

Review of Exhibitions

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painted on an end wall seemed meant as a graphic symbol in negative of the clear night sky. They also suggested the children's game evoked in the work's title, *Join up the Dots*. This transplanted barn seemed to express Finn-Kelcey's ambivalence toward her rural origins and her subsequent displacement to the city.

Following some 15 years of introspective performances which took self-doubt as their theme, Finn-Kelcey turned to installation around 1987. One of her earlier efforts was *Bureau de Change* (seen at New York's New Museum in 1990), in which an enlarged image of van Gogh's *Sunflowers* was created by thousands of coins laid on the floor mosaic-style. While that work addressed questions of economic and esthetic value, her recent installations have engaged more metaphysical themes. Somewhat mischievously, this show spoiled illusions of a dignified afterlife with a dose of worldly disenchantment. —Mark Harris

Tim Noble and Sue Webster at 20 Rivington Street

This show of well-conceived sculptures and installations using computer-sequenced electric lights probably came as a surprise to viewers acclimated to the tacky esthetics and low-grade materials previously relished by London misbehavers, Tim Noble and Sue Webster. Only last year they were introducing themselves in their "British Rubbish" show at the Independent Art Space as "The Shit and the Cunt," flaunting scatological art jokes and the fabricating abilities of glue-sniffing adolescents.

As the visitor moved through this year's show, which included one major piece on each of the gallery's three floors, there was a cumulative theatrical effect. The first work encountered, *Toxic Schizophrenia*, was a wall structure of flashing light bulbs which re-created the classic tattoo design of a heart pierced by a dagger. Sophisticated light sequencing made for a mesmerizing display of alternating colors that depicted blood

draining from the heart. The work was inspired by the Blackpool illuminations, an end-of-summer ritual in which the traditionally working-class seaside resort of Blackpool comes alive with flashing lights celebrated for their unashamed vulgarity and for being the closest thing in Britain to Las Vegas neon.

On the next floor, looking like an enlarged piece of costume jewelry, was *Excessive Sensual Indulgence*, a flashing-lightbulb fountain which created the illusion of spraying water. Individual bulbs were designed to produce two different colors, one directed straight ahead, the other spreading across the wall in atmospheric halations.

The duo's uninhibited approach to the entertainment value of the art work was most telling on the top floor, where a single spotlight, beaming up from floor level, showed two freestanding assemblages on metal poles. At first sight, the sculptures looked like random accumulations of bus tickets, plastic toys and empty cartons. However, on the wall behind, these two structures cast perfectly realized shadows of Noble's and Webster's profiled



Noble and Webster: *Toxic Schizophrenia*, 1997, mixed mediums, 102½ by 78½ inches; at 20 Rivington Street.

heads, severed, facing each other, impaled on spikes and dripping blood. Titled *Miss Understood and Mr. Meanor*, this work was a further homage to aspects of British popular culture, from matinee sleight-of-hand performances to touristy chambers of horror such as the London Dungeon.

More closely wedded to local iconography than most young British artists, Noble and Webster also carry their attitudinizing and wit more lightly than many of their better-known contemporaries. —Mark Harris

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