

Laura Mansfield

If I had a Monkey I wouldn't need a TV

Laura White

Castlefield Gallery, Manchester
28th November - 25th January 2009

Laura White's solo exhibition, *If I had a monkey I wouldn't need a TV*, transforms Castlefield Gallery into an eclectic installation of familiar household items, from colourful drinking straws and clothes pegs to scrunched, pasted and manipulated magazine images. Looking closer at the arranged mass, animal heads, tails and reptiles lurch forward from the seeming chaos.

White's work explores the relationship between the image and the object. She has previously projected film and video footage onto constructions built in the gallery space enhancing the physicality of the image and aligning it with the three-dimensionality of the constructed forms. In the Castlefield exhibition she plays with the form of the image itself, pulling and twisting the printed image into something tactile, sculptural and freestanding. The resulting work holds a curious tension where the printed image is pulled out into an object, yet momentarily its three-dimensionality sinks back into the flatness of the picture plain.

Using images sourced from the magazines and newspapers (abundant within our everyday lives) White creates freestanding sculptures. Flashes of imagery and colour are moulded together in towering piles of paper. The forms remind one of the messy colours of newsagent shops and the plethora of magazines on display – the colours, headlines, and patterns that engulf our everyday.

White's use of commercial images grounds her sculptures in a contemporary timeframe. With shifts in magazine printing, trends for colour tones and image designs, her work can age quickly. The images, thus, date and the colours become retro. In a conversation with Lisa Le Feuvre, documented to accompany the exhibition, Laura remarks that her work is:

"Totally about now, responding to a certain time and place. I want to respond to the way we think about the world now. Being in a city is all about this; it makes you more aware of the present."

She explores how it seems our view of the world is constructed by the images that surround us in our everyday actions. Images that, in turn, create a sense of identity to the present moment, narrating and suggesting the pleasure and lifestyles we lead.

Further built into White's entanglement of images are those cheap household products that first catch one's eye; neon drinking straws, plastic clothes pegs, a wicker chair, an orange bath mat, and an array of coloured cottons. This again draws upon the paraphernalia of our everyday, suggesting something about the disposable mass of items we consume.

Within her piles of screwed up paper and cheap plastic goods White pulls out the tactile and organic forms of horses' heads, snakes and zebras; the man-made mess of the present combusts in a profusion of natural forms. White creates a three-dimensional entanglement of forms from the scraps, fragments and excessive images of our contemporary moment.

The exhibition envelops one in piles of paper and discarded goods, carefully arranged. Objects rest within the present and seek to modify the commercial mass of imagery into something organic, pointing to forms of animal life, albeit animal life glossed over and glamorised in high-resolution colour prints.



Giraffe (2007)
Laura White
Photography by Laura White