Strange Bedfellows. 3C at AVA

Image: Lyndi Sales

The idea was a nice one, and kudos must be given to Kirsty Cockerill. She changed the old annual committee’s choice exhibition to a committee and critics choice exhibition. A smart way to liven up a pretty staid show.

It was strange, having been involved (yes, yours truly was a critic selector) a little with the show and seeing all the work before the opening. Still, I duly went to celebrate the vernissage, with fine wine, and having not eaten, looking forward to the AVA’s new snack policy. There was a lot of murmuring as all-girl collective Doing it for Daddy was planning
something with some bands right after the speeches. The story goes back a little further even: when the fliers were released (a picture of a mysterious red curtain adorned the front), they changed their stage to include a red curtain, effectively stealing the flier image post-mortem. The bands were ok, they sang an ode called Sweet Virginia to Virginia MacKenny, the critic who chose the girls. It was humorous to say the least, and much in line with the collectives incessant teasing of art world structures, by being terribly circular and self-referential.

Also on the show were some old favourites, Julia Rosa Clark's Dodgy Weather, James Webb's Auto-Hagiography, some nice drawings by Thando Mama, some pieces by Lyndi Sales (in our last conversation she called me meanhearted. So only a brief mention here), prints from Churchill Madikida, etc.

Besides these, there were a couple of works that I really enjoyed. The first was new work by Dan Halter, who has moved from making maps into different territory. There were two pieces, the first being the words 'Safe as Fuck' spelled in iconic red ribbon, affixed with hypodermic needles. The second was a portrait of Henry the fourth beaded by the ladies at Monkey Biz (a non-profit organisation for women with Aids). Henry the Fourth is Rhodie slang for HIV. I am continually impressed with the way Halter approaches social issues without reverting to the plaintive, descriptive work of many people.

The second piece was by Ed Young, who in true style, wasn't picked as an artist or a critic. Watching him moan and whine for a week was a very happy time for me. (That reminds me of a incident this week when Gabriel Clark-Brown emailed me with the subject line reading 'Ed You Must Meet With Me'. I'm surprised that people continually get confused. Be a little more clever people. Not every young white artist in this town is Ed).
The third piece was by Chad Barber, a student who hasn't exhibited before. He put up a very funny piece called Image of Jesus licked clean by a dog. The materials used read 'Sheet, Semen, Miniature Pinscher, Saliva.' I liked that, a very simple sculpture that occurs almost entirely in words.
The fourth piece was my own selection for the show, David Scadden, who put up an animation called Pink Rabbit. I really suggest you go see this piece.

Labels: ava, kirsty cockerill, south african art, south african artist