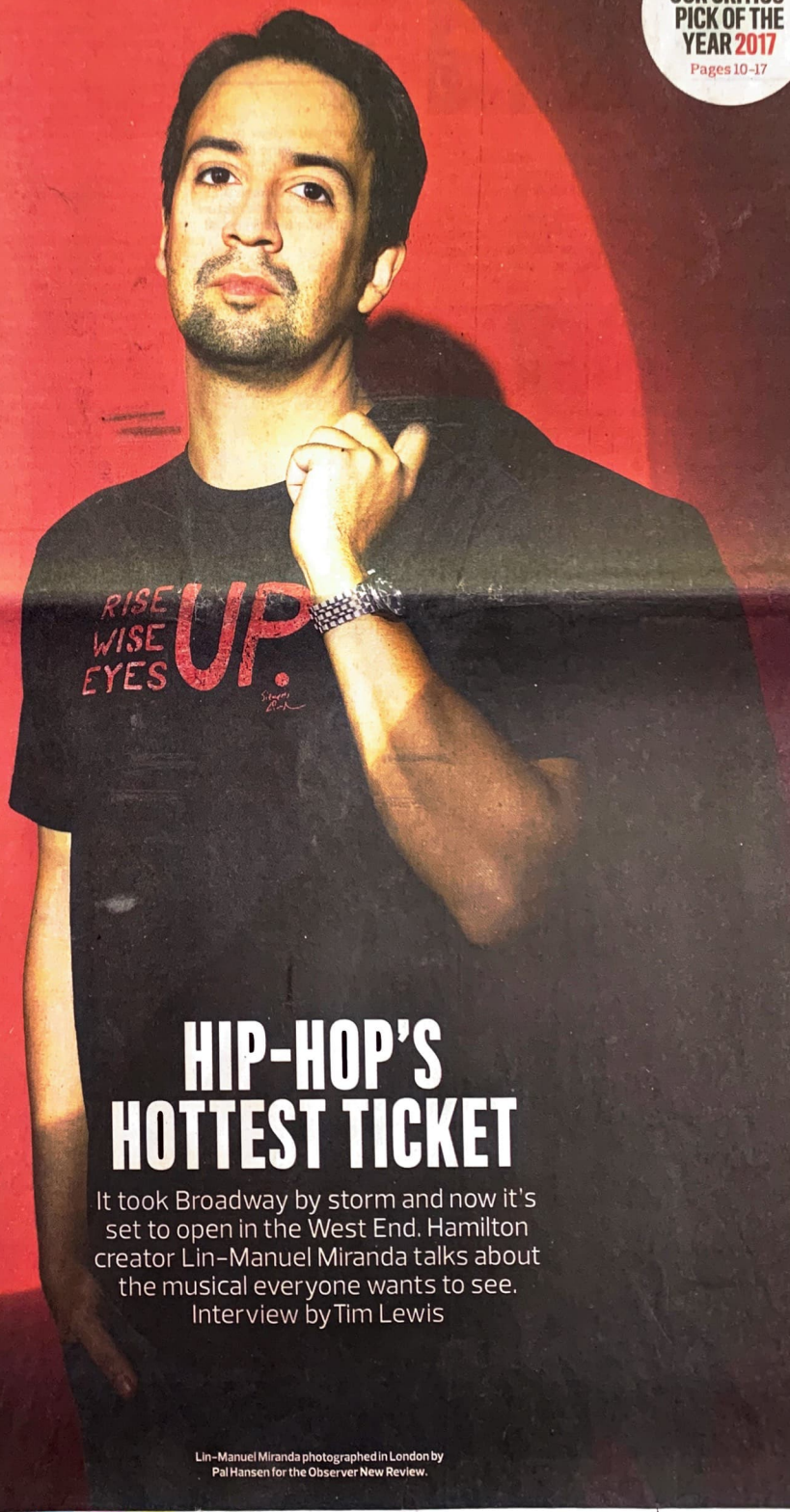


The Observer

THE NEW REVIEW

SUNDAY 10 DECEMBER 2017

INSIDE
OUR CRITICS'
PICK OF THE
YEAR 2017
Pages 10-17



HIP-HOP'S HOTTEST TICKET

It took Broadway by storm and now it's set to open in the West End. Hamilton creator Lin-Manuel Miranda talks about the musical everyone wants to see.

Interview by Tim Lewis

Lin-Manuel Miranda photographed in London by
Pal Hansen for the Observer New Review.

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David Mitchell



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Mark Kermode reviews Menashe

Euan Ferguson on Peaky Blinders and the return of The Crown

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Lin-Manuel Miranda on his hip-hop Broadway musical, Hamilton

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Our pick of the best children's books this Christmas, from picture stories to titles for teenagers and older kids

Ekow Eshun on a history of seminal British magazine the Face

Graphic novel of the month

ONLINE THIS WEEK

Assignment – share your images of what 'icy' means to you at witness.theguardian.com

Gallery – Zacharie Gaudrillot-Roy's ghost town nightscapes
theguardian.com/artanddesign

Showcase – original photography commissioned for the Observer last month
theguardian.com/artanddesign



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Feedback

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A distressing but powerful piece (Five years after the gang rape and murder of Jyoti Singh in Delhi, cover story, last week). I urge you to read it.

Claire Felstead @clairefelstead on Twitter

India, where cows, corrupt politicians and intangible religious "sentiments" matter more than the citizens.

Valbhav Sharma @taofududeism

Thoughtful and insightful comments and answers from one of the BBC's greatest assets (Q&A with BBC correspondent Clive Myrie, last week).

Barney Jones @barneyjones

An outstanding professional, and the best-dressed man on the telly.

ochongodeo, posted online

In our house children were positively encouraged to make up their own minds about books (Books that opened eyes to inequality, last week). So I read a huge mix and came out of it a little, bookish human being, alert to racism and sexism. I loved Rudyard Kipling's *Jungle Book* and *Just So Stories*. Would I have felt differently about them if I'd read his jingoistic poetry? I think I'd have felt astounded, unable to reconcile the tone or content of one with the other. And I think that that is the thing. We contain multitudes of personae, and in Kenneth Grahame's and Kipling's cases some of those were unsavoury.

barbkay

Dr Seuss can be pretty bigoted at times, but his story *Yertle the Turtle* is a delightful take on class and dictatorship.

Shaista

This was an important article for anyone that's wondering whether the whole fake news/Russian bots business is true (How Russia weaponised the web, Science and Tech, last week). Very informative.

@emmarhinosfan

It's been a decade since our planet's first "cyberwar". As this article concludes, this new way to harass each other, on a global scale, is here to stay. It is the price we pay for wanting to live in a connected world.

@MarkAntonyOwen

Thanks for recommending the *Allergies*, Craig. Fabulous. They have just got me through my Sunday run (On my radar: actor and DJ Craig Charles's cultural highlights, last week).

Zaphodssparehead

I saw the headline, thought oh for f&@k sake, don't be ridiculous! and then saw it was Stewart Lee (Can Harry and Meghan make Britain whole again? last week). It's all so surreal at the moment that I'm no longer sure what's serious and what's satire.

freeflow

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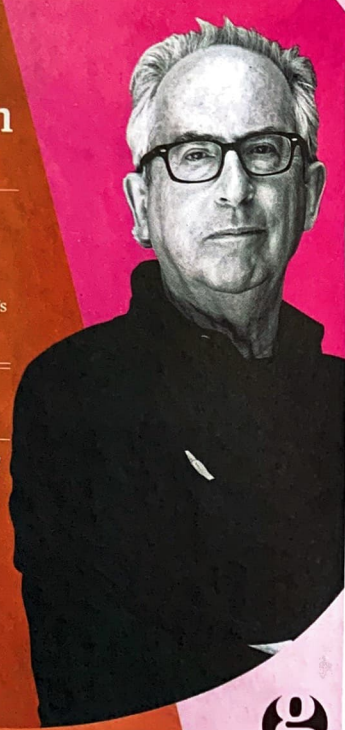
Peter Carey in conversation

Join multi-award-winning author Peter Carey as he discusses his latest novel, *A Long Way from Home*, an exploration of 1950s Australia and Indigenous dispossession. He will be in conversation with the Guardian's associate culture editor Claire Armitstead.

The Tabernacle,
London,
W11 2AY

Wednesday
17 January,
7pm-8.30pm

Book now at gu.com/live-carey





David Mitchell

Want a tip on weight loss? Don't ask Mick Jagger

People won't take dietary advice from obese nurses, but they will from stick-thin film stars – with terrible results in both cases. That was the news last week.

The first half of the above is an inference from a study in the journal *BMJ Open* saying that about 25% of nurses in the NHS are obese, a discovery the report's lead author, Dr Richard Kyle of Edinburgh Napier University, declared to be “deeply worrying”. The depth of his concern surprised me considering that about 25% of the adult population is obese, which he must have known. So, what he's found is that nurses are, on average, neither thinner nor fatter than the general population which, if I were him, is precisely what I would expect to find. Then again, calling the findings “deeply predictable” would probably have been a kick in the teeth for the people who'd just paid him to find them.

His deep worry stems from two issues: first, the health impact of obesity on all those nurses – “It is vital that we redouble our efforts to take care of our healthcare workforce who do so much to care for others” (maybe he used to work in greetings cards) – and second, that patients will be reluctant to take dietary advice from the very fat. “If someone is visibly overweight people don't necessarily trust that advice. The public expect nurses to be role models,” he said. Tam Fry, chairman of the National Obesity Forum, echoes this sentiment: “People in the health service are meant to be role models but they're not.”

You hear a lot these days about who are supposed to be role models. Reality TV stars are bad role models, footballers should try to be better role models, etc etc. It makes a certain amount of sense when talking about people who are paid a lot to do something unimportant. But I think it's a bit much also to lay that burden on those paid a pittance to do something vital. Purely by their choice of profession, nurses are surely already making a contribution role-model-wise, and they can probably

do without our heaping on a load of extra pressure to be thin and healthy and beaming with media-groomed joie de vivre.

In the west today, it can be difficult to be thin. I certainly haven't got the knack. And, in a cruel reversal of what historical imagery makes us expect, the poor are now more likely to be fat than the rich. Time and money are a huge help in attaining the trim appearance that contemporary visual snobbery associates with success. These days the euphemistically prosperous-looking are probably anything but. And, as time and money are commodities nurses are notoriously short of, I'd say the fact that the profession's obesity rate is no higher than the national average is already an achievement.

But what of the concern that patients suffering weight-related health issues will be less willing to take lifestyle advice from a fat nurse? Well, I can't immediately dismiss it – people can be pretty stupid. Maybe they'd also be less likely to heed safety advice about crocodiles from a zookeeper with only one arm.

The media have a slight obsession with hypocrisy. It's like potting the eight-ball early in pool. If someone can be labelled a hypocrite – if you can say they “don't practise what they preach” – then it's game over: you can ignore everything they say. That's not always a very sensible approach. We all know someone can completely sincerely advise you to do something that they've tried and failed to do themselves.

But many of us do seem to find it reassuring to get our dietary advice from the rake-like. The British Dietetic Association is so concerned about this that it brings out an annual list of “celebrity” diets to be wary of. This year's includes the alkaline diet, favoured by Kate Hudson, Tom Brady and the Duchess of York, the raw vegan diet, advocated by Gwyneth Paltrow, Megan Fox and Sting, and the ketogenic diet, followed by the likes of Kim Kardashian, Mick Jagger and Halle Berry.

These people are all in good shape so the idea that they've got some glamorous trick for maintaining their appearance is as attractive as they are. But, as you'd probably expect, it doesn't work like that. According to the BDA, while some of these diets might help you lose weight a bit (largely because of the extent to

Film stars are thin from assuaging a different hunger – one that dwarfs doughnut cravings

which they overlap with the broader scientific consensus on healthy eating), they might also be bad for you if you stick to them for too long (probably not a massive worry).

They're fashionable fads cooked up (or left raw) by amateurs, which means they are often, as the BDA says of the alkaline diet, “based on a basic misunderstanding of human physiology”. “If something sounds too good to be true, it probably is,” was how Sian Porter, consultant dietitian with the BDA, put it.

To my mind, the idea that a film star is thin for reasons primarily to do with diet is as foolish as thinking that nurses might have their facts wrong on healthy eating simply because they happen to be fat. Film stars are weird people – they have a drive to be looked at that, in most cases, has informed a very high percentage of the choices they've made. They have a huge amount riding on their appearance, and it is insufficiently cynical to say that it's primarily money. They are thin from assuaging a different hunger – one that dwarfs the doughnut cravings under which the majority labour. They're the wrong people to advise the general public about what to eat. It's like asking a cheetah for techniques to cut out carbs.

If a problem with our society is that people unquestioningly believe the thin and rich, and ignore out of hand the utterances of the poor and chubby, then I wonder whether pressurising the chubby to slim and the slim to shut up is really the answer. I suspect that's treating the symptom rather than the underlining cause – which is the utter vacuity of millions of people's system of values.

So let's leave Halle Berry and round nurses out of this. It's not their fault. The unavoidable truth is that you shouldn't judge the wisdom of someone's words according to how physically attractive they are. People who don't realise that are bound to suffer. And their minds won't be changed by anything I say. Not unless I lose weight.

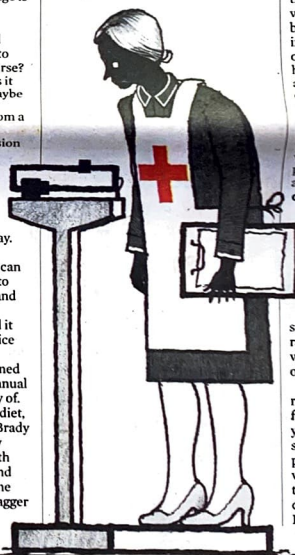


ILLUSTRATION BY
DAVID FOLDVARI

SNAPSHOTS Nightscapes in a ghost town

When French artist Zacharie Gaudrillot-Roy learned how to use digital image manipulation, he decided to mix reality and perception by creating a city made entirely of facades. “The facade [of a building] is the first thing we see and it could tell us everything and nothing at the same time – it is just a question of imagination,” he says. “I like to wander through the city at night and when something tempts my eyes I take a picture.” Gaudrillot-Roy, who lives in Lyon and has been working on the project since 2009, adds: “I choose a building when it evokes something in me and causes me to interrogate myself. So it is not really a conscious choice, but more about a feeling.” **Stacey Smith**
zachariegaudrillot-roy.com



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