

# All The Young Dudes?

Artists:

Daniel Crooks—Samstag Museum, October 10<sup>th</sup>—December 20<sup>th</sup>;  
Christian Lock—*New Work*—Greenaway Gallery, October 20<sup>th</sup>—  
November 17<sup>th</sup>; *Arte Magre*—various artists—Australian Experimental  
Art Foundation, dates; Daniele Puppi—*432 Hertz*—Australian  
Experimental Art Foundation, November 1<sup>st</sup>—December 7<sup>th</sup>;  
*Provisional State II*—Johnnie Dady, James Dodd, KaB101—  
Contemporary Art Centre of South Australia, November 8<sup>th</sup>—  
December 15<sup>th</sup>.

by Ken Bolton

## ***Walt Destiny***

The Samstag Museum is showing an interesting selection of Daniel Crooks' work, from his ongoing project 'Time Slice', giving over to it both levels of the Museum. The form the works take is of a projection onto one or more screens. Sometimes the screens are themselves subdivided. The subject is Time, or time and motion. Most typically Crooks' screen will show moving footage from a still camera's point of view, or a sequence of these, or a very slow pan. The pace is slowed-motion, sometimes very slow. The special and additional feature is that aspects of the image are compressed or stretched, or alternately both; sometimes a figure's movement will see their shape stretch to incorporate various stages of an action into one growing, elongating image, often so that the beginning of the movement and its end become static and sudden termini, achieved, or departed from, while the progression from beginning to end is shown fluidly and distortedly to move between these points. Sometimes the development seems to involve overcoming a meniscus or tipping point: the beginning becoming the middle for a long

while and then, more suddenly, its end. It is mesmeric with some of the quality of watching honey poured. The word of course is “morphing”. The Futurists would have loved these techniques: though without the quaintness would we still love Balla’s ‘Dynamism of a Dog’?

The major—and largest—work, ‘Pan No. 11 (cross-platform transfer)’, occupies the downstairs Samstag space. It is made up of a series of screens that form a wall, the elements butted together like links in a bracelet—but a ‘wall’ really—standing a little more than head high, and winding in a serpentine manner the length of the gallery. The screens are projected onto from behind. We see passages shot in a New York subway station. In one sense the wall of screens is itself like a series of subway carriages coupled together, a train. Some screens show carriages turning, towards one, as they curve into the station from within a tunnel. Others show the passing, horizontally to the camera, of these same silver carriages, or a long shot of an almost empty platform with commuters walking its length (left to right across the screen), arriving to wait.

With some of Crooks’ pieces one feels that one is looking at an *effect*, rather than art, but an entrancing effect. While it is an attractive and wondrous effect it is not clear that the images are shaped to make points, or to carry content, so much as to draw out the meanings that attach conventionally to the effects generated. While we haven’t seen these effects in gallery art before we have seen their like as ‘special effects’ in film, on TV and elsewhere: usually associated with Sci-Fi, horror, the uncanny. (Some of the techniques will also have been seen before in the work of artists like Bill Viola.)

‘Pan No. 11 (cross-platform transfer)’, though, is to be taken seriously. Wonderfully and beautifully slowed, the effect is to make the subway station figures seem fated, noble, heroic—or deserving of our pity for their exemplifying the human condition, that is, work, drudgery, effort, cares and responsibilities, oppressive routine. The large screens, the mercury-silver and blacks and greys, are handsome and sumptuous. (Much of what they are showing is the silver gleam of subway carriages and windows.) One screen shows a short set of steps within Grand Central Railway—or is it that the next stop is Grand Central? (The platform speakers announce this regularly throughout.) We watch figures

appear, shouldering their bags, slouching in old parkas and caps, wearing sneakers or heels and given a moment of extra slow contemplation, distortion, transfiguration—as in a distorting mirror (the phrase Crooks will be hoping not to hear)—and passing.

This is flanked by related, neighbouring scenes on the contiguous frames either side. Beside the frame given mostly to the rise up a few stairs from a platform is another, showing the platform itself and focusing mostly, at an angle, on the carriage doors, open to receive more commuters—who appear regularly enough, but intermittently, moving in the imposed slow, ennobling pace and enter the carriage. Finally the doors close and the train moves off. If we consider ‘cross platform transfer’ to succeed then it joins the family of works (and whole oeuvres) that has Robert Frank’s *The Americans* at its beginning, and it probably adds something to it.

The ennobling effect of slow pace is a regular resource of the rock music clip: typically four youths make their way heroically towards one across sand dunes, desert and cactus: warriors, vigilantes—men of purpose, boys with a mission?—limbs moving with immense dignity and resolve. It’s a rhetoric. It is a rhetorical effect: legitimate within ‘ordinary’ film—where it would be *a trope amongst others*. In Crooks’ works, while a lot of work and expertise has gone into the process, it can seem a little thin, though rather memorable and entrancing. (My point is that it is offered effectively *not so much as a trope within a filmic work’s syntax* but as its whole point. Well, very nearly.) The effect is also to produce a kind of sadness: that our pity for these citizens cannot help them, cannot reach them.

Upstairs are a number of works. There is one in which a man—a tramp or homeless person one would guess, or possibly simply someone from a traditional pre-Western way of life—stands amidst a crowd downtown in a modern Asian city, looking about him, clutching a bottle of Coke, dressed in worn and ragged clothing, himself weather-beaten: the crowd passes him, in both directions, on their way to work or shopping or for lunch, taking slow purposeful strides and when they cross past him, on either side, snap! they are filed there as a thinned, verticalized form of themselves and gradually move to the far margin (left or right) as they are joined and displaced by others. Meanwhile the tramp or authentic-figure-from-the-past, looks on, turns to watch them, seemingly bemused: as

if he's in a different 'zone', get it? 'Seemingly' is the too operative word: what 'seems' here is what is conventional to the popular genres under which the work falls and at which it would seem to aim as well: so he is bemused as if he sees and understands, or 'recognises the justice', of what's happening?—as if he illustrates that *the poor and innocent* will be spared? Left alone? And so on. Maybe he is a reproach to soul-less modernity? These are clichés, stock and token meanings available as vehicles, I think, by which the medium, and these particular techniques, can be shown doing their paces. Demonstration pieces.

Similarly, 'Static No.12 (seek stillness in movement)', which features an elderly Asian man doing Tai-chi: when the process (Crooks' isolating, stretching, morphing) is set to work on his figure the 'meanings' seem the usual: 'zen', with curious attenuations and Cheshire Cat-like disappearances.

.

## ***Under Wraps***

**Christian Lock** showed new work—a selection from a larger body—made this year—in the very much transformed Greenaway Gallery—its first exhibition. The Gallery looks very very good, a big improvement on the old space: more coherent, less bitsy, less interference from inherited architectural features (pillars, wall divisions, steps) and with fabulous natural light.

Lock's new work is abstract, more or less, and involved in exploring, working its way through, compositional permutations, 'moves', gambits—and with a particular vocabulary of elements. Some of the works are pretty astounding, all are pretty good. They are distinguished by the use of, among other things, a clear plastic (a sort of bendable Perspex). It is not the only material, and not always the dominant feature. But it is consistently a feature of the works. As is the prominence given to the frame as an agent 'within' the picture. 'Within', because the action, the elements, are only partially bound by the frame, spilling forth from it, extending well beyond it, sitting well 'on top of' or in front

of it. As used here, the frame suggests a locus, an approximate boundary, and suggests an overall two-dimensionality. It is a two-dimensionality that the works go, sometimes, a long way to step beyond. At other times they sit more quietly within it. Many of these frames were left as clean, unstained wood, adding accents of colour (warm against the overall black and white) and working also as directional or tension-giving compositional factor. The frame, then, is highlighted and serves also to establish the works as notionally in the same ballpark as paintings—paintings made up of layered colours, shapes and textures and bits of illusionistic ‘imagery’.

In one sense these are attempts to work in the broad abstract tradition, as it has come to us via Hoffmann and de Kooning, or Tony Tuckson—or most ‘post-painterly abstraction’ of the sixties and subsequent. The Greenberg Variations. The difference is the material, which places Lock’s work here a little closer to Arte Povera: though the vocabulary of shapes includes torn fragments, and perfect circles (of solid black, white, silver, sometimes orange), these last indicating both a cooler temperature than de Kooning’s 1950s and a more Californian, less trash-friendly sensibility than the Italians. (Don’t those spots say John Baldessari, if not ‘Chromium’ Ken Reinhardt, of, um, ‘fond’ memory?) None of this contextualizing is very necessary: the game has been in play for many decades and viewers will have no difficulty with the work: it’s the old push-pull in a current guise. But lest that sound deprecating it should be insisted that Christian Lock’s *New Work* show ‘delivers’ and doesn’t depend on applause for novelty value. The hard question is, Does the artist work through the American-type Painting ‘moves’ so as to give the new materials, the layering of plastic and polyvinyl materials, a try out? Or is he using the new materials to search for continuing life within those mid-century conventions and concerns? Maybe it’s the first?

(It must be noted: there is very little—is there any?—actual painting in these works. The materials listed mostly runs “synthetic polymer/digital print on PVC and holographic material on wooden stretcher”. These are assemblages, mostly on flat planes all parallel to an imaginable ‘picture’ surface and within a very shallow space; they might almost be read as collages carried out on a large scale. The frame allows the identification ‘picture’ and ‘painting’.)

A number of large works make the first and biggest impact on entering the gallery. All works are given as 'Untitled' with a number. 'Untitled 8' is the most flamboyant: there is a great amount of clear plastic—with the sparkle of cellophane—scrunched and curled and curved around it, in mostly sinuous swathes, suggesting packaging but also a kind of glossy, mid-century Baroque Hollywood armature. Compounded with the festive glamour of the clear plastic material is glitter and ribbons of rainbow-reflective coloured material. Aside from this the work is mostly white and silver with a few dark accents, but overall very light. There is a little warmth supplied by the gallery lighting, and the reflective surfaces of much of the material catch this and fragment it into fugitive flashes of yellow, green, orange.

'Untitled 8', then, is the storm-trooper within the exhibition. Disconcerting, its vivacity and rococo confusion of luxuriantly *esthetique* materials (glossy, smooth, pearlescent, glamorous—as if synthetic packaging and design materials had just been invented: very Cadillac, very Mamie Van Doren) could conceivably take one 'aback'. So, a work of great, clamorous impact and one that calls for a lot of stocktaking, interrogation of its effects and devices, its materials and the various degrees present of literal depth and seeming depth. In this work the confusion or ambiguity are exhilarating. In the calmer works this tension becomes more meditative.

The picture next in line, 'Untitled 9', works to give a much deeper, more sombre note within the exhibition. Where 'Untitled 8' thrilled in an evanescent, hair-dressing aesthetic, 'Untitled 9' featured complex but more legible ambiguities of depth, and oppositions of light and dark, 'abstract' and real. Its internal pace was more deliberate, the eye was not led (and harried) so much on a kind of chase but could set its own pace of examination. Where one work was a matter of exciting distraction, the other was gravely legible, sonorous and dark, but in principle knowable. At the work's heart were two closely associated torn fragments of painted material, perhaps 'skins' of paint (à la Paul Hoban?), that possessed a texture suggesting a leathery skin or a bark-like texture. That is, by association, the body, the corporeal—and perhaps hand-facture, depiction even—as opposed to what might read as collage, assemblage of disjunct materials (plastic, synthetic) possessing a manufactured sheen and smoothness. These latter elements featured sometimes a printed diamond pattern, or a pattern of evenly-spaced dots—and

were employed as pure shape, for qualities of dynamism, colour contrast, transparency and so on.

In 'Untitled 9' the pained or reproachful note of these dark, organic shapes (dark and sombrely red, like bruises or wounds) sound the grounding tone of the picture.

The rest of the exhibition was a deal more serene, I thought. And some of these, too, were very good.

'Untitled 1' squared up into a play of black, white and lemon shapes. There was some quotation from Lock's previous repertoire, of organic sea-shell or mollusc shapes—printed, in negative, ghostly x-rays—and petal folds, or cloud—but all sieved through industrial-looking reproduction on PVC—plus a solid dot or two of black, white or silver—and the warmth of frame and stretcher.

Where 'Untitled 9' seemed a troubling work much of the rest operated in an area, and at a level, that might be characterized as Ben Nicholson-meets-Robert Ryman. (Ryman? Where's the paint? It must be just the whiteness.) The visually intriguing matter of *uncertain depth*, in *New Work* was the attention-grabbing element—along with sensational aspects of colour, line, direction, balance etc, which were more entirely conventional.

Interestingly, this uncertainty could take on on gravity in 'Untitled 9', and allow serene calm in a work like 'Untitled 2'. This last may have been at the least exploratory end of the range Lock showed in *New Works* but I think it was my favourite. Maybe it was the least demanding, simply. The elements were fewer, the arrangement was much less about strongly conflicting oppositions: the volume and tension were turned down. While not tiresome, the busy 'Untitled 8' had been tiring. Exciting, yes, but good to get away from.

•

## You'll Have To Speak Up

Rome-based Italian artist Daniele Puppi (in residence at the AEF over much of November) showed two pieces in his exhibition *432 Hertz*, the very noisy 'What goes around comes around' and the merely loud 'Fatica No 13'. There was also a sound piece, 'Psssst'. Pronouncing its title reproduces that work effectively and it did make the some gallery visitors turn quickly, turn repeatedly, to locate who or what was importuning them.

Slight? But 'Psssst' gives some hint of what Puppi is on about: his works seek to seize and alter the space in which they are shown, often making the viewer aware that they are held at bay, claustrophobically corralled or whatever, dwarfed in a space that is filled by the work. 'Fatica No 13' was a sound installation in a purpose-created long, small space: a screening onto what looked to be two physical doors—with hands (fingers) trying repeatedly to prise them apart from the other side. The doors, closed but for a narrow strip, were rattled and shaken, the fingers repeatedly thrust into the gap to pull the doors apart, a face appearing behind. There was an accompanying soundtrack of desperate rattling and grunts. All in all, like a tiny nightmare. I was reminded of Bruce Nauman's works of the later 60s and Vito Acconci's: the focus on a single action, simple tasks, confinement. Puppi amps up effects of sound and scale and works a kind of hyper illusionism: where the Americans were forthrightly 'documentary'—and usually black-and-white, grainy, and amateurishly filmed—Puppi's actual procedures (the techniques, the question of how is it done?) invite our curiosity or wonder.

Dominating the remaining, larger gallery space was Puppi's 'What goes around comes around'. Again the work dominated the space from the far end which (as with 'Fatica No 13') it effectively filled. 'Whatever goes around' employed two screens, almost adjoining, but separated by about 30 cms. On this combined screen was footage from a Bruce Lee film—a scenario in which Lee and a rival (Chuck Norris) circle each other, come together in a flurry of kicks and blows, separate and continue some more. The special interest derives from the enhanced, sometimes suddenly and vastly enhanced, size of the reactions, and the play between the two screens. One screen will appear briefly to

become much larger as a head is knocked back, shaken by the power of a kick; or the screen will tilt, as well as expand, as it absorbs' the force delivered by the other screen's action. One effect was the humorous one of being able to employ the dramatic underlining and distortion that fill, say, action comics. The other was the more physical one of finding oneself swept up in the world the installation produced: the screens, once they begin these swellings and other transformations, have the power to effectively colonise the rest of the space, far more than they would normally. The whole was accompanied by a very loud soundtrack of howls and yelps and growls and roars from the combatants and the sound of the successive impacts. Rather overpowering.

Impact is a large part of Puppi's installations and perhaps the most notable depend upon brevity and 'the unities', massively compressed: one action, one (brief) moment, one place (in fact one spot)—viz the two ten-metre long legs and feet that jump up and down in the nave of a Baroque church, for one example, or the large building engineered to have all its doors and windows open and slam shut repeatedly, giving the building a life and presence dwarfing the viewer's. Puppi's shorter, more singular pieces do not beg the viewer to hang around, where 'Whatever goes around comes around' does—while at the same time making it rather easy to walk away (on the grounds of tedium matched with thunderous sound). But Chuck Norris and ritual fight scenes will do this to many a viewer.

A glance through the book on Puppi (*Daniele Puppi*, authored by various hands, published by SylvanaEditoriale—essays, interviews, statements) shows a vast amount of work that includes pieces—installations—of great power and authority. Some are works on a large scale. There are many I would have preferred to 'What goes around comes around'. Even so, the current showing reveals directions and possibilities not being pursued here locally; and artists generally want to show their newest thing, partly to test it out, finding it unproductive to receive applause for a sure thing.

.

***Arte Magra—a thin art, an art made from very spare means***

A large enterprise, and a long time coming, *arte magra* was the conception of Domenico de Clario and curated by him and Mary Knights, the latter doing much of the work on the ground in Adelaide. *Arte magra* invoked, I think, two lode-stars under which to travel: *Art Povera* and Fluxus.

The Fluxus-esque is that mode that regards success as marked by recognition of its Fluxus-like status. Which is funny, because the regard with which Fluxus was held—admittedly by the New York-dominated Anglophone art world(s) of the nineteen-seventies—was that Fluxus was lite as lite as lite, a kind of art that, for itself, regarded success as recognition that it had shown how easy it was to be, how little was required (with the right sort of leveraging and attitude), to achieve the status—of ‘Art’. The leveraging was, regularly, the capitalizing on Duchamp’s strategies for demonstrating what might constitute art while-at-the-same-time testing its categories. Fluxus was art by virtue of treating the Duchampian as itself a category. It didn’t in fact test received notions of art. They had been tested. It cited the most recently received, like flashing a pass—and it was ‘in’, cheekily, free, no hard work, no heavy lifting, delighting in the curiously held belief that there was an establishment somewhere out there that it could be held to be epatering, nose out of joint with irritation. Its inane triumphalism was both annoying and boring, tiresome. A great deal of *arte magra* operated under this cheerful delusion or handy dispensation.

The main gallery event of *arte magra* sailed as close as anyone could to charges of ‘liteness’ but escaped them, I think. And Louise Haselton’s untroubling task—of coming up regularly with something appealing to the eye, yet unexpected, and with improvised found materials—was something of a triumph and probably very good fun for her and a reviving resumé of her own philosophies and strategies. Haselton made a pair of complementary sculptures from materials, things, found in the street—rubbish, wrappers, containers, broken appliance pieces, branches and fronds. The results conformed to the artist’s known, rather Ornette Coleman aesthetic (‘free-form’ and limber) but stretched the parameters to a high degree. A new pair of sculptures each week replaced the former set. The complete series being shown on the last weekend and drawing quite a crowd.

Tanya Schultz and Aurelia Carbone occupied the AEAF gallery space with an interactive installation, 'I saw a dream like this'. Arrayed on the floor was a parabolic arc of coloured, pop-corn shaded 'nuggets' of various sizes. For one moment I thought it might be a parodic re-working of something like 'Spiral Jetty'—and then that became the joke I wanted to make about it—but the whole functioned very effectively as a kind of visual surprise: the high, sweet register of these pinks and blues and yellows, some barely orange colours, sorted by colour into a number of arcs that made up the larger one. For many viewers *this sudden glimpse*—and then, as they entered further, *the singular* and rather pure, if synthetic, environment—of impossible optimism and childish utopia—was enough. If the arc had been that of a giant pair of headphones, then at the open end of the 'U' shape was a set of three steps above which was suspended an equally cartoony 'cloud', lumpy and grey. It housed a camera which, when anyone stood near that opening of the 'U', took a polaroid shot of the triggerer. The photo duly appeared. (It fell to the ground. Or you could climb up the steps to receive it from the proffering cloud.) The photo showed the subject with a perfectly curved rainbow above their heads. The optical trick was that the rainbow of nuggets on the floor (and running up the wall for a foot or two) was arranged (à la the anamorphic skull in Holbein's 'Ambassadors' painting) so that, photoed from the cloud's superior angle, the vast shape on the floor presented, in the photo, as a perfectly arced rainbow. A kind of 'gift'.

This was not a critical sort of art, but—lite as it was—there something rather unalloyed about it and pleasingly transformative of the space. Viewers typically chose to spend time with the work, just to remain within its ambience.

Much else within *arte magra* looked to be pallidly echoing a not very heroic sixties/seventies past. Collectively its main burden would have been the ritual enactment of feel-good naivety and innocence and demonstration of the wettest kind of 'creativity'. Were there some successes along the way? I did not see very many of the off-site ventures and cannot say.

•

## Three Amigos

CACSA closed the year with a three-favourite-sons sort of show: *Provisional State II*—a set of installations by Johnnie Dady, James Dodd and KaB101. The three performed a number of effective moves: the unifying aspect was that they formed a series of ‘worlds’ the viewer had to pass through, funneling viewers through a familiar space made much less familiar by the installations and much of it simply (‘aggressively’, in the art-world sense where nobody gets hurt) rendered off-limits, subtracted, withdrawn from use or access. The thematic link, as opposed to the stronger formal one, was one of distinct Australian environments. (The overall environment created by the aggregation of the three was a slightly show-ground one: think the River Caves ride, wax-museum environments, stage sets.)

Entry was via KaB101’s occupation of the first room. Wire security fencing held one at bay from it, and through the wire we viewed walls covered in black-and-white signature KaB101 graffiti. It looked good. The rude occupation of space, and the crowd-control aspect of the handling of the spectators, was good—terrific if you were a sado-masochist (which has always been a question with regard visual arts audiences).

Around some narrow corners and the viewer comes upon James Dodd’s space. This too featured plenty of aerosol spray paint, but in day-glo colours, and took the form of murals painted direct on the walls together with some cut-out wooden silhouette that represented, as did much of the painted walls, outback Australian landscape forms: empty space, jagged rock. The colours were not naturalistic—the aerosol paint suggests immediately ‘city’, the urban (while no doubt every country town has a kid or two aerosoling away at night in the prescribed NY-Berlin-Banksy manner). The forms—the jagged silhouettes, the chevrons of paint—were in a Deco-Cubist shorthand that suggested Hollywood Gotham City and Batman, almost as much as the outback.

The final room was another filled so as to exclude the viewer, though one could, and was no doubt supposed to, squeeze in. In it were parked five caravans—the old-style small, curved ones—made from heavy-duty cardboard. They were not clad, so that one saw

the structure first. An initial take was likely to read them as turbines of some sort, as industrial factory machinery, enormous motors. But it became clear quickly enough that they were caravans: domesticity on wheels, the possibility, or the dream, of living any where, of moving on from place to place. These caravans we have seen before from Dady, as we have seen the construction method—and the general principle might be ‘make something big out of an inappropriate material’, though in fact it runs more like *‘literalize/actualize, in large form, sketched, drawn ideas’*. Seen thus they could be said to refer to the ‘idea’, the notion, rather than specific objects. (The procedure defamiliarizes, it ‘makes strange’, and makes for pleasure in the resolution. It is closely related to—a variation on—Claes Oldenburg’s ‘making large’, & ‘making soft’.) It was amusingly, pleasingly, like being in a stable, back-on to a line of horses or elephants. The cardboard smell filled the room, too, reminding that you were in ‘their’ space, or a space not yours, less the neutral white cube of detached judgement. Not that they were shuffling & backing up or kicking at the woodwork, but the viewer did feel amusingly crowded out.

De Kooning once made a remark that gets quoted often. On content. He said “it’s very small, content”. It always seems a curious phrase. I guess he meant that painting, abstract gestural painting, was mostly physical immediacy, and ‘manner’, address. He wasn’t defining terms. De Kooning might be surprised to see how small content has become.

Of the three, KaB-101 seemed most surprising as intervention into the gallery space: a frisson, definitely, of the outside world in the gallery space.

Johnny Dady’s piece(s) were satisfying. But you might say they satisfied an itch that had been scratched many times before & which has about gone away. Dady has had more than one idea in his time, but not many more, I am beginning to feel. (Of course, one idea can be enough. Who can forget Giorgio Morandi? Who doesn’t have a copy of his LP, *One Green Bottle*?) The brief—the briefer & briefer—gap between seeing & understanding, the brief moment prior to recognition of the ‘idea’ that Dady’s sketch lassos or nails, is amusing. But it is a mild amusement.

Least strong as installation, I might have liked James Dodd's set best, finally. His work has for a long time dealt in the symbols and images that corporate Australia uses to signify and proclaim a paradise of leisure: Dodd turns these double-edged, conveying the full official meaning—and its hollowness: a silhouetted palm tree in Dodd's hands typically evokes, say, urban development, marinas, kerb-&-guttering, private property, public space as business-generating infra structure for resorts & retirement, corruption, poverty, chemical sunsets, security guards-with-dark-glasses, & more, sunset drinks and overdevelopment, the whole miasma. Dodd has moved from these images here but retained the style of the corporate-moderne—very 1980s, quasi-governmental—to intimate the poisonous effect of our designs on the interior. Of the three, Dodd's work had the most leverage. Did it have enough?

These works seem to be satisfied with their demonstration of knowing the moves that bring about a successful intervention into a space: installations that 'work', that occupy the space effectively and interestingly, and deliver a frisson. Carried out with aplomb and assurance this can seem enough. After all, it's not inept, it blocks the viewer's access to grounds for complaint, it looks authoritative, it doesn't mess about. All true, but it doesn't do these things to much end beyond mere arrival. A little bit like installation-as-the decorative.

"Nice" is pretty much the appropriate term of approbation, or "neat!" Which would have done also for much of *arte magra*, along with "cute".