

All Smoke and No Fire at The Old Truman Brewery

“*All Smoke and No Fire*”, not for some exceptional artists; “*All Smoke and No Fire*” inherently a metaphor utilised by *Tether group* to make an assertion of a certain nature, which does not weigh fully to its claims. Tether plays on the notion of group collectiveness, not taking individual ownership; by far individualism is highlighted through exhibits as each piece is examined on its own merits.

Tether-an-eclectic group of artists, curators and writers based in Nottingham - (Trent University graduates) formed in July 2007. “*All Smoke and No Fire*” a one year out support scheme for arts graduates. Free Range a distinct show; works range from architectural interventions, sculptural installations to performance standout.

Louise Moe-Dean’s “*Emma and I*” *The Twins Story* challenges stereotypes by providing insight into each individual’s life as opposed to the way society perceives identical twins both emotionally and aesthetically.

“*All Smoke and No Fire*”, contradictory to its meaning, prevailed as Ni Zhang’s work; evoked emotions. Zhang’s work encapsulates a girl in a traditional pink-dress looking bewildered on a camel’s back, which is draped over, in a very flamboyant, detailed patterned, cultured patchwork cloth of many colours. The camel simply a blur of our imagination entwined with other animate objects, it has no head or a back but our mental-vision fills the missing gaps as each piece narrates a specific ethnic or cultural story through the aesthetics.

“*All Smoke and No Fire*” roamed contradictorily as the drum rolled to an emotional state; Richard Holden’s work relates to the emotional states he experienced as the project deadline approached to the fore. Thus - *The Art of Procrastination* became the product constructed from exhausted time. Four images reflected four stages of development deploying colour as a tool to convey his emotional journey of what he was procrastinating prior to working on the project. E.g. the colour Blue labelled making a phone call, Red - looked in the fridge, etc. All the colours in that piece denote an emotion leading up to the deadline. The second piece labelled ANXIETY in capital letters; infused image of a human silhouette looking apprehensive, expressed in hues of blue, yellow, grey and fragments of white. Third; a cluster of colours splashed out, shades of white, orange and grey maintain the contingency of distress, labelled FRUSTRATION. The fourth; different shades of green mushroomed together portraying moods of tranquillity, labelled RELIEF.

Gong rolled on to Surya Son and Léa Mazet’s work, a book displayed on a projector, named *SHOW OFF*. Words written by Suraya Son “I never met my parents”, Lea Mazets, “One day coming back from school they had moved out” a thought provoking piece; begs the question what constituted these lives.

The drum stumbled, tripping into the contradiction “*All Smoke and No Fire*”, the centre piece, a 10ft high *Trojan horse* made of wood and cardboard, avowing the concept of disparity, the construction associated with desolation of The Old Truman Brewery complex and Tether’s invasion. With the mobile architectural intervention the “*Pillar Men*”; satiated with personalities of their own, liable to follow spectators who entered the room, yet prone to shyness; attempt to camouflage themselves amongst the concrete columns, despite their efforts, they’re easily spotted. A *light* projected in the dark room constantly whilst an old *TV* flashed like a CCTV recording of stuffed assets in a cupboard. *The Illusory Light and Mirror installation* contained a

light-bulb hanging down the centre of the triangle box; made up of broken glass mirrors' illuminating multiple reflections upon reflections of the same mirage of images as an illusion of space; an astounding piece not to mention mesmerising. The *white boxes "pillar men"*; amusing to watch as they chased a woman; bringing on the laughter, creating a sense of freedom; seeking heed under the great Trojan horse, where they are unable to navigate, rendering inflexibility to its core. Whilst in salvation; torching a light inside the horse's rear interior, within the big hollow circle discloses a genius architectural intervention of a miniature, (dolls) house, which constitutes a kitchen, washing room and other assets that attribute to a house. Situated in the vicinity of the horse stable, a round plastic *swimming pool* filed with black liquid and a Wellington boot; cans stacked up and a patchy plastic grass on a pillar, creating perceptions of realism. An impressive piece, suggests a triumph of true grandeur if concluded to its last detail.

Trojan horse and the brilliant Illusory Light and Mirror installation's are not perishable; curator's deliberately highlighted the masterpieces with a theme of it's own, as other rooms were arranged with smaller pieces of work and a gong drum going off. "*All smoke and No Fire*" the metaphor derogatory to it's meaning, evidently as the Trojan horse and Illusory Light and Mirror installation stole the lime light; in a similar fashion the grand pieces are momentous of the show.

Jessica Singh an Australian born American- Indian *illustrator* pursued bright colours', old textile's, female forms, fairy tale elements and "*generally bizarre influences*". Her representations of women in differing forms i.e. oriental clothing with angelic concepts, conveyed layers of culture's and tradition's woven together, women epitomized in her work are from past decades; whose roles in society were to display beauty, as her work depicts angelic and fairy like women oozing beauty. Her pictures are loud and scream to be examined e.g. protruding eye lashes; ten inches, portraying an extension of beauty. She repeatedly recreates these aesthetics with hair and clothes that are bold, bright and with fairy wings. Singh also induces American-Indian ethnicity through primary colours; reds, blues, yellows, etc, rich textiles and flamboyance intertwined; the look's women embody in her work are fervent, emphasising strength of tradition and culture.

A graphic designer's work incorporated poetry; read: "*love your enemies; loving those close to you there is no reward, for there is to love those you should not*", a beautiful message encapsulating the mind. These two pieces illustrates disregard for the "*All Smoke and No Fire*" metaphor.