



Date: 02 Feb 2012

The Body In Women's Art Now, Helen Carmel Benigson, Gazira Babeli, Anne Marie Schleiner, Miri Segal



The Body In Women's Art Now At Rollo

The Body in Women's Art Now: Part 3 – ReCreation @ Rollo Contemporary – REVIEW

Contemporary artists have been rather slow on the up-take when it comes to contemporary media – perhaps disregarding the messy world (wide web) of the internet happenings as the realm of spotty teens rather than rather than of discourse-orientated artistes. But the artist's in Rollo's new show are refreshingly different, with the gallery bringing together works from four different glitch-based practices, that share a delight in the pop and pixel of all things digital.

Helen Carmel Benigson is the big name amongst the four, recently described in the Independent as 'A Pipilotti Rist for a harder, more media-savvy generation', and tipped by those in the know (apparently) to make it big. Consequently her work is given the largest showing, including a ceiling to floor scroll of tweets by alter-ego Princess Belsize Dollar, and the transcript of an improvised erotic rap delivered down the phone to an unsuspecting victim – who understandably hangs up upon the barrage of 'glistening creamy milky ahh dripping pouring sexy wet'. Comparisons to Rist are understandable, with

both artists bathing their work in saturated colours and psychedelic patterns. But, beyond visual parallels, the two artists could not be more different; while Rist projects psychic visions mined from self, Benigson is in the business of appropriation – adopting and adapting imagery from external culture to create a sickening, swirling remix; a crazy mirror of contemporary visual languages.

Part 3 – ReCreation is the final exhibition in Rollo's *The Body in Women's Art Now* series, with a mission to examine the altered status and experience of the body in relation to new media and technologies – 'the impact of technology on bodily interaction and bodily capabilities'. Thus Benigson video work is that which most aligns her with the rest of the work in the show, being the piece that most explicitly addresses questions of gender and its relation to new technologies. Mashing-up scenes from a first-person-shooter game with online virtual Poker, she plays out a narrative of gender stereotypes in which macho commandos strive towards the heroic rescue of a reluctant princess avatar at the poker table. The piece alludes to the regressive gender constructions typical of the virtual world, the with the princess both physically tailored to male erotic desire, and violently denied the ability to follow her own (economic?) imperatives.

This neo-feminism is the thread that runs throughout. Miri Segal's video piece BRB, for instance, contains an epic scene of lesbian-avatar intercourse, with two corpse-like fantasy images going through the motions of passion. But, genital-less, we are given a horrific and impotent vision of male desire, objectifying and sanitising the female body into something sub-human – titillating but safely neutered. Similarly (although with less success), Anne-Marie Schleiner plays with sexualised tropes of game-dom, donning the absurdly skimpy outfit of Lara Croft as she traverses the streets of New York, staging 'wireless gaming interventions' (also known as 'playing a computer game in public').

Ultimately, Rollo ought to be applauded in their effort to bring together the work of these IT girls (if you'll excuse the phrase for the sake of a pun), and their messily pioneer practices, genuinely contemporary in their open-eyed engagement with an all-pervasive technological culture. **Words Thomas Keane © 2011 ArtLyst**

[Visit Exhibition...](#)

Follow ArtLyst on Twitter for breaking art news and latest exhibition reviews