicksmith).
4. Katy Moran 33, gestural landscapist. Moran's oil-slicked oval canvases are evocative and abstract (Stuart Shave/Modern Art).
5. Spartacus Chetwynd 35, performance player. Meat Loaf and Jabba the Hutt have been subjects of this anthropologist-turned-performer's wittily trashy, pop-culture-inspired pieces (Herald Street).
6. Olivia Plender 31, comic-book curator. Graphic novelist, illustrator and

writer who weaves spiritualism into cult fiction and obscure histories (The Drawing Room).

7. Sigrid Holmwood 30, 'ye olde' artisan. Role-playing in a professional capacity, she's a method painter using sixteenth-century paints, quill brushes and studio equipment to reconstruct a peasant artist's life (Annely Juda).
8. Gail Pickering (age undisclosed) physical-theatre director. History, politics, social ritual, fashion and philosophy are all topics for Pickering's playful performance dramas (ICA).
9. Sam Porritt 29, three-dimensional dauber. A sculptor of shrines and signs with a flair for drawing – and risk-taking (Brown).
10. Graham Little 36, fashion illustrator. Little explores fashion's relationship to art through pencil reworkings of female figures from women's magazines (Alison Jacques).
11. Peter McDonald 35, eye-popping painter. McDonald's colourful and quirky pop paintings and sculptures depict aspects of ordinary life via big-headed cartoon figures and crying mountains (Kate MacGarry).
12. Seb Patane 38, Victorianate goth muso. Italian-born Patane stages allusive installations mixing nineteenth-century imagery with dark electronica beats (Maureen Paley).
13. Esther Teichmann 28, psychological photographer. Teichmann's subtle but striking images explore the body as an emotional as well as physical landscape (Man&Eve).
14. Charlie Woolley 27, cross-media instrumentalist. Film, music and literature feed into Woolley's lo-fi sculptures and collisions of collaged text and imagery (David Risley).
15. Conrad Shawcross 31, sci-art machinist. Science and engineering combine in Shawcross's mechanical wooden sculptures which twist yarn and spin lights (Victoria Miro).
16. Pablo Bronstein 31, architectural intervener. Buenos Aires-born Bronstein's architectural pen-and-ink drawings, models and installations

- testify to his interest in social mechanics (Herald Street).
17. Ruth Ewan 28, conscientious protester. Working with kids and animals, Ewan makes leftfield colouring books, jukeboxes and videos that explore social models of propaganda and protest (Ancient and Modern).
18. Williams Daniels 32, montage painter. After building complex tin-foil or paper-layered models mimicking famous paintings from art history, Daniels painstakingly paints every rip and tear on canvas (Wilma Gold).
19. Charles Avery 35, anthropological explorer. Avery's epic project of drawings and sculptures details the weird and wonderful inhabitants of an imaginary island (Parasol Unit).
20. Juneau Projects (Philip Duckworth, 32, and Ben Sadler, 31) folk-art musicians. Back-to-nature arts-and-craftsiness meets new technology, music and collaborative performance (FA Projects).
21. Tris Vonna-Michell 26, performance griot (Cubitt Gallery)
22. Anj Smith 30, oil paint fantasist (IBID)
23. Clunie Reid 37, chaos-maker (MOT)
24. Jamie Shovlin 30, weaver of fictions (Haunch of Venison)
25. Michael Fullerton 37, political portraitist (Carl Freedman Gallery)
26. Ryan Gander 32, über-conceptual polymath (Store)
27. Alexander Heim 31, urban archivist (doggerfisher.com)
28. David Blandy 32, heroic minstrel (ArtProjx)
29. Steve Claydon 39, goth archivist (Hotel)
30. Ben Rivers 36, documentarist (bfi.org.uk)
31. Becky Beasley 33, minimal carpenter (Laura Bartlett)
32. Juliette Blightman 28, slow-moer (Hotel)
33. Jacob Dahl Jürgensen 33, modernist magus (Wilkinson)
34. Sam Windett 31, still-lifer (the Approach)
35. Athanasios Argianas 32, sonic sculptor (Max Wigram/Arcade)
36. David Musgrave 35, persistent pencil pusher (Greengrassi)
37. David Thorpe 36, utopian environmentalist (Maureen Paley)
38. Graham Hudson 31, reclamer (Rokeby)
39. Kathleen Herbert 35, unsettling filmmaker (Danielle Arnaud)
40. Runa Islam 38, culture decoder (White Cube)