

# Out of Hours

## Art

Where is the super-villain, bent on world domination? What happened to the beautiful Blessing? And how on earth, in the middle of a war-torn African republic, did Bond flag down a taxi on page 163? Clearly, I am not going to answer these questions, but I'm able to give you one or two facts which should not diminish your pleasure in reading this well-written and enjoyable story, in which Bond comes across as more literary and reflective than we might have expected.

Like the *BJGP*, the Bond novels are 60 this year: Ian Fleming published *Casino Royale* in 1953. He wrote another thirteen Bond books, and twice as many more have been produced by other authors, including Kingsley Amis and Sebastian Faulks. William Boyd has been described as an Ian Fleming geek, and included him in his novel *Any Human Heart*. He counts among his friends three actors who have played Bond and have also acted in films that he has written — Sean Connery, Pierce Brosnan, and Daniel Craig.

*Solo* is no Fleming pastiche — it is all Boyd, cleverly plotted and elegantly written, at ease with Bond and comfortable in Africa, where he spent some of his childhood. His idiosyncratic choice of the Jensen Interceptor for Bond's wheels may raise eyebrows — the Bentley was being mended. Bond, of course, gets the girl, two of them in fact, knocks back heroic quantities of alcohol and smokes like a chimney. Boyd introduces us to two appealing formulae for Martinis, and to Bond's very own salad dressing.

In the first half of the story Bond is sent by M, and minimally equipped by Q, to Zanzarim, a small and potentially extremely oil-rich West African state in the grip of civil war, and where things do not go entirely smoothly. In the second half the action moves to Washington DC, where a more complex web of domestic and geopolitical intrigue begins to emerge, and where Felix Leiter makes a welcome appearance. The hokum is never on the scale at which Fleming's more deranged villains have operated, so come on Mr. Boyd! We medics have coped with Andrew Lansley and Jeremy Hunt; let's have another one when you write your next Bond book.

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### JACK VETTRIANO — THE MARMITE OF THE ART WORLD?

#### Jack Vettriano: A Retrospective

*Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum,  
Glasgow*

*21 September 2013–23 February 2014*

As a young man, Jack Hoggan (as he was then) would fabricate excuses for leaving work to visit Kelvingrove and be inspired by great art like Dalí's *Christ of St John of the Cross*, and works by the Impressionists and the Glasgow Boys. It is fitting that this major exhibition of his work, the first in Scotland outside of his native Fife, should bring him back to Kelvingrove some 30 years later.

Much has been said and written about Jack Vettriano OBE, one of only a handful of contemporary artists whose work is known worldwide: his working class background, leaving school at 16, teaching himself to paint using materials gifted from his grandfather (whose surname he later adopted) and from a girlfriend when he was 21, his rejection by Edinburgh College of Art, and then his meteoric rise to become one of the very few millionaire artists in the world, much to the disgust of the Scottish Art Establishment. Dubbed 'The People's Painter', Vettriano is both loved (by his many fans) and loathed (by his fiercest critics).

This thoughtfully presented exhibition, which includes 101 paintings spanning over 20 years, allows us (for just £5) to make our

own assessment of his work — from well-known paintings such as *Mad Dogs*, *The Singing Butler*, and *The Billy Boys* (inspired by a scene from Quentin Tarantino's *Reservoir Dogs*) to erotic works such as *Game On*, *Fetish* and *Night Geometry*. But be warned, as the writer AL Kennedy cautions in her foreword to the exhibition catalogue:

*'Be careful when you look at a Vettriano — you will see what you want to see. The pictures will tell you as much about yourself as they do about the artist and his figures.'*

As well as its characteristic style (1930s and 1940s scenes featuring glamorous brunettes in red dresses, set against beaches, bars, and bedrooms), the hallmark of Vettriano's work is its engaging narrative quality, often described as 'cinematic'. In his own words, the exhibition features a number of video interviews with Vettriano and quotes appear on the walls throughout:

*'With Martin Scorcese you get a movie, with me you get one image, and you build the movie around that, any which way you choose.'*

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*The Billy Boys*, © Jack Vettriano 1994, [www.jackvettriano.com](http://www.jackvettriano.com).

