

KINGDOM

14 November 2004 – 11 December 2004

MARKET GALLERY Glasgow

334 Duke Street
GB-G31 1QZ Glasgow

artists & participants

Edwina Ashton, Guy Bar Amotz, Diann Bauer, Mauro Bonacina, Sean Dawson, Rowena Dring, Dubossarsky & Vinogradov, Hadassah Emmerich, Steven Gontarski, Anthony Gross, Ulli Knall, Christopher Orr, Nike Savvas, Toby Ziegler

Press release

In the age when social hierarchies are won and lost in the blink of a reality game show instant, men (and woman) pay top 12-step programme dollar to achieve alpha-male status, personal barbarism is so out of control it has to be curbed by the nanny state, and questions of authenticity and cultural dominance become ever more complex, KINGDOM reigns supreme.

Set in two shop fronts in the hard and fast streets of Glasgow's East End, KINGDOM is a cultural barometer for today and tomorrow. Like the natural world itself, the beauty in this show is fiercely aggressive. Fitting over 38 artworks by 17 artists of fame and promise into 101 m2 of floor space, the works will battle for the senses and ultimately cultural supremacy.

The territory this exhibition defines is one of magical realist proportion: with all work either extremely large or extremely small scale, physicality gives way to chimerical illusion, and the gritty reality of the makeshift loses itself in the spell of intense craftsmanship, visceral beauty, and spatial impossibility.

Like a medieval fable, KINGDOM promises an orgy of decadence, where the finest luxury combines with most guttural instinct to create a new law unto itself.

Edwina Ashton's precious Edwardian-inspired drawings are painstaking attentions to detail. Made directly onto the walls, nestled in corners, hiding in cracks, her little 'graffiti' are ephemeral surprises, poetry of the often unnoticed.

Guy Bar Amotz's sound-speaker sculptures are high-gloss hi-fidelity. Working with musicians and dancers from around the world, his space-age fibreglass forms do to Brancusi, what Lennox Lewis did to Evander Holyfield.

Diann Bauer's massive paintings lie somewhere between Zenned-out comic book action, and Manga billboard ads. But it's her incredible drawing skill and intense detailing which is instantly captivating.

Mauro Bonacina's enamel on aluminium paintings are sensationally slick, more polished than stained glass. Reinventing the genre of macho artist, his works are often self-portraits, combining Guston and Patrick Caulfield in scenes tinged by filmic uber-violence.

Starting from the standpoint of luxury, Sean Dawson's opium-induced abstractions begin with photos of designer architecture and stylish interiors which are then melted beyond recognition. Using the distorted remains as a model, his large-scale paintings are strangely hyper-realist and kaleidoscopic at the same time; monumental tributes to decadence and subversion.

Rowena Dring's landscapes are equally sentimental and pop. Working from images from her many vacations, her incredibly detailed large-scale 'paintings' are actually entirely constructed by hand-stitched fabric appliqué.

Dubossarsky & Vinogradov's make social realist paintings 'The People' really want to see: The Queen or Madonna picnicking in the countryside, Arnold Schwarzenegger surrounded by children, porn stars frolicking in the Tuscan woods.

Hadassah Emmerich's indulgently decorative paintings are hauntingly feminine. Searching through a mist of exotic flowers, graffiti text, and lace-like patterning, her 'lost women' invoke a ghost-like romanticism of another era.

Steven Gontarski's anthropomorphic sculptures combine fashion fetish with a certain fascismo deco. Radiating with all the sex of a new millennial futurism, they're at the very least trophies of ultimate good taste.

Anthony Gross's video animations are a very creepy kind of cool: a kiddie-style Japanimation, which broadcasts with a certain dictatorial authority.

Klega's ink on paper drawings and Luddite digital animations are designer acts of sadism. Rendered with the imperial sparseness of Eastern-block chic, Klega hosts a wry humour shared only by bloody dictators and the criminally insane.

Ulli Knall's ceramic sculptures are fetishes of the weird and the wonderful. Working from portraits of her friends and obscure historical figures, she creates a world populated by mythological creatures both magical and spacey.

Christopher Orr's tiny paintings rival the old masters, so delicate they're often painted with 1 hair. His strange and mysterious scenes often depict "normal people" partaking in romantic rituals inspired by the British countryside.

Neil Rumming's large-scale paintings combine his love of natural history with a hard-edged graphic logoism to create a contemporary hedonistic mysticism.

Nike Savvas's installations are as regal as they are kitsch. Often incorporating disco lights, silver balls, mirrored coins, and all things shiny, she will be exhibiting in KINGDOM, her menagerie of hand-blown glass birds.

Toby Ziegler's op-art paintings are painted in reflective paint on reflective fabric. Working like 'magic eye' digital imaging, his work is entirely handcrafted. As the viewer moves throughout the room, images become visible in the mosaic style patterning.

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Curator: Patricia Ellis