

Girlie

The Girlie series of paintings were first installed at the Whitecross Gallery in October-November 2008, in cooperation with the curator, Helen Murphy.

The series comments on the sexualisation of the girl in popular culture. Historically, the term referred to early pornographic magazines. Contemporary usage of the term is employed by advertisers and is aimed at selling products that sexualise pre-pubescent girls. This exhibition was an attempt to explore the paradoxes that issue from the popular conflation of these two ideas.

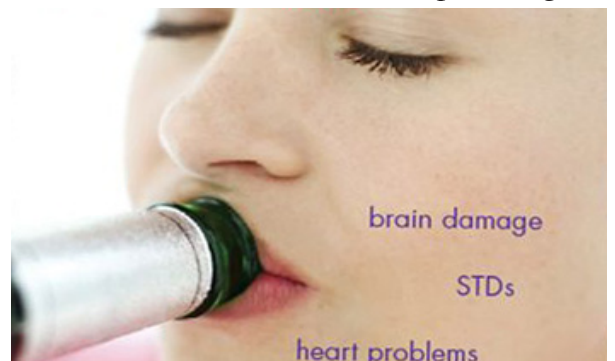
References to fairy queens, princesses, girlie tattoos, cuddly toys, playboy bunnies and slogans from girlie T-shirts are juxtaposed with patronising and derogatory labels such as bitch, whore, tart, slut etc., so as to draw attention to the persistence of hypocritical moral judgements of women. Not only are these judgements inconsistent with the values of egalitarianism, allegedly implicit in democratic states, but they also endorse distorted conceptions of the boundaries between women and children's sexuality.

At a more formal level, the paintings were intentionally constructed to evoke standard prejudices of painting. That is, the medium of painting is often regarded with disdain and/or when pursued by women, is seen as a quaint activity (evidence of which can be seen in a review of the show in Art Review, issue no. 29, Jan-Feb, 2009). I wanted to play with these common attitudes by setting up the viewer to assume that the work fits seamlessly with these prejudices. Indeed, I wanted to mock those in the art-world who have little ability to understand or engage with art that does not employ conventionally austere modes of presentation.

Daphne Plessner, 2009



Reference material: 1930's -50's porn mags.



Posters advertising consumer goods 2006-8

