

her dissatisfaction_

Rudolf Boelee in collaboration.

Matthew Ayton, Stu Buchanan, Dougall Canard,
Maria Langley, Roy Montgomery, Christine Rockley,
Brian Shields, Robyne Voyce.

The gallery was stifflingly hot, and the crush was on for gin and tonic. Greeted by the authentic tones of legendary Christchurch jazz musicians, Stu Buchanan and Dougall Canard, who were providing the soundtrack, I proceeded to search everywhere for Rudolf's exhibition. It's not that I hadn't seen the huge billboard. Recognised it, in fact, as the same dissatisfied heroine who had graced the exterior of The Physics Room in 2000. But I was looking for his distinctive brand of New Zealand modernism - the instantly recognizable pop art pieces, the brightly coloured screen prints, the Kiwiana and the insistent repetition.

This time the billboard shows more of the waif, slightly less supersized than the outdoor version but still cinematic and grainy, the eye drawn to the almost obscene exposure of the intimacy of the nape of her neck.

Somehow you can almost taste the melancholy, the resignation and the eponymous dissatisfaction, but this time, we were witness to her weapon - this is extreme dissatisfaction.

In one room there was a video, a matey front porch discussion between Rudolf Boelee and musician/writer Roy Montgomery. They share a beer and spin yarns, talk about the old days. The video is looped, echoing the circularity these nostalgic conversations can take.

The third part of *The Ambiguous Image*, *her dissatisfaction_* is a collaboration by Rudolf Boelee and the Crown Lynn New Zealand Collective, which relocated aspects of earlier exhibitions into the Physics Room, and in to more of a personal trajectory into Rudolf's life, environment and influences.

Far from his native Holland, Rudolf Boelee ended up in Christchurch in the late 1970's. The synchronicity of things soon had him moving in the same circles as a variety of other like-minded souls. It was during this time that he met partner Robyne Voyce.

Rudolf met people living their lives through their bedroom fantasies, living in their heads, through their headphones, their music collections, their dissatisfaction with suburban Christchurch. Trapped in suburbia, lost in their own worlds, these people found solace in music, art, theatre, in a unity of purpose and aesthetic.

In the exhibition there are allusions to pop culture, cinema and music, from the jazz band playing at the opening, to the confluence of Boelee's arrival in Christchurch with a flourishing punk music scene. The cinematic theme of the billboard combines with the documentary-style filmed conversation, the jazz soundtrack, and the virtual billboards displayed.

This aspect of the exhibition, ten photographs of local buildings onto which virtual billboards were placed, are real Christchurch buildings, not tourist monuments to our gothic heritage, but office buildings, utilitarian high rises, reimagined with giant billboards, bearing seminal scenes from new wave cinema instead of advertising slogans and consumables.

All shows are an attempt to explain something. All exhibitions are the staging of something, a cumulative gig. And the gig is something else, something always unknowable. Rudolf told me that the art exhibition is ultimately a selfish act - the show as therapy - but to me the themes of the exhibition were more universal - a love story, an ode to friendship, longing and belonging.

Keiler MacDuff

Rudolf Boelee

Image: Inez Grimm

