

# Interior World

Seraphine Pick and Oli Perkins. Curated by Kirsten Rennie Weston

Described by curator Kirsten Rennie Weston as ‘an exposé of narratives that dangle like loose threads’, *Interior World* played host to a variety of the figures and tropes of role-play and transgression as The Physics Room was populated with the silent but brooding traces of both Seraphine Pick’s and Oli Perkins’ figurative practices.

*Interior World* provided an assortment of Pick’s sketchy and ambivalent forms installed in a bedroom/salon-style paste-up on the large back wall of the main gallery, with an array of new two and three-dimensional offerings by Perkins staking their claim to the rest of the terrain. Spanning a period of 10 years or more, I like the idea that Pick’s accumulated drawings came spilling out of a box long hidden under a bed or sitting up in an attic somewhere, waiting patiently for its contents to re-emerge. As it turned out, both Pick and Perkins had a hand in the installation of Pick’s sketches, which is in itself a practical illustration of the generosity and playfulness evident in the practices of both artists.

Amongst Pick’s collage writ-large, a small selection of paper bag masks hovered eerily, projecting from the wall. Even though the image has haunted her work for years, amongst the spidery lines and the connotative intrigues of Pick’s early, layered-up figurative style, these sculptural elements stood out as a peculiarly inviting entrance point into the epic and edgy world cobbled together here and exposed for all to see.

The masks equally offered a way out from Pick’s dense, pressed-flat world of veiled references and events that papered the gallery with its roll-call of eerie figures bordering on the nightmarish. It was within this realm of supposition and conjecture that Perkins’ dioramas and battle scenes meshed most fruitfully with Pick’s playful, voyeuristic intent, gestating an air of shifty looks and provocatively mischievous gestures within the show as a whole.

Perkins’ sequence of 60 photographic stills in which Skeleton does battle with Luke Skywalker’s action-figure replica potently invoked the resolute tone of those silent pacts and acts of infinite bravery that always exist within the field of play, accompanied as they are by the spoken commentaries and hyperbole of youthful mythologising.

In counterpoint to this energised sequence and the more static mug shot-like “portraits” of plastic characters, Perkins presented miniature sculptural scenes constructed from the found objects and play things that are glorified in his colour-saturated photographs. Here the objects find themselves perched, all gleaming white and dripping, on paint cans lined up upon a table with rickety saw-horse legs.

Bleached of the narrative perspective, colour and scale of the photographic prints, these sculptural works seemed silenced and diminished. Yet Perkins’ deceptively simple technique of telling tales and trying different narratives on for size illustrated how mobile and tentative our understandings of “reality” should necessarily be. If anything, Perkins’ whited-out dioramas surely sought to remind us of the vulnerability and variability of “value”; perhaps indicated most clearly via the plastic squirrel with his not-so-silver but precious-as-gold Seagers spoon. Here Perkins also cleverly unearthed the absurdity of “truth” or any kind of overarching rhetoric, preferring to privilege the enabling and contested space in between particular subjectivities or understandings.

Just think of those moments of utter betrayal on the playground or that strange blend of tragicomedy that exists when you can’t tell if your opponent or pal is laughing or crying. For it’s in poignant moments like these that both Pick and Perkins give a slick, sly nod to the various scales of experience, along with the rope-burn and frayed tempers of our inner, and most often other, selves.

**Kate Montgomery**

Interior World. Seraphine Pick. Photo: Simon Lawrence

