

EVE BIDDLE

JUROR'S STATEMENT

FUN HOUSE: Art of the Surreal, Fantastic, and Bizarre.

These works are a jumble of dreams and nightmares designed to overload the senses and spark the imagination. What daydreams will you take from here? What strange machinations will your mind churn out tonight?

John Baker's *Born and Raised in Chicago* and *The Two Friends* are wonderful examples of a more "traditional" approach to surrealism, mixing styles and subjects, and even frame elements into strange, distorted portraits that seem to pull apart time and space. They place us at once in the present, the 20's and the 50's - and maybe even the future - when these paintings start to come apart at the seams and eventually turn to dust.

Ileana Doble Hernandez feels both familiar and completely bizarre - almost dangerous. Is the mother in *Pollito Chicken* going to eat her child? Or nurture it? Is it a vision of herself that she sees, or thinks other people see? How often have we had our own conflicted self-narrative around the dinner table?

Trish Igo's assemblage sculptures blur our expectations and play with assemblage to knock us out of our object assumptions. A trophy that would usually hold a taxidermied head instead holds the back of a goat (or something that looks like it). *Goat Mound* along with *Ghost* pop us onto a new and strange world where value is flipped on its head: what would our hunting rooms look like if they contained camel humps and shark fins and bear mounts instead of toothy heads?

Trent Taft's virtuosic sculptures also play with our expectations of trophies and still lifes. Totally grotesque, but insanely detailed and beautiful, I can't look away but I am disturbed by the rolling eyes, the anger and the sadness in the expressions. I expect these will stay with me.

Shawn, Quinlan, working in the quilting vernacular, draws us in closer with domestic feelings and materials only to flip us on our backs with dark, doomsdays predictions. He mixes internet memes, traditional homemaking materials and activities, and a deeply dark sense of humor that makes me simultaneously feel warm and fuzzy and thoroughly depressed and creeped out.

Santiago Cohen's *The Fight* has a different dichotomy of material and subject. The painterly style and almost kid-like stances of the figures depicted feel playful. But the pig- and chicken-headed referee and coach are letting loose a child fighting a child in a dimly lit boxing ring, and suddenly the painting becomes menacing and eerie.

FUN HOUSE is a weird and wondrous snapshot of each of these artist's inner workings and interpretations of the world.

My hope is that each of you will find some aspect of your own life reflected in FUN HOUSE - be it your body, your environment, or your dreamworld - however strange and distorted it may appear here.