

JEREMY DICKINSON
Classic and Sports Car
January, 2009

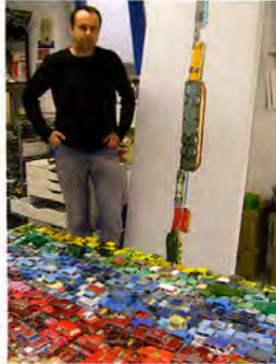
JEREMY DICKINSON

It's an odd coincidence that Jeremy Dickinson's lofty London studio overlooks both a bus garage and Wimbledon Stadium. Both have featured extensively in his paintings over the years, but now the inspiration is within this fascinating lair. Taking centre stage is a table packed with diecast cars, laid out in a dazzling miniature gridlock. Since the mid-'90s, this eclectic collection has been the theme of Dickinson's work, which has an international following with recent sell-out one-man shows in Japan, Korea, New York and Paris.

From his hoard of old toys, Dickinson builds still life arrangements including his trademark towers. "The toy series started when a friend sent me a Tootsietoys Greyhound bus that he'd found in a California flea market," says Dickinson. "The bus had been crudely repainted and was well played with over the years. It looked as if it had an interesting history. I'd hit a creative block with photo-realism, so set it up in the studio and started painting from different angles."

The success of those early studies led to Dickinson digging out his old toys from the attic and laying them out in the studio in various configurations: "Those groups really got me going and the memories flooded back. The chips and dents show that the toys had a life. I like the idea that the playing has stopped and now it is in a frozen state."

Dickinson was soon visiting events such as Sandown Toy Fair to find more subjects, but his quest contrasts with specialist collectors. His best finds have been among the tatty items under the tables: "I'm always after strange colours. Some '50s Dinkys such as the Austin Counties were released in weird two-tone schemes. I think the colour range was affected by the lead in the paint. I look for unusual toys, particularly French Dinkys, but the older stuff is getting hard to



Dickinson with his miniature traffic jam

find. There's a collectors' shop in Halifax that had trays of wrecked toys, which was a fantastic source."

Family and friends have also started to send Dickinson toys for reference. His sister recently dug up a Corgi Citroën DS in her garden, while an Italian chum produced two rare Politoy: a Porsche 911 and an Alfa T22.

Although the backgrounds are in acrylic, Dickinson prefers oils for the main subjects, giving the detail a lustrous quality. The toys are one of many transport themes that have inspired this Yorkshire artist's paintings since he left Goldsmiths College, London in 1986, and work in progress includes painted body panels from distressed vehicles.

Dickinson's full-scale dream car is a 1965 Ford Mustang: "I think I saw too much American TV when I was a kid, but I'd really rather have a classic bus. As a boy, I loved riding on Scania Metropolitans over the moors from Halifax to Bradford. The engine roar and acceleration were terrific."

Mick Walsh

Dickinson's work is represented by Galerie Xippas and Sarah Meltzer. For prints, see www.therealmart.com or e-mail: jdickinson@iname.com



Clockwise, from far left: *Auto Spectrum* is a highlight of the *Auto Stack* series; daring leap for Ford in *Thunderbird Truck Chase*; *Spiral Parking* presents a history of Matchbox toys; *Bus Rears – London, Paris, Halifax*; wonderful *Trolleybus Wall Map of England and Wales*