

Art



Home Sweet Home Series - Pink.



Silent Scissors Series - Blue.

Fun and games

Charlene Vella

Elisa von Brockdorff is a photographer and installation artist. She is currently exhibiting photographs that playfully combine these two loves by creating images of temporary settings with ordinary objects.

Her photographs are brightly coloured compositions where humble things, be they chairs or nails, are brightly painted in block colours to achieve a happy mix of photographs and installation.

The objects were selected presumably because of their shape, form, texture and/or colour.

They are sometimes placed in a landscape for happy contextualisation. It is in their mutual interaction that Von Brockdorff seems to be at her most playful self, and amply reveals how the child inside her is very much alive.

The *Silent Scissors Series* and the *Plastic Dreams Series* are very much what we have learnt to expect from Elisa von Brockdorff, and the same can be said for the plentiful balloons in *Pills and Portals*.

Von Brockdorff's are photographs that will surely brighten up any space. They are vibrant and cheerful, and possess an obvious *joie de vivre*.

It is easy to associate them with a sunny personality, or somebody who has, or is going through a phase of an all-positive attitude. It is a positivity that gives enough confidence to take on not only life's challenges, but even the best imaginatively-stirred scenarios.

Similar in nature is an installation recreated within the gallery. This includes objects such as a

cheese grater, cups, plates and bowls, a juice squeezer, all of which are painted as are the objects used in Von Brockdorff's photographs.

Nonetheless there is more to Von Brockdorff's *Plastic dreams* exhibition, than an exclusive care-free atmosphere. There is also a forlorn air.

This may be due to the lonely chair or doll's house that creates this latent feeling of dejection that dispels the notion that this is all about fun and games. Moreover, in the *Plastic Dreams Series*, the houses are in treacherous settings where their surroundings dominate them by a disproportionate scale.

Like the blatant use of bright colours mentioned above, this notion and other commentaries are provocative, but a tad too obvious.

What I am uneasy about is the fact that despite the undeniable fun and charming character of Von Brockdorff's work, its undeniable element of creativity and its commentary, it does not sufficiently exploit the intellectual factor, which I believe to be an essential ingredient to good art, and which is in addition even more essential to conceptual art.

The carefully thought-out compositions somewhat make up for this deficiency, but not quite.

There is, however, an evolution in her decorative work, and the *Liquify Series* comes as a refreshing surprise.

I was looking forward to experiencing something that had more depth. With conceptual art, the idea takes precedence over the method used to deliver the concept, but perhaps Von Brockdorff is being deliberately too 'obvious' in presenting her commentaries.

Plastic dreams is open at Lily Agius Gallery, Cathedral Street, Sliema today.



Toast to the Flowers Series - Garden View.

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