



Alan Reid: Boudoir Concrete●●●●●

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Delicately balanced clashing of art and design

Looking for all the world like propaganda posters for Nazi leisure organisation Kraft durch Freude, Alan Reid's representational drawings of lissome young bodies appear to promote healthy living and sexless appeal.

Lithe bodies are interrupted by quirky cubist elements: arcs of colour dissect one piece, and in another, a collection of flutes covers the pubic area. There is a strange interplay between the concrete and the boudoir: between the soft lines and pastel shades of the drawings, and garish colours and angles of the geometric forms. Two genres are at war here as modernism imposes its boot print on romanticism, and art clashes with design. In some pieces the juxtaposition is jarring.

A subtle humour is also at play and manages to hold a dramatic tension between innocence and an unidentifiable shadow. Evoking the lost innocence of cigarette card girls and gilded youth, winsome bodies are drawn with a faux naïveté that hints at an underlying joke, the punch line of which disappears over the horizon as we approach it.

Reid is an American artist, a Texan based in New York, and this is his first European solo show. The work is well executed, with a delicate aesthetic balance that yearns to fulfil its promise. A number of redesigned Ulmer Hocker pine and rattan caning stools scattered around the space invite us to move closer and to sit down so that we can observe intimately. Within all of this there is something inexplicable – perhaps a sense of foreignness – that evokes a modern-day awe of the exotic, of a language of art that is slightly unfamiliar and unattainable. This distance is alienating and the viewer is left wondering whether this really is more than the sum of its parts.

Mary Mary, Glasgow, until Sun 9 Oct