

Mary Mary

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Alexis Marguerite Teplin - 5cm Higher ●●●●●



'Femininity' is central to Alexis Marguerite Teplin's work, currently on show at Mary Mary. Refreshingly, this exhibition does not engage with depressing pastel coloured clichés of femininity, but contains art that expresses the 'feminine' in its most positive sense.

In contrast to many contemporary artists' restrained use of colour, Teplin's works feature multiple areas of bright varicoloured paint. There is a tangible sense of uplift upon entering the gallery space as sparks of vibrant colour jostle on the surface of the paintings and sculptural pieces. An industrial looking metal stand supports a book about Martha Graham, the title of which has been altered through the application of colourful paint to gnomically state 'ART AHA', while a portrait of the dancer and the stand itself are similarly embellished.

Teplin frequently utilises found material that she has purposefully reconfigured to reflect a 'feminine' sensibility, which generally seems to add something affirmative – even celebratory – to the overall effect. A pair of the artist's shoes – worn, sensible black ones – are placed on the floor, with a piece of felt wedged at the back of one shoe, while the other has a slice of felt covered in plaster under its heel. Both are filled with white and nude plaster oil paint, giving the impression that the artist has mysteriously melted into her shoes. In the next room, three images from Anthon Beeke's dubious Naked Ladies Alphabet of 1971 are altered by Teplin's addition of a surrounding of multi-coloured paint. Although she only covers white space, the 'letters' (which spell out 'O MY') seem celebratory, rather than silly and slight.

Teplin's works repeatedly allude to art historical figures and movements: the application of patches of colour in her paintings recalls Cezanne's 'taches', while the use of off-white felt, and the exhibition's title, riff on Joseph Beuys. While these art historical signposts may be identified by the cognoscenti, failure to do so in no way inhibits the visceral enjoyment of the work. Viewing Teplin's work is an invigorating experience – perhaps this is a conscious by-product of the transformative nature of her practice.

Mary Mary, Glasgow, until Sat 27 Mar