

TERROЯ

A significant solo show of recent work by artist Simon Pericich, **TERROЯ** is an exhaustive exhibition that expressively engages with the spectacular sadness of our contemporary humanity. Executed on a large, confrontational scale, the expanded body of work is characterized by a resolute willingness to face culture's dark present. These disturbing matters manifest in a manner of equally disarming prints, video, sculptures and installations that surround and suffocate the space and senses. A heavy cocktail of the erotic, poetic and absurd, Pericich's particular brand of drag nihilism paints a painfully dystopian picture of capitalistic society with a unique awareness of its tragicomedy.

Instantly evoking dramatic tones of error and extreme fear, the title of the exhibition **TERROЯ** is spelt in smeared makeup dragged by the artist's own face across the gallery wall. Intensely textual elements continue to haunt the audience's attention with ironic and ominous sentiments, such as a large printed curtain in which the phrase "Die ok" is isolated from a "Diet Coke" sign and set against the backdrop of a high-density urban landscape.

There is indeed a brooding mood of gloom to the rooms; brutality and melancholy seem to wail from its walls and spew from its speakers. A clay bust wrapped in plastic and strapped with leather is caught in a moment of suffocation, while in a black immersive video installation, a suffering man writhes in an dark sparkling pit as raining glitter falls to a somber and slowed down pop song soundtrack. Heavily saturated tones of perpetual entrapment, collapse and degeneration act as continuing motifs throughout the exhibition. Inside a Perspex enclosure, condensation is constantly trapped as it regressively cycles, while in another framed tomb, glitter relentlessly showers.

The artist's works are both firm examinations of and defiant rebellions against commodification and capitalist control; they warn and offer relief to its shadowy shallowness. In an obsessively decorated sculptural pyre, laden with a compendium of objects, a sympathetic shrine is conjured for a fallen unknown co-worker. Such assemblages are residues of rituals in which the audience is presented with the aftermath of their performative processes of becoming.

Elements of violent ruin reveal and compose Pericich's artworks, constructing a strong interplay between destruction and creation. On a shattered mirror, "swallowed whole by wallowed swell" is scratched onto glass, while blackened and burnt books lie pinned under a shatterproof makeshift vitrine. The damaged nature of the works mirrors the artist's concern with the detriment of our own ultimately irrational and selfish actions.

Art historical comparisons can be drawn with Anselm Kiefer's work that uses bold symbolism to critique his culture's past, as well as Gustav Metzger's "auto-destructive" art that entailed damaging processes as part of their creative act to speak of the violence of his personal past. However, Pericich's material incarnations of melancholia are highly responsive to his personal context and therefore do not critique something past, but rather, that which is present.

Incorporating the found, the made, the broken and the assembled, the terror on show in **TERROЯ** is the terrifying awareness of a profoundly alone, finite and minuscule condition pitted against the mass population and throws of the world. While an agony lurks in many of the artworks presentation, a quiet calm also emanates from their darkness. These works are proud scars gained from bravely crawling into the deep recesses of the soul that resonantly encapsulate Keats's poetic remark, "truth is beauty." Potential comfort can be found in their anguish, tranquillity in their murky affliction, beauty in their smashed state and humour in their nihilism.

Simon Pericich's triumphant body of works successfully function as bold anti-monuments that seek meaning in a bleak urbanised world full of banal objects and commoditized experiences. Born from an imperative to make sense of all this mass of material possession that surrounds and enslaves us; Pericich portrays it as it really is, as a miserable mass of glittery junk. **TERROЯ** offers the audience a chance to get entangled in a web of distress, be shocked by the abyss of contemporary disconnection and choke on their own selves.

- Tara Elizabeth Cook