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 A DAILY REVIEW OF THE DALLAS ARTS



Art Review: Lost in Suburbia: 'Town and Country' at Brand 10 Art Space

By RYDER RICHARDS | February 15th, 2012 8:30am

The moment one crosses the threshold of **Brand 10** for the "Town and Country" exhibit, a confounding interior/exterior dilemma ensues: urban street noise ceases and you walk smack into a fence. Skirting the picket fence finds you staring at a man-made tree. Deeper within the space, a love seat, television, and back yard await. Constructing the exhibit as a microcosm of traditional suburban life, the space capitalizes on our domesticity, familiarity, and a creeping sense of displacement.

Upon entering one encounters the fenced area, converting viewer into voyeur as one must skirt the contained enclosure peeping through chinks and knot-holes to discover a small porcelain house alone on a bed of white sand. "Good Neighbors", a collaboration between Joel Kiser and Todd Hayes, ironically overreacts in its effort to obscure and protect, drawing more attention and rendering isolationism and privacy as suspect. One of the better pieces in the exhibit, the tragic isolation presented leaves the plot of land sterile, both physically and culturally, with nothing left to protect but outdated truisms.



Also in the front room we find John Frost's "Things Fall Apart," a man-made weeping willow built from enjoined dowel rods and leaves cut from a book. Naturally despondent, the once wooden organism is now a wooden simulacrum dripping leaves onto floor of a displaced, confused reality. Evoking a similar sentiment, David Willburn's delicate thread drawings portray two entryways (a door and a gateway) as insubstantial fragments: impossible, unreal portals suggesting memory rather than passage, longing rather than acceptance.



Acceptance comes as one enters the middle of the gallery space: Josephine Durkin's "Bloom" requires two people to sit on a love seat in order to activate a series of pulsating umbrellas poking out from a stack of suitcases. Visually compelling and emotionally charged, the piece only blooms when participants become intimately close and static, confounding the intentions of the luggage they face.

In the back, Janet Chaffee and Benito Huerta have collaborated to create "Property," a chunk of concrete filled with dirt and sprouting grass. The portable lawn cleverly acquiesces to the notion of land-owners as better citizens, evoking a myriad of concerns about how one combats traditional views of civic worth. Not to be overlooked is Mark Collop's video "Dog Fetch," also playing in the back, saying less about home than about monstrous obligation and distraction.

The exhibit, strategically laid out, is worth viewing as it displays several great art pieces by regional artists. However, with the exception of the excellent collaborative works, the exhibit falls thematically short in it's investigation of such a rich, complex topic as the relationships between town and country, either in the national or the rural sense of the word.



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2 comments

- Outstanding!**
 Ben @ 5:02 pm on February 16, 2012
 LIKE THE IMAGE OF A FLORAL BOUQUET THAT OFFERS THE VIEWER ITS PERFUME, AS WELL, JOSEPHINE DURKIN'S "BLOOM" IS EXACTLY WHAT ITS TITLE SUGGESTS: A CAREFULLY "ENGINEERED", COMPLEX CONSTRUCTION, A SENSITIVE AND COMPELLING FORM OF "PARTICIPATORY" ART, THAT DEMANDS MORE INVOLVEMENT THAN MERELY THAT OF THE RETINA. JOSEPHINE DURKIN'S HIGHLY ORIGINAL WORK INSISTS THE VIEWER PARTICIPATE IN ORDER TO UNDERSTAND, A LATTER-DAY TINGUELY CONSTRUCTION WITH AN INTERNAL, BEATING HEART.
 DAVID A. MOROWITZ, M.D. @ 6:32 am on February 27, 2012

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 This Weekend's Gallery Openings: Mar 1 - 3
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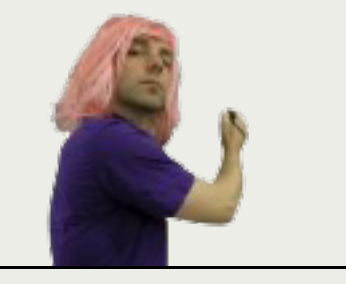



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■ Million Dollar Quartet (Theater & Dance)
■ A Thousand Words (Movies)
■ Crazy Horse (Movies)
■ John Carter (Movies)
■ Silent House (Movies)

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