

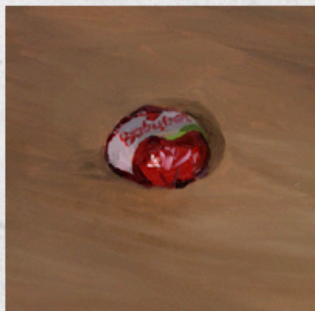
Waitrose

Painter's brush with spoilt milk inspires cheese show

The youngest artist ever to be commissioned to paint a portrait of The Queen has taken a more humble inspiration for his latest project - cheese.

Christian Furr was inspired to create his new collection while painting a bottle of milk that was going off back in 1992.

'As I painted, I began to wonder about the origin of cheese, and the seed was sown,' he says. 'A good cheese is a pleasure to look at. If you think of the craft involved and the amount of time the makers spend on them, there's a lot to them. And they're very



ACROSS THE BOARD Furr's subjects range from gourmet to this painting, Babybel, in his exhibition



different. The other day, I saw a Norwegian cheese that was just so square that it looked like modern art.'

It isn't only cheeses such as Chaource and Époisses that Furr turns his eye to. Everyday varieties are also included in his new collection, called The Humble Cheese.

For an exhibition at the Knight Webb Gallery in Brixton, south London, the artist has painted pictures of lunchbox favourites such as Dairylea, Primula and Babybel.

'I love Andy Warhol and his fascination with mass-produced consumable items like the Campbell's soup cans,' he says.

'That led me naturally to Babybel and Dairylea. Here the interesting part is finding something in the commonplace packaging - they look like sweets.'

While cheeses are terrific subjects to paint, Furr found one downside - his diet.

'When I first started painting them, I went for a check-up, and the doctor said my cholesterol had gone up,' he says. 'But I was quite healthy and jogging a lot. So I put it down to the cheese, and cut back a little.'

'I've got three daughters, so the cheese does still all get eaten, but I don't have quite so much anymore.'