

Tate Britain

STRANGE SOLUTION

Karla Black

Alice Channer

Dee Ferris

Anthea Hamilton

Katy Moran

Essay (Excerpt)

A connecting thread between these five artists is that their diverse works originate from found objects, images or materials taken from the everyday. In varying degrees, these elements are amended, transformed or simply placed together so that they retain a sense of their original function, but also take on new meaning. Often there is a deliberate tension set up between the work's materiality, form and implied (or denied) source. There appears to be a shared economy of means utilized, a process of reduction and abstraction that results in a pared-down aesthetic. The intention is not to offer a direct representation of a chosen subject or scene, but to offer a sense of an emotion, state of being, or an experience of a time and place. The work has a personal quality and narratives are evoked but never spelled out.

Karla Black's substantial yet ethereal sculpture, *Wish List* (2008) seems casually suspended, yet its size, form and placement is carefully related to the architectural setting. The raw sugar paper is saturated with strangely familiar substances and tones, but the list of materials – chalk, ribbon, hair gel, nail varnish, plaster, paint, petroleum jelly, polythene, rubber glove - are more commonly found in the domestic domain than in an art gallery.

The energetic small-scale canvasses by Katy Moran, painted in acrylic, start with an image taken from a variety of sources – the internet, her mobile phone camera, junk shop pictures and magazines. She turns the picture upside down to avoid creating a literal description of the scene and works intensely until the rich, sumptuous colors and thick brushstrokes loosely indicate figurative images. These take their clues from titles such as *Carla's Garden* (2007) and *I Dream of Miami* (2007).



They're finished when I can see a figurative element in them ... through the paint I'm searching for the thing it reminded me of, or suggested to me, and trying to get close to that thing.' The exuberant spontaneity of the gesture is genuine rather than contrived, Moran comments, 'When I'm making a painting, I get quite excited by how close to awful I can push it, while getting something quite lovely from it as well'.

As a reference for her conviction that 'somehow unintentional paint marks convey a more convincing reality,' she cites painter Francis Bacon's comment during an interview with art historian David Sylvester, 'An illustrational form tells you through the intelligence immediately what the form is about, whereas non-illustrational form works first on sensation and then slowly leads back into the fact.'

What is the question that lies behind the 'Strange Solution' suggested in the title? Perhaps the dilemma of how to add another object into the world that as an artwork offers new meanings and revelatory thinking, while offering some response and relation to the lives we inhabit and experience visually. All of these artists meet this challenge in a distinct and thought provoking manner.

Katharine Stout