

## Exhibits fail to captivate ex-inspector of prisons

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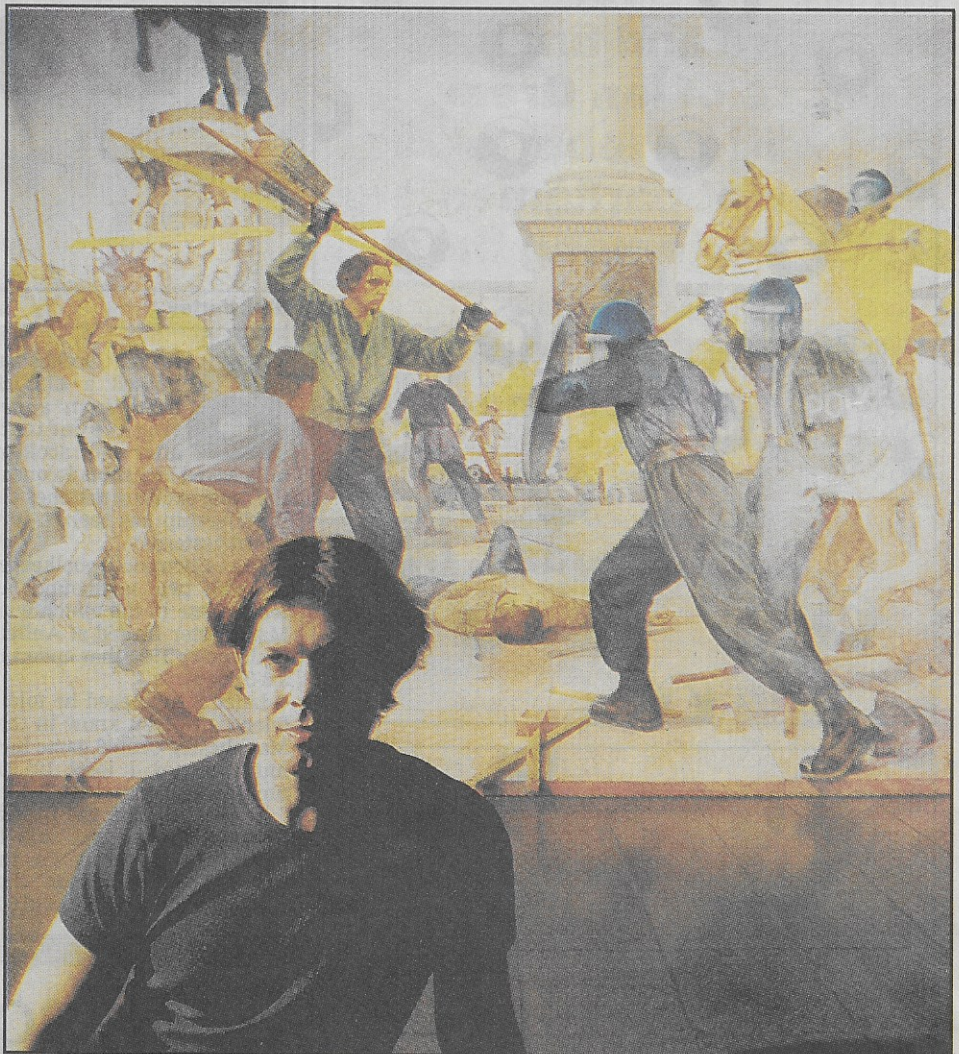
Soviet realism or telling it like it was? Poll tax riot picture is defended

**T**RITE Soviet realism or the work of a modern-day Uccello? A representation of the poll tax riots of 1990 is set to be unveiled at the Museum of London's new London Now gallery on Tuesday, writes *Luke Harding*.

Painted in a realistic style, the 12ft by 9ft canvas shows stick-wielding protesters fighting with police in riot gear in Trafalgar Square.

Yesterday the museum's curator of paintings and pictures, Mireille Galinou, defended the work by John Bartlett, entitled *History Painting*. "It is an extremely interesting and important subject. People who say it is Soviet realism could make the same criticism about any figurative painting. It is an historical interpretation. I like it."

The exhibition aims to bring the museum up to date — its current exhibits peter out after the Blitz — and show how much the capital has changed in the last 50 years.



John Bartlett and his 'historical interpretation' of the poll tax riot PHOTOGRAPHS: GRAHAM TURNER