

Transgressiphoria

EXHIBITION DESCRIPTION

Transgressiphoria is an installation work which explores capitalism's pornofication of the human psyche and its reflection in the fetishized objects of children's play.

The installation will feature a large collection of reconstructed popular character toys (Room One); a video projection installation (Room Two); and a collection of collage panels with light and sound installation (Room Three).

Room One (The Garden):

A long white table spanning the length of the gallery space will display around 100 transfigured plastic character toys. The toys will be positioned in various tableaux including bizarre sexual encounters, strange ritual scenes, and transgenetic conflicts. Traversing the length of the table, the audience will be led through a narrative as they attempt to make meaning from the scenarios presented. The "concluding" phases of the narrative leads the audience to the edge of the table where the toys spill out onto the floor and lead the viewer to Room Two, or "Retribution".

Room Two (Retribution):

In Room Two, viewers will encounter a dark room with a sole light illuminating a large flat plinth in the centre of the room. The plinth presents a collection of plastic character toys which have been painted white. The dolls are presented in their original intact form. They are naked and expose their lack of genitalia. Mutated animal toys are presented eating their "flesh".

A large-scale video is projected on the gallery wall which integrates works presented in Room One and Three. The video work incorporates footage of the toys being played with transposed with images from Room Three.

Room Three (Fecundity):

A collection of 144 A4 collage panels (18x8 panels) will be mounted to cover an area of 4m x 2.4m. The collection features palimpsests work which layer fashion advertising, homoerotic imagery, personal imagery, and text. A 4m barrier of synthetic turf will be placed on the ground and will separate the viewer from the panel. White plastic animal toys will be arranged on the turf where a large plastic rabbit will serve as the focal point. The room door will be covered with a pink velvet curtain. The lighting source in the room will be a blue light projection which will make the panel imagery more difficult to discern. The projection will include a sound loop of synthesized play of children.

EXHIBITION STATEMENT

The dominant adage of late capitalism's socialisation of children is to "let children be children"; however, with capitalist ideology being dominated by continual contradictions, children's identities are wrapped in the cultural fabric of increasing sexualisation. On another hand, the calls to protect childhood innocence, construct children as asexual beings, and prevent dialogue about children's sexuality and their "secret" play.

Trangressiphoria explores the tension between a childhood which has become pornified by adults (imbued with the aesthetics of pornography, for example in the design of Bratz dolls which have been associated with an objectified adult sexuality) and the suppression of children's sexuality (not addressing the fact that children express a variety of sexual behaviours). These tensions are visible and manifested through the artists' memories of how they played with toys as children and also extends the idea of how toy manufactures want us to play with these dolls to its logical conclusion.

Trangressiphoria explores the tenuous boundaries between children's play and adult play through the equivalency constructed by the appropriation of found images and discarded toys. Mass cultural waste is tenderly manipulated and assembled into enigmatic sexual gestures that reify the banalities of perversion and become a satirical comment on the sexualisation of identity.

Additionally, as a meta-narrative strategy of the installation, the work alludes to Bosch's 1504 triptych *The Garden of Earthly Delights*, which also further functions as a comment on the mass preference for "supernormal stimuli" (Barrett, 2010), simple stories of good and evil, and easily consumable emotions of desire, pleasure, and revenge.

Each gallery room references each of Bosch's panels; Eden (Room Three - *Fecundity*), Earth (Room One - *The Garden*), and Hell (Room Two - *Retribution*).

Fecundity references Bosch's left panel. It refers to copulation without lust, functioning solely for the purpose of procreation, which Bosch symbolised with a rabbit. The panel is centred on Adam and Eve, where Adam is depicted as experiencing sexual arousal and the primal urge to reproduce for the first time. Humanity is represented here in an innocent state, unaware of the consequences of their actions (Adam's lust leading to the scenes depicted in the middle panel, which then culminate in the third panel). Room Three plays with this notion and reconstructs it, as Adam the male idyll, expresses the homogeneity and commodification of gay desire.

The Garden – Bosch's middle (and largest) panel, shows humanity (and animals) acting with free will and engaging in pleasure seeking amorous activities. They are behaving overtly, without fear or shame and express a childish sexual curiosity. Fantastic creatures mingle with engorged fruit and human bodies composed in couples and groups. They represent a life without consequences, an unspoilt pre-moral existence. Room One reconstructs these hybrid animal-human scenarios and plays with the notion of innocence, and self-absorbed sexual exploration which reflect the artist's own play as children.

Retribution - Bosch's right panel depicts God's penalties as humanity has succumbed to temptation which has led them to eternal damnation. It depicts the spectacle of torture and retribution. Humans cover their genitals, and the naked bodies, once plump with desire, now have lost their eroticism. Mutated animals are shown torturing humans and feeding on their flesh. Room Two depicts this theme as the toys are punished for their sins, their hypersexualised qualities have been stripped, and their product symbolism has been removed. They are no longer commodifiable.

Reference: Barrett, D. (2010). *Supernormal Stimuli: How primal urges overran their evolutionary purpose*. W.W. Norton & Company, Inc: New York