

Reverie

I went to an excellent exhibition of works of art at The Tin Cat Gallery at 107 Rundle Street Kent Town on March 8th 2007.

The first works I saw were by Andrea Przygowski. From her series *Slack and Slender* she had ornamented the stairwell with delicious little boxes of, well I read them as landscapes, landscapes in a most unusual medium: Andrea used ladies stockings and the occasional suspender clip to make perfect waves, perfect waters, perfect valleys, neat, boxed and with a minimalist air.

At the top of the stairs I saw her pastel and paper pulp works on canvas, moody medium, moody pictures, and suddenly I was consumed with a memory of a hectic past, not Andrea's past, my past. When a work of art is put out into the public's view it doesn't belong to the artist anymore, it belongs to the viewer. All the work in this show belonged to my eyes and my memory.

In Andrea's work in pastel and pulp I saw, I see me being maybe 22 and not entirely sure about the company I am keeping. The memories menaced me, but the pink dress seemed familiar, comfortably tense around the body, the neat fit of a nubile moment long ago when *cerise bouclé* was a fashion statement.

I reread my invitation for clues to my newly awakening past life and I read...*these four artists have produced works that reflect what it means to be lost in solitary thought. To wander in an illusionary world and delight in the possibilities this absorption offers up to their imagination.*

I glanced with quick interest at the other works in the upper room and realised that I was about to be embraced by the imaginative lives of these artists.

Andrea Przygowski graduated in 2006 from Adelaide Central School of Art with an Associate Degree in Visual Art and she says of her work *I found myself absorbed in the dichotomy of the emotional world and the way it is portrayed in pulp-fiction novels.*

Despite being usually blind to the blandishments of artist statements I felt a pang here. I was being led back into my youthful memories by Andrea's

cunning creations, and the power of romance.

Then just as I was recovering from this reverie I looked at Angela Black's big oil painting *Home Again* and felt the tiny panic of the thought 'Ah just in time'. I know that light in the sky beyond the house, that odd atavistic urgency of trying to get home before the light goes, before the outside world fills with the shadows of sounds, with the alarming shadow of the chill outside. I looked at Angela's small oil on MDF images, renderings of what could be photographs from anyone's mother's album, familiar faces you may never have met, memories from the following dark of past time.

Angela says of her work: *In periods of reverie, thoughts are free to drift from one place to another. Time is suspended; the past is allowed to intermingle with the present, revisiting people, places and events that exist only in the memory.*

Even though the young women seemed to be messing with my mind I turned to Joanna Poulson's work, optimistic that the bright, almost jolly images would evade a surge of memory.

Fat chance - Joanna Poulson's works dragged me wily nily back to a lost world of *Simplicity* dress patterns, to the olden days when we really had to make our own dresses and longed for gunmetal silver shoes and a handbag that looks, in one of the works so like an ornamental evening bag my Mother used that I could smell the face powder spilt in the bottomless pouch of this squid like accessory.

Jo's paintings made me think - were we blind back then, like the lady Jo painted in *Waiting*: her eyelids weighed down, shuttered with silver glitter eye shadow?

At this moment I started to really worry about how these artists were so successfully channelling the past, the past that surely must be mine, for surely they are too young for it to be theirs.

But maybe it's a shared past, a sort of Western dreaming: Joanna Poulson says: *Through my work I connect with my Mother's youth, my Grandmother's dressmaking and a world of*

elegance...in looking back, I like to imagine that life was easier in those times of limited choice. But in reality, it was a time when to waste anything was obscene and objects such as buttons were cut from discarded clothes as they were too valuable to throw away.

Joanna is currently completing an Associate degree in Visual Art at Adelaide Central School of Art.

I was being entranced by the inner life of these works - each medium, each stylistic approach is well suited to each set of works, they are not flat colouring ins, they have a considerable presence of each medium, something to hang the memories onto.

When I saw Tammy Whitworth's work I found myself so fully enchanted by an inner life that I was provoked into scribbling poetry. I found myself selfishly diving into an almost archaic form but I felt, looking at some of Tammy's paintings of the self standing mesmerised in cloudscapes, that I too was floating, and I was floating in the enigma of a wish. I felt the silence of hopefulness, the patience of a good child wanting, wanting the pictures to be real; they seemed to be an evocation of some sort of real time now gone.

I also felt the reality of some sort of loss, perhaps of faith, isolated, suspended but cocooned in hopeful dreams. Tammy uses the scale and the skills of a miniaturist: these are small works, lovely objects.

Tammy Whitworth says: *I explore obstacles which fall in our paths. Often we search for the right open door with frustration at the closed ones, when we should look back romantically on the closed doors with gratitude.*

Tammy completed an Associate Degree in Visual Art in 2006 and is completing her Degree over the next two years at Adelaide Central School of Art.

I think you should all hop to and find a way to gaze at this work and then put your hands in your pockets and buy some treasure.

Maureen Gordon



From left to right: *Slack and Slender 2*, Andrea Przygowski; *Bittersweet #1*, Angela Black; *Fabulous Shoe*, Joanna Poulson; *Purse my lips with a silent smile*, Tammy Whitworth