

CAKES, EMBROIDERY AND CARDBOARD GUITARS

Rose Eken takes on the theatre of rock.

Rose Eken draws on the melancholy and romance of rock music to create videos and sculptural installations. She is inspired by the aura and physical detritus surrounding rock performances, a fascination sparked while designing lighting for rock gigs; I got really intrigued by the moment before and after the show; when venues are empty it's like they are longing for the crowd.

Her hand-made style references the DIY of punk and the combination of audacity and fragility that comes with it. Miniature cardboard projected on a large scale. She also makes rough, delicate models aesthetic deliberately balances the sketchy and meticulous. It dismantles or deflates the 'rock-coolness', allowing instead for something more poetic. She enjoys the 'Look, Mom I made an ashtray' feel of clay, its lack of functionality, and material inelegance which emphasises the stupidity of sculptural representation itself.'

Her recent show 'Song With No Name' featured cake and guitar rosettes. 'I got interested in juxtaposing the machismo of the rock star or the guitar-nerd with traditional female virtues; embroidery, ceramics, the miniature.' Although she does want to highlight sexism in music and art, Eken's light, subjective touch, and the collective yet personal glamour of rock 'n' roll pulls the work away from dry social politics.

Eken has also explored performance without the performance through conducting a series of interviews as a band 'A whole Lotta Rosie.' Eken admits art-bands 'became a cover for rubbish performances both from a musical and a fine-art perspective'; what intrigues her about them is 'the notion of daring, of not giving a damn; the balance between success and failure is exposed.'

So what does Eken listen to? 'Orange Juice, Bonnie Prince Billy, Nina Hagen Danish bands such as Jomi Massage, Speaker Bite Me, The Ravonettes, Rumspringa.' She particularly likes the arty Scout Niblett, and her 'crapness'. The flimsiness is at the base of her practice, the state of being both rubbish and beautiful; the loneliness of their theme, but she doesn't try to force artificial weight onto her work; calling on the ability of rock music to inject the unreal into our personal narratives, and exposing the delicious emptiness of contemporary culture.

Rachel Potts

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