

‘Full Of Intrigue’ ...Ruby Walker on ‘Complicit’, Gallery 8



Much as Alice’s wonderland can be found down a rabbit hole, curators Coates and Scarry’s most recent exhibition takes place on one of the quieter streets St James’ Piccadilly has to offer. The stunning display of talent titled ‘Complicit’ combines work from a trio of artistic powerhouses; Kate MccGwire, Juliette Losq and Jayne Anita Smith, into a mixed medium journey through a lost world.

Each artist focusses on our relationship with the objects, places and emotions rejected by mainstream society, creating unorthodox yet beautiful works which, when put together, create the perfect push and pull between nightmare and daydream.



MccGwire uses feathers to create 3 dimensional, almost fluid works that challenge adult perception of what is truly valuable. Most people wouldn't give them time of day, but by using these left behind objects and turning them into treasures; fragile, seductive and untouchable, she gives them new purpose, and brings back our innate childhood ability to find wonder in even the most overlooked objects. In the exhibition space, they come to life, the twisting gallery providing the perfect showcase from which they can tell their story.



Losq's watercolour and ink scenes offer new levels of depth into unremarkable semi-urban spaces. She plays upon the unsettling tranquility of an abandoned place, taking the viewer on an almost interactive experience as you navigate between serenity and a sense of unease.

Her installation, *Covert*, is undoubtedly the biggest piece in the exhibition. A dark cabinet emerges from within the paper-based scene, transforming the room into somewhere truly magical and allowing the viewer to interact with the scene in a way that is resonant of a stage set. Losq's work is influenced by a modernised twist



on gothic.

Undeniably the darkest of the three, Smith's work connects to the "physical and emotional suffering" that for a lot of people is an unfortunate reality. Capitalised upon by the media, these horrors are then spoon-fed back to us, and Smith does well in capturing that pure emotion in her work.

Overly thin, pained-looking figures spill from a dark swirling mass, a cacophony of haunting faces from her own memories and experiences that seem to warp and mutate the longer you stare. Each work has its own environment, *A Warping of the Senses* seems to be escaping from its own, spilling from the black background as if to remind the viewer of its connection to reality.

All three stunning styles come together to transform the gallery into a place that could be the beginning of a Grimm's Brothers fairytale, the startling actuality being that these works all have a basis in a world most people experience on a daily basis. Relatable, yet still full of intrigue, *Complicit* provokes bouts of nostalgia at every turn, and will continue to do so until the 2nd of August; so catch it while you can.

<http://www.8dukestreet.co.uk/home/4538086756>