

Trendspotter

TINS were in when Andy Warhol gave them art credibility, but until Gaultier released his latest £52 perfume and £44 aftershave in a supermarket can to de-fantasise scent (despite leaving it fantastically expensive), it seemed the trend had stagnated. Engaging London Arts Board-sponsored mag *Engaged* re-asserts the aesthetic acceptability of this epitome of western laziness with its fourth issue, which is contained in a can. Issue Three, we are told intriguingly, "exists in a 3-D rendered public lavatory". Don't panic, *Bulletin* is scooped by that one too.

"Serving suggestion: empty contents of tin onto any available surface and digest slowly" recommends the can. So break the non-resealable lid, invert and gawp in wonder/confusion/contempt (delete where applicable) as a packet of alphabet wine gums ("100% potential poetry! Suck on a sonnet!"), a badge, "pre-plucked

insects, with legs and wings removed for convenience", and various other objects tumble out.

The loose pages of the magazine are coiled comfortably in the tin, and comprise about 15 pages of quality pop-art. They are a suitably high-colour, high-gloss, high-preservative, conveniently consumable visual snack.

Once sufficiently engaged with the pages, and the connections between the artwork and the objects, it becomes apparent that the "magazine in a tin" format is not an unnecessary pretension, but a way to force all the contents to be understood together, and by reference to each other.

"Shopping can be an aesthetic experience; lights, colours, space all play together in a theatrical

effort to give us more than just a convenient way of buying products. We are seduced and abandoned in the corn flakes section." It is a wry humour like this that makes *Engaged* the success that it is, instead of the dismal failure it could so easily have been.

Ten quid may seem a bit pricey for a magazine, and positively extortionate for a can, but hey, who wants to read alphabet spaghetti? And can anything costing 38p be seriously fashionable? Anyway, for scrimpers, *Engaged* includes string masquerading as an *objet trouve*, and easy to follow instructions in the artwork mean you can save pounds on connection and line rental charges by creating your own *Engaged* mobile phone (geddit?).

Tom Sykes



Engaged with contents (above) and the tin fully-packed (above, right)