

Romance and Sensibility

Bernadette Curtin tunes in to Rebecca Kinsey's paintings:



Layers of a meaningful life are like graffiti walls etched and scratched, upgraded and reinvented. Some parts are rubbed out and lost, and new colours and forms are added over time.

In the body of large paintings entitled "I Love You Forever" Rebecca Kinsey layers quirky figures, fish, animals, flowers and poetry over dark rich backgrounds. Transparent deep crimson is first ragged onto the surface of the canvas. Next darker more opaque areas are added to create a soft focus mood of shadowy suggestion, like a night world of dreams and streetwalking. Drips and scrapes and fragments of poetry emerge from the depths and gradually begin to tell a story. Street art, Asian culture and text are interwoven into the fabric of the images, forming a background story to the central figures in the foreground.

Pablo Neruda's poem "Ode to Things" explains the way artists appropriate ideas and sensations to use in their art:

*I pass through houses,
streets,
elevators,
touching things:
I glimpse objects
And secretly desire
Something because it chimes,
And something else because
It is as yielding
As gentle hips,
something else I adore for its deepwater hue,
something else for its velvety depths.*

In the series of small paintings the central figure floats in a light airy space in contrast to the dark world of the large pieces. Here the heroine is whimsical and engaging, staring out at the viewer through her cyclopean eye. She is often accompanied by her cat. Like Leunig's duck for Mr Curly, Kinsey's cat serves as the alter ego of the artist. It is as if the cat and humanoid are sharing a conversation about art and life.

Overall there is a keen engagement with the inner world of feelings, memories, hopes and dreams, and it is this sensibility which brings originality and romance to the paintings.

Bernadette Curtin has a Masters in Fine Art degree from RMIT Melbourne. She is a painter and lives on the far North Coast of New South Wales.

i love you, by Rebecca Kinsey [oil on canvas, 120cm x 80cm]