

strokes defining the foliage on the banks. No people can be discerned here, but Seurat's fascination with bathers fills a third panel with their forms.

The bowler-hatted man lying on the grass in the large canvas is included here. He seems to be gazing at two youths paddling in the river — one clothed and stooping, the other naked and upright. Neither was included in the final

Grande Jatte, the subject of Seurat's second monumental painting. Two of the small panels in the Berggruen gift offer insights into the genesis of this consummate canvas, now reigning over the Post-Impressionist rooms at the Art Institute of Chicago. The first concentrates on a stretch of land in the distance. The restless, freely applied brush-

for the most part, smarter than the working-class bathers in the earlier canvas.

And in the second Berggruen study, which enlarges its focus to encompass nearly all the land in the Chicago canvas, a top-hatted gentleman stands erect in the foreground. Brushed in very lightly, he has an almost spectral air, and Seurat's decision to place him in deep

stiff profile of the lady who joins the top-hatted gentleman and parades with her parasol and pet monkey. None of Seurat's dissatisfaction with the pomposity of bourgeois life affects the Berggruen oil studies, though. A well-dressed woman does, admittedly, perambulate along the river-bank

before he died at 31, nothing is permitted to disturb the spell-bound atmosphere of the harbour in strong sunlight. Diminutive figures can just be detected, standing on the path beyond the thin strip of water. But they are wholly subservient to the overall scene, where emptiness takes on a highly charged potency of its own.

Apart from a distant row of

purely luminous painting in the whole collection. If the National Gallery could purchase this sublime painting from Berggruen, along with the equally magical *Les Poseuses*, then Seurat would be represented at Trafalgar Square with a splendour unmatched anywhere.

● Richard Cork reviews the Venice Biennale in *The Times* tomorrow

MUZEUM SZTUKI, LODZ

Critic gives an anatomy lesson

The shotgun marriage between the Tate and contemporary art continues with the gallery's first independently curated theme show. *Rites of Passage*, which opens this week, features work by 11 international artists. The critic Stuart Morgan, a supporter of young artists who has always regarded himself as being outside the art establishment, was invited to co-curate the show with the Tate's Frances Morris.

In the past, Morgan has been quite rude about the gallery and its director, Nicholas Serota. But all has been forgiven. In Morgan and Morris the Tate has chosen a complementary duo to select and stage-manage its grandest ever contemporary exhibition.

Morris says the two began by drawing up a list of all the artists, British and international, they could think of who were working with "the body". "We narrowed it down to 20 or 30 we felt extremely interested in," she says. "At that stage we realised that 'the body' wasn't a subject and threw it out. Talking about these artists we found it wasn't there; the work was rooted in something else." But if "the body" itself was a bit of a red herring, the body as a subject does work as a general shorthand for art that is not necessarily conceptual or self-referential.

"The art we have chosen is combative," Morgan says. "It's thoroughly emotional, and I think if there is one thing that is

A sniper has turned gamekeeper to co-curate the Tate's imminent new show, says Sacha Craddock

going to come out of this, it's the idea that cool minimalism and cool conceptualism are things of the past. People want something else." He says he wants people to cry.

The mind/body split is a bit simplistic, but Morris hopes to represent the growing emergence both in Britain and abroad of work that "deals with issues, subjects like the ageing of the flesh, illness and sexual desire". Morgan, however, adds that "none of the work in the exhibition is purely 'issue-based'".

The notion of a dramatic experience in an exhibition that plunges the visitor from warmth to cold fear, on a physical journey from darkness into light and back again, is not going to be to everybody's taste. "We wanted to do it in a rather theatrical way and give the viewer or visitor a journey that had different flavours, experiences and climates," Morris says. "Rather like a symphony or mass that has a range of

moods." Morgan describes the exhibition as "a succession of tableaux" through which you are encouraged to travel.

It is impossible to categorise the artists included. The list is impressive in its range and breadth. There are young and old, living and dead. The very first experience in the show will be a frieze of photographs of the artist John Coplans's naked body — "A hairy, fat, overweight man", says Morgan, "who poses himself for someone else to take the pictures". The second will be an opportunity to take a filmic journey through the internal orifices of Mona Hatoum's body.

There is also work by Louise Bourgeois, who Morgan says is "the greatest sculptor in the world, possibly the greatest artist. She does not stop breaking new territory, and she is 80-whatever years old." This is shown alongside the quiet, barely known work of Hamad But, who died very young from Aids.

"Our lives are very difficult", Morgan says, "and in many cases now they are very short. What we want people to realise when they walk around the show is that we are all on our own and we have to make our own way. There is nobody here to help us, and the general problems are problems of life, death, and who you are in the universe. For me it is the kind of art that doesn't have a name."

● *Rites of Passage* is at the Tate Gallery, Millbank, SW1 (0171-887 8000) until Sep 3



Life, the universe and everything: Miroslaw Balka's *Remembrance of the First Communion* (1985)

kind of mini-symphony between Morrison, Keane and percussionist Teena. Playing her first Edinburgh show in five years, the leathered Sinéad O'Connell looked supremely confident she followed Morrison on the main stage. "I will follow my own policies," she said on the opening *The Empty New Clothes*, and then played that she was going to call it exactly that by kicking straight into *Famine*, a rap which questions the failure of the 1845 Irish potato famine.

Even when singing historical subjects through a massive PA system in the middle of a huge field, Connor still manages to make songs sound like peals of cries from her heart. *Thank You For Hearing* and *Red Football* she sings rather than sang, but it was real strength behind the emotion.

Over on the second floor former Pogues singer MacGowan, with his band the Popes, proved to still have more life than the current Top 40 put together. Mixing Pogues classics *The Broad Majestic* and *Fairytale of New York* with songs from their recently-released debut album *Snake*, the Popes trace a line from traditional music to punk.

After the all-out mayhem of the Popes, the Beautiful Seemed desperately tame. Perhaps O'Connor had a change of heart when she told the crowd to forget the stage: "And forget — if you do sing, it's an Irish song."

ANN SCANLON

DANCE: Debra Craine reviews *Rasputin*, a new ballet commissioned by Irek Mukhamedov for the Hampton Court Palace Festival



IF EVER there was a dancer in search of a choreographer it is Irek Mukhamedov. After tasting the exhilaration of working with the late Kenneth MacMillan at Covent Garden, the Russian superstar has cast his net wide for creative opportunities. There was his *Othello* with Kim Brandstrup's Arc Dance Company, and a head-bobbing just a case of

chilly Friday night to see an evening of ballet under the stars. On stage Mukhamedov was the star, in fact the only star of *Rasputin*, in which he played all seven roles — including two

Making a mess of the monk

So who is Natalia Volkova that she managed to produce such tosh? According to the programme, she "created solos and duets for many of the leading dancers of the Kirov Ballet" and worked with the Rus-

long ballet — even for one person — requires different skills. Volkova would appear to have no understanding of ballet's narrative prerequisites. Her storytelling was a mess: even reading the cast of

consists of the obvious: a heavy-torsoed moves signalling Putin's desperation, a feline slither of the back his feral ale. Mukhamedov's body power is impressive, but too out of control colour what little the choreographer had to offer. The music is unspeakably bad, a mishmash of mournful Russian basses