

RAKEWELL

The Rake's progress: last week in gossip

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Introducing Rakewell, Apollo's wandering eye on the art world. Look out for regular posts taking a rakish perspective on art and museum stories.

Another day, another story about questionable art research. According to the *Daily Telegraph*, researchers in Piedmont claim to have discovered that looking

at great art can actually be beneficial to health. Taking a group of 100 volunteers, the academics measured levels of cortisol, a hormone produced by the body in response to anxiety, before and after their guinea pigs had marvelled at the enormous 18th-century fresco in the Basilica of Vicoforte near Cuneo. Apparently, the experience effected a pronounced drop in stress levels. 'On average, we found that cortisol levels dropped by 60 per cent and that more than 90 per cent of the participants said they felt much better at the end of the experience,' said Professor Enzo Grossi. Is it time for the Rake to jack in his gym membership for a National Art Pass?

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East London's Chisenhale gallery has announced details of a curious new exhibition by German artist Maria Eichhorn, a two-part show that explores the sensitive matter of contemporary labour conditions. The first of said parts, which took place on Saturday, was a one-day public symposium on the subject. The second, however, is somewhat more unusual:

'At Eichhorn's request, the gallery's staff will then withdraw their labour for the remaining five weeks of the exhibition,' reads the gallery's press release. 'None of Chisenhale's employees will work during this period and the gallery and office will be closed, implementing leisure and "free time" in the place of work.'

While Rakewell can't vouch for the aesthetic quality of the, erm, no-show, he can't help but feel a bit jealous of the Chisenhale employees' enforced rest and relaxation.

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At a talk at New York's FLAG Foundation last week, Jeff Koons dished the dirt on his recent collaboration with Lady Gaga on the cover for the singer's *ArtPop* album – 'she wanted to get naked', apparently – and gave some interesting insights into how his children perceive his work. 'They look at [the 1988 work *Pink Panther*] and say, "There's the Pink Panther!" [...] and then, "There's the rabbit!"' Things get rather more difficult when it comes to the *Made in Heaven* series, in which the artist depicted himself and then-wife Ilona Staller in a series of unprintably compromising positions: 'And then, "There's Ilona's asshole' [...] They automatically understood and valued the work. It's a dialogue that's just about biology, one form of the eternal.' Which is certainly one way of putting it.

Got a story for Rakewell? Get in touch at rakewell@apollomag.com or via [@Rakewelltweets](https://twitter.com/Rakewelltweets).