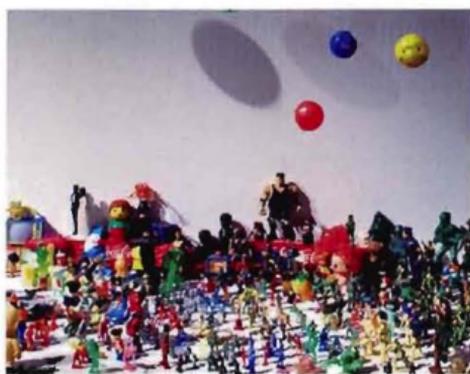


# Monomania

GOODMAN GALLERY CAPE | *Cape Town*



Monomania refers to a pathological obsession, an unflinching preoccupation with one idea, emotion, subject or relationship that captures its victims within a closed circuit of desire, where all of the trivialities of everyday life melt in the flame of a singular passion. Collecting,

hoarding, classifying, replicating and meticulously constructing are all activities that lend themselves to monomania, and while a personalised obsession can be decidedly dull, the preoccupations of some of the artists grouped together on *Monomania*, at Goodman Gallery Cape, are captivatingly contagious.

Arie Kuijers' works saw revellers happily immersing themselves in his collections of gay pornography and paraphernalia. Kuijers filing cabinets, cupboards and hand made board games – all containing a distinctively handmade, schoolboy aesthetic – show his compulsion for collecting pornography and pictures of pretty young boys that would seem appropriate on any movie serial killer's wall. However, the intimacy the artist maintains in his composites and the hours of labour implied in their painful delicacy transform these images from the realm of the shocking and kitsch. Kuijers modified antique dollhouse, *Recollections*, is particularly successful in its use of the miniature (which, like the collection, is of the realm of the sentimental) to transform the unsavoury, all the while questioning traditional notions of taste and heteronormative history. Tiny aristocrats gaze on a salon of half-naked boys, each in tiny gilded frames, while a miniature big screen television plays homo-erotica. Described by Kuijers as forever a work in progress, *Recollections* is obsession at its most appealing.

Joanne Bloch curated her collection of toys into a panorama of biblical proportions in *The People*, where issues of race, violence, gender and looming apocalypse are played out in this plastic tableau of tiny figures. Simon Allen's *The Birds* weaves layers of the 16mm film containing Alfred Hitchcock's 1962 classic of the same name. This deconstruction of a moving image, cut into its assembled parts and then literally rewoven into a giant grid, arrests the viewer initially in its sublimity – a grand scale translucent painting. On closer inspection, the obsessive process of disassembling and then reassembling Hitchcock's narrative resonates with the quiet horror of the original film.

The other works on the show, however, are considerably less intense: Ryan Arenson's tired mythico-religious iconography does little to suggest any real passion and David Koloane's frenetic drawings, though fine works in their own right, too fall short of the show's title. Still, *Monomania* is definitely the best show I've seen at Goodman Gallery Cape: unlike their standard displays of 'stable' artists, it showed real curatorial promise and some surprising and arresting works, demonstrating that even one fetish, if explored with sufficient zeal, is more than enough to foster the artist's (and the public's) imagination.

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