



## Natasha Kidd

**Houldsworth Fine Art** (West End)

**W**hen an eight-year-old friend recently announced that her school would be visiting a chocolate factory, it turned out that everyone present – both children and adults – shared the same fantasy of giant, bubbling vats of melted chocolate into which mounds of naked candy were mercilessly dipped. When we discovered that the gooey side of the operation would not be visible for fear of industrial espionage, we all lost interest. If that image appeals to you, then Natasha Kidd's 'Painting Machines' will tempt in the same oozing, irresistible way. A machine repeatedly dips the canvases into buckets of thick, white emulsion creating neat,

rhythmic folds in the paint. These are then hung on the walls and left to dry like so many white-chocolate candy bars.

Of course, when machines replace even the most sacred of artistic pursuits – painting – it says something about the loss both of the human touch and a psychological depth in contemporary painting. And there are references to the 1960s monochrome masters who questioned the very essence of painting – from Piero Manzoni's all-white 'Achromes' to Robert Ryman's infinitely imaginative variations on the white-on-white picture. Actually, though, Kidd's work is a homage to our lasting love affair with paint – our fascination with its very substance and its dripping, messy, lipsmacking appeal.

*Gilda Williams*