



## **Mat Collishaw**

Modern Art *East End*

Placed in a small, crimson-walled room, Mat Collishaw's gilt-framed photographs flip-flop around the subject of childhood innocence and sexuality. In a fake sylvan landscape, an Alice-like girl plays a flute to a stuffed white rabbit and considers nibbling a toadstool; another girl presses close to a bull garlanded with flowers. Placed inside morbid, black-painted frames, four images show roses on fire – fragile blooms destroyed. Collishaw's attitude towards such deceitful symbolism might perhaps be gauged by the fact that, in one piece, he has sandwiched all manner of dust and muck between image and glass.

Converted into colossal multi-panel mosaics are three black-and-white images of a naked woman, trussed and wearing a

bondage mask, a young girl lying on a bed covering her chest and an Egyptian-like sculpture of a horse's head. They are upsetting, but more distressing are the defensive procedures of one's mind; the bound woman, it decides, must be sourced from some sado-masochist website, the child seems in trouble only because of the photo's dramatic lighting and the maleficent-looking horse is just a stone icon. Moving in to examine the tiling, one discovers deliberately slap-dash gluing, as if you were being punished for finding ways to keep looking at the prurient material. As an eye-opening guilt-trip, this is unquestionably effective, but, given that Collishaw began his career with images of brutalised women and, two years ago, said he'd had enough of violent, intentionally shocking images, it's disturbing to see him taking such a determined step backwards. *Martin Herbert*