

Rebecca Ackroyd, CARBURETTOR, at Kinman, London



The penultimate exhibition at Henry Kinman's subterranean space in Curtain Road is an engaging and confident solo show by 27-year-old Rebecca Ackroyd, who is still studying for a Post-Graduate Diploma at the Royal Academy School in London. The relentless march of developers through Shoreditch means that Kinman will have to abandon their concrete basement at the end of the year. New premises in the neighbourhood are being sought as I write, and there is talk of a New York space, Kinman Projects, opening in November as well.

Ackroyd is showing wall and floor-based works in an assortment of predominantly pastel shades that work very successfully against the raw unpolished concrete of the space. The work in CARBURETTOR is imbued with a nostalgia for adolescence, as well as a knowing familiarity with recent and 20th century art history. The wall-based silk and tulle pieces are redolent of the dressing up box, as if swatches from princess dresses rummaged up from playtime tangles have been repurposed and draped using resin casts of concrete reinforcing bars to create arabesques. There are knickerish salmon pinks and pale baby blues, crepe de chine layered over stiff remnants of netting; all is limp, paint-spattered, puckered and snagged. And curiously elegant, all the while making such strong and intimate allusion to an absent body that you almost expect it to smell. It doesn't.

The floor-based works are resin casts of the back seat of a Morris Minor – such as the artist's mother owned when she was a child. Disposed across the floor in careful groupings, they bring to mind 90s strategies that combined homage to 1960s minimalism with appropriated found objects – I am reminded unavoidably of Hadrian Pigott's soap casts of bathtubs; perhaps it is the pastel colours again. Paired with the car seat casts are ceramic objects – usually bifurcated, tubular, brownish, grey or white. Again, unmistak-

ably relating to the body, but this time to the hidden interior, intestinal tracts. If the back seat of the car is emblematic of childhood dreaming, of a span of innocence before the conscious, independent agency of adulthood, then the allusion to our interior structures suggests perhaps a psychological reading of the work.

Ackroyd is patently much concerned with materiality for its own sake here, and performs the same alchemy as someone like Karla Black in taking improbably girly and occasionally abject materials and rendering them tough and expressive. One might also think of the gilded wool blankets of Edith Dekyndt, although these have a more self-conscious elegance. The resin casts and concrete reinforcing bars add heft to Ackroyd's work and the whole adds up to a distinctive and compelling personal language. This is a very strong show by an artist who first came to wider notice in New Contemporaries last year and is now surely someone we need to watch closely.

Caroline Douglas

Director

Rebecca Ackroyd, CARBURETTOR, Kinman, 81 Curtain Road, London EC2A 3AG.
Open Wednesday – Saturday 11am – 6pm or by appointment, 4 September – 4 October
2014 www.kinmangallery.com

Photo Courtesy Kinman, London

