

Shimabuku

Wilkinson *East End*

You might remember Shimabuku's work from 'Facts of Life' at the Hayward Gallery a couple of years ago. He took an octopus on a sightseeing trip of Tokyo, then released it back into the sea. 'You're going home,' he called, as the gelatinous beast idled in the breakers. On video, in this exhibition, the Japanese artist shows dog owners coaxing their pets into Langland Bay, Swansea, by throwing balls and sticks out to sea. Some swim energetically after their quarry, others bark at the waves and refuse to go in. Billed as 'Swansea Jack Memorial Day Swimming Competition', the event goes on and on (I witnessed over 40 pooches a-paddling), but you're unlikely to stay the course – which might be the point. In Wilkinson's basement, catching myself writing notes like 'number nine, Peppa, pathetic' and '18, Turbo, good swimmer', I realised that, in addition to having an eye for absurdity, Shimabuku also makes you feel trapped and self-conscious; watching becomes almost a Sisyphean effort.

The artist is also trapped or, rather, his disembodied voice emanates from a cardboard box covered with airport stickers. On a low plinth is a box of elastic bands; a sign invites you to 'take a rubber band out of the box and pass your body through it.' A few mangled bits of twangy stuff, which look as though they've been passed through the body rather than vice versa, suggest that some people have had a go. Upstairs are designs for wallpaper containing canal-scenes, bicycles, a donkey and an octopus. Whimsical arrangements of things seen on the artist's travels – a perfect show for the silly season.

Martin Coomer

'Born as a Box'

