

OBJECTION

curated by Tim Silver and Russell Storer

Stephen Birch, Mikala Dwyer, Simryn Gill, David Griggs, John Meade,

Robert Pulie, Paul Saint, Tim Silver : 7 – 29 November

When I was at art school in Dunedin in the mid 90's it was cool to sell your art. There was only one real art space at that stage, called Stupid Street Gallery, located, naturally enough in Stuart Street, in a sagging, creaky old warehouse. Art School kids used to flog off their retro-kitsch cute stuff for \$5 - \$20, probably earning enough per show to buy that week's booze money.

Then every one grew up, realized that art was a 'real' commodity and started making sprawling installation art which now (doesn't) sell for thousands of dollars. Sandwiched between the video projections and the site-specific works making up your average project space exhibition program, *OBJECTION* looked like a throwback to the Stupid Street days, only with real artists, who show at real dealer galleries, for real money. Dozens of gorgeous objects were strung randomly round the gallery, some works spilling into others in a kind of artistic pot-pouri. *OBJECTION* was a salon style presentation of some of the currently more interesting Australian artists, and was both democratic and sensible in its makeup - it was small, portable, enjoyable, looked damn good, and there was something for everyone.

This is not to say that sensible equals boring. No way. This show was less Mum's hard wearing raincoat and more that sexy little number you always wanted but couldn't afford. And this is also not to say that sensible equals non-critical, because to my mind, the kind of 'dealer show on acid' feel to this exhibition was as engaging as any piece of overblown conceptualism. Eschewing the prim and proper layout of any museum protocol much of the work sat happily on the gallery floor, Mikala Dwyer's handmade clay numbers (*Number Sculptures*) marching along one wall in a giant line, and above, perched precariously on the very top of the wall.

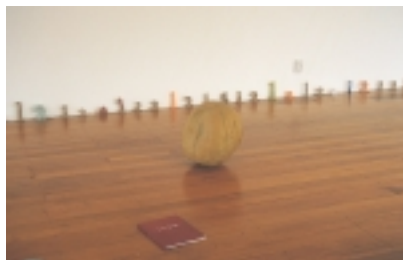
Their chunky, homemade feel and their childlikeness drew you in, they begged for interaction and they offered you nothing but charm in return.

A return to childlike pleasures was also apparent in Tim Silver's work (*Untitled (Baby I wrote a song for you)*), an electric guitar cast entirely from crayons, its waxy creamy exterior emitting the smell of a primary school supplies store.

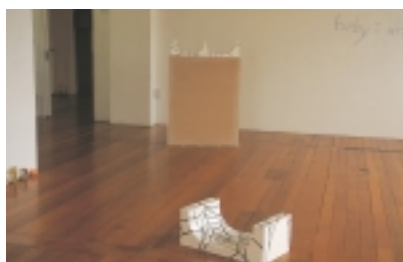
David Griggs' cardboard skate ramps (*Griggs and Murphys Ramp 1991 and 1992*) were mini versions of the big boys playground, etched with painted webbing. One was placed deliciously atop a raw plywood plinth, its plain chipboard exterior a perfect foil for the ramp's sleek surface. Simryn Gill's table of metal implements in the corner (*Untitled*) provided a darker edge to this array of lolly objects; laid out like surgical equipment were all the tools an artist could need; scissors, knives, scalpel, hooks, and, immediately post-September 11, my first thought was that it was the contents of the confiscation file at Christchurch airport. A definite case of less not being more.

Emma Bugden

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