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HALLDORSÐÓTTIR, HRAFNHILDUR; LORNA MACINTYRE, BLISS AND OTHER STORIES TEXT, 2005

LORNA MACINTYRE BLISS AND OTHER STORIES

BY
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'Bliss and other Stories' consists of four platforms sticking out of the wall at different heights in a corner, each with different objects on them. The platforms are made from wood, which appears found and weathered and each piece is different. There are some deliberate choices that have been made about the appearance of these; the copper tubing, which attaches them to the wall, is visible through the wood, no attempt made to hide the construction. All the same, they appear to elegantly emerge from the wall, as palms offering the work to the onlooker. On the top platform there is a partly painted foam ball/sphere, the next has a palm-size kneading of plaster or filling material, then a similarly sized squeezed piece of aluminium foil, and lastly there is a small pinecone partly painted yellow.

In its structure and its formal aspects Lorna's work reminds me of a poem. With its four equal arms coming out of the wall, each offering a sentence. The appearance of each platform or arm is deceptively similar and with no inherent hierarchy, with only the naturally found and weathered qualities to tell them apart. This formal aspect underpins the structure of this piece. It determines a sense of openness, which is integral to the feel of it. The sentences become entry points, which take you by the hand and lead you into the poem. Every re-entry gives you a new reading, a new understanding and a new experience. By formally allowing for this to happen, through the use of the arms, Lorna is simultaneously opening up the work and giving the viewer the opportunity to endow the objects with our own interpretations, while at the same time creating a self-referential universe entirely reliant on its own components.

It is the strength of this work that it maintains a balance between the wilfully obscure and the suggestive. In my opinion this strength comes from the choice of structure, the arms are the fundamental concern here, and the objects are replaceable and interchangeable. It is through the faded elegance of the arms that we are given access, and it is through their oddly stable formal appearance that we can start to roam around in the internal space of the piece, and if we so wish, begin to form our own interpretations as to what might be going on.

Lorna's work is like a poem that I don't quite understand. Understanding in this case is wildly overrated anyway. I can interact with the work and will generate one understanding, but whether it was 'Bliss' is unlikely. More likely is was one of the 'other stories'.