

Life & Times

Books

a lightness of touch. And here too the air within the sculpture belies the weight and volume of the individual pieces. The work feels like a prima donna, strutting her stuff, demanding attention.

And what of the 'Shrinking Universe' title? Does this reference the effect of the internet and the homogenisation of culture that it is causing? Rothschild takes a quite different, marginal scientific view that the universe is shrinking and not expanding. The exhibition is very beautiful and stylish, but, at the same time, disconcerting and unsettling. Like all great art it stays with you long after you have left the room.

BEST OF THE REST

The 58th Venice Biennale runs until 24 November. There are two central exhibitions (€25 entry to the Giardini and Arsenale sites) and 90 international pavilions. Here are my favourites:

France: Laure Prouvost showcases a beautiful undersea world in Murano glass that reflects identity.

Ghana: architect David Adjaye designed a group show, including John Akomfrah and Lynette Yiadom-Boakye.

Lithuania: an indoor beach with opera singers (only on Saturday) and recordings at other times.

Zimbabwe: a provoking group show reflecting on identity in a post-colonial world.

Arsenale and Giardini: both central exhibitions are curated by Hayward Gallery Director Ralph Rugoff and are elegant, challenging, and fun. He understands what visitors want from a gallery show and delivers an outstanding show for visitors of all ages.

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REFERENCE

1. Judah H. Interview. 'I used to be afraid of colour!' Eva Rothschild, Ireland's dockside voice in Venice. *Guardian* 2019; 9 May: <https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2019/may/09/venice-biennale-ireland-eva-rothschild-sculptures> (accessed 19 Jul 2019).

Chicken Unga Fever: Stories from the Medical Frontline

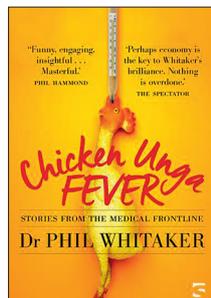
Phil Whitaker

Salt, 2018, PB, 224pp, £9.99, 978-1784631543

The Human Kind: a Doctor's Stories from the Heart of Medicine

Peter Dorward

Green Tree (Bloomsbury imprint), 2018, HB, 352pp, £15.29, 978-1472943903



BREADTH AND DEPTH: TWO DOCTORS ON DOCTORING

Both written by practising GPs, both with deceptively similar subtitles, and both covering many of the same issues, these two books turn out to be very different in style, tone, and intent. Phil Whitaker has been writing his column 'Health Matters' for the *New Statesman* since 2013, and his book is a collection of some 60 of these pieces, ranging widely across diagnostic puzzles, ethical dilemmas, health policy, and the myriad challenges, delights, and frustrations of general practice. He has mastered the constraint of a limited word count, making each piece a model of concision and clarity, usually ending with a lesson learned and shared with the reader — who I assume is imagined to be a typical *New Statesman* subscriber (whatever that may be). GPs will enjoy it, but will not feel challenged.

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By contrast, Peter Dorward's book, aimed at both the medical and the general reader, plunges deeply into matters philosophical, psychological, and political. It is intensely personal too, from his musings about 'How to be Good' as one chapter is headed, through meditations on selfhood and free

will, to his analysis of the meaning of pain prompted by his own climbing accident. He explores opiate addiction, somatoform or 'functional' disorder, mental illness, terminal care, and other matters, all in their social context and illustrated with harrowing and heart-rending case studies, interleaved with anecdotes from throughout his medical career and personal life.

I imagine that those medical students and young doctors lucky enough to come under the author's tutelage will learn many important lessons, and provoked into animated argument. In short, it is a marvellous book, and deserves to become a classic of its genre.

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