

Parlour presents Parlour Peeps: Kirstin Carlin

How to look at a painting

In presenting Kirstin Carlin's work in our Parlour Peep series we're acknowledging that painting takes time to look at and that it can be lived with. The 'mis-tinted' blue is seen on the walls, and in the sky of her compositions. They're hung on existing hooks found in the town house.

There's no sincerity like irony

The reference point for the images comes from a range of sources; amateur and professional photography on Flickr, stock imagery, historical paintings, folk or 'Sunday' paintings, tapestries etc. The imagery generally becomes unrecognisable in the finished paintings but the bones of the composition are still there. In 2010 Kirstin showed a series of floral still life paintings that combined dirty browns with pastels. Her choice of colour in these newer paintings is an extension of that, continuing the juxtaposition of the paint application which is quite direct and intense - or in your face - in contrast to what are usually more soothing colours. The paintings she showed at RM were titled with oxymorons - 'Passive Aggressive', 'Blue Blood', 'Blindsight' etc - an indication of the contradictions within her painting and painting in general.

Painting is like poetry?

Is this something you think about in painting a lot? This notion of contradiction? Of it being at once too much but also quite resolved? There this underlying tension which is similar to poetry - that it can verge on being too spare or overbearing and the aesthetic decisions that prevent it from going over either edge are largely chance based.

Thomas Kinkade is like a Sunday painter on steroids

Thomas Kinkade is a great example of contradictions, he filled America (?) with his vision of a perfect peaceful conflict free world

but he was obviously quite depressed and died after taking a concoction of sedatives and alcohol.

Kinkade makes me feel a bit sick

"The issue is Kinkade's ideology, and particularly his nostalgia; his paintings endlessly trumpet a nonexistent past when times were simpler and morality more pure. There's nothing wrong with this, but it stands at odds with a contemporary art world that looks to the future for inspiration. We value complexity and innovation, and distrust saccharine pictures of the past."

(<http://www.artfagcity.com/2012/04/10/why-thomas-kinkade-wont-strike-a-cord/>)

Pick a path

Kinkade uses lots of framing devices in his images: rivers, paths, fences. They lead somewhere. He uses them as both a compositional and symbolic device. They're loaded and lead somewhere, anywhere, nowhere and they're empty at the same time. Going for clichéd compositions allow for the image to be pushed in other directions.