

**Clare Rojas *We They, We They***

**3 February – 21 March 2010**

**Second Floor Galleries**

*The following text is an extract from an email interview with Clare, conducted January 2010.*

*How does your early training as a printmaker influence your work today?*

I think printmaking influences the way I layer my paint, and the flat solid colours I use.

*It is clear that you are interested in exploring notions of femininity, gender and sexuality. To what extent are you questioning idealism and how are these issues played out in your work?*

This is the big question for my practice. I was interested in having this conversation in my work, asking questions about idealism versus reality because to me this didn't seem to be happening at all. The world felt like a 'dictatorship' through the media and government. If there was any such conversation already happening, it was one-sided and used a language that didn't, inherently, seem to work in my favour.

I had the idea that I could manifest the world I wanted, one where the table was turned, and I wondered how that would feel. I, as a woman, would be empowered, men would be exploited, language would work against them, they would earn 30 % less than women, and historically the government would be all women, with a few good men being put into office. I wanted a world where I was not afraid; afraid of being raped, watching a Hollywood movie without feeling exploited or objectified. I thought by turning the tables and imagining this world through painting, performance and video, I could laugh and figure this all out. Maybe there could be some empathy from the other side, maybe things would change and momentum could build.

However, now that I have seen that world, I am not convinced that this is the right means to an end. In many ways I think the answer is more innocent than that, and I want to explore this now, in a quieter way.

*More recently you have begun to cut up older works and incorporate sections into your large patchwork 'quilt' walls, in much the same ways as fabric and materials were traditionally re-used over and over again in quilt-making. Can you talk a little about this newer series of works?*

I think recycling the old to make the new is an awesome metaphor for anything. I am interested in thinking about my politics in a different way, a more resolved and reduced way and it's hard to do that with older work that feels defensive. I don't feel the need to defend anymore. And yet I could not have arrived at this destination without my past journey. I sorted this out with older work, so it makes sense that I re-use it; I redefine it, just in a different way.

*Other recent large-scale pieces feature interior domestic spaces. These works are becoming increasingly abstract, less didactic and much more open with regard to their narrative. Are you now encouraging more metaphorical readings of your work?*

With the interior works, I am thinking about how our energy transforms a space, whether we are (actually) there or not. I am interested in how we sense this, and how a space resonates like a person, in that it has its own energy and force. A home or interior reflects so much about the inhabitant. I am exploring ways in which I might present such energy without having to actually present the figure itself.

*For this exhibition Ikon is presenting wall-based drawings, paintings, hanging banjos, a musical performance and the first public reading of your new children's book 'Pidgy'. What connects all these kinds of work?*

I think they are all related in one basic and fundamental way, and for me that is good enough. I made them all. They all came from the same place.