

Linden Innovators 2 | Linden Centre for Contemporary Arts

25 June - 24 July 2011

The Innovators series of exhibitions at Linden Centre for Contemporary Art are unique events. In each instalment of the series, several artists of diverse and divergent practise are selected on the merit of their proposals and brought together by a sympathetic approach in concept and/or execution. Once selected, each artist is offered technical, curatorial, marketing and financial assistance to present new work in an environment that encourages risk and experimentation. Innovators 2 presents works that, when viewed collectively, addresses themes of excess, materiality and colour.

Burning Up by **Kristen Phillips** takes its title from a Madonna song of 1983. Made of bronze, her intricately detailed sculptures contain multiple motifs including jewellery, floral patterns and fruit. Sometimes the amalgam of these objects renders them difficult to decipher as they merge into an almost liquid mass. And when displayed on day-glo pink plinths the eye is even further perplexed. The result is an optical excess, in which Phillips references Dutch still life painting, 1980s colour schemes and design histories that exemplify a consumer driven morass inherent in our contemporary lives. But in their materiality, Phillips has made the drudgery so alluring and bespoke, that she has ironically created another object to be desired.

Like Phillips' bronze works, the forms that make up **Naomi Troski's** *Slow Haze* are difficult to define. Composed of a white synthetic lattice suspended by rope, Troski's amorphous forms billow throughout Gallery 3. As you move around the room, in order to establish the optimum viewing angle to decode the ebb and flow of the plastic and rope structure, you become acutely aware of how much you are looking through the object, rather than squarely at it. Slowly, the subject becomes as much about our relationship to the object in space than solely about the object alone. And in a rare feat of alchemy, Troski produces an organic shape that echoes the vapour of a low cloud from the synthetic form of a plastic lattice.

In **Minaxi May & Dawn Gamblen's** installation *Synthetic*, material becomes subject. Comprised of hundreds of rainbow coloured bendy straws, the artist duo have assembled an installation from readily available materials. It shows once again that art objects need not be made, rather just recognised (a la Duchamp readymades) and repositioned in the gallery. While one could detect undertones of commentary about consumerism and waste in *Synthetic*, May & Gamblen seem more concerned by the formal qualities of plastic: its durability, myriad colour and identical forms recontextualised into an aesthetically alluring installation.

There is something fantastical in **Valentina Palonen's** *Imagining New Colours*. In the confines of Gallery 5 she has created a room of curiosity, intrigue and wonderment from everyday materials such as polyurethane foam, resin and ribbon. The title work appears as a synthetic, though strangely organic, globulous pink, yellow and blue form with human feet protruding out. Its egg shape suggests a crouched figure cocooned within, though there is an inherent ambiguity between a living organism awaiting metamorphosis or an expired specimen likely to be found in a science or anatomy museum. The trolley on which the figure sits suggests the latter, as does the presentation of

Palonen's other 'specimens' on shelves and hooks in the gallery space that transform it into a storage room for the exotic, hidden and unfamiliar.

Elaine Miles also explores ambiguity in *Indoor/Outdoor*. Part performance and part static exhibit, it consists of video and installation works alongside the artist's occasional intervention with objects in the exhibition space. Window display cabinets offer a domestic context within the gallery to exhibit the discarded household objects the artist has collected over several years and provokes thought of quotidian experience and collective memory. On interacting with Miles's evolving installation and performance, one's focus is directed toward the transition of everyday objects in our indoor (private) and outdoor (public) lives.

There is something hidden in *Love Me Two Times* by **Kirra Jamison**. Her intricately crafted works on paper made with gouache, acrylic, pen, vinyl, watercolour and ink seem to compile fragments of a broader narrative that is skewed by repetition and absence. The multiple sheets butted up to each other on the wall appear like a book unbound and the imagination runs wild while the eye can find no anchor for the image in space, as each exuberant collaged colour competes for the viewers attention. And the mind further races as a result of the plastic representation of the organic plant-like forms.

Ultimately, one detects in Jamison's work that despite the non-linear narrative drawn from page to page, a transformation seems to be occurring, and, like creeping ivy, elements of each image begin to build on one another. Similar sentiments can be formed about the diverse projects presented in *Innovators 2*, in which themes of excess, materiality and colour proliferate.

Trent Walters