



## Vera Klute: Deadweight

by GABIJA PURLYTE on Jan 24, 2014 - 3:39 pm

No Comments



WORDS Gabija Purlyté

Currently in the RHA Ashford Gallery (dedicated to exhibiting artists who do not have commercial representation in Dublin) is the solo show *Deadweight* by the German-born, Dublin-based Vera Klute. Though quite small, the display is immediately striking in its variety, with works ranging from pencil drawing and oil painting to kinetic bronze sculpture and mixed-media installation. Klute not only displays admirable skill in handling each of her materials, but also, perhaps more importantly, exploits the cultural meanings they come charged with; our attitude to the sculpture of two headless chicken skeletons joined at the necks is inevitably modified once we read that the hot-pink enamel surface covers real chicken carcasses.

Klute's body of work is united by the same underlying question: it explores our perception of the outside world and of our place in it, treating reality not as an objective, external entity, but as an extension of individual subjectivity. Hitting the perfect spot in that delicate balance of funny and unsettling, the works play upon our expectations, establishing relationships which seem arbitrary on the level of everyday reality, but make perfect sense from the surrealist point of view with its dreamworld logic — it is somehow not that surprising that bronze teeth prosthetics begin rattling once approached, filling the gallery with a charming clickety-clack. The comic twist is extended even to the listings of materials used — visitors will be pleased to know that the aforementioned skeletons belonged to free-range chickens (indeed, why shouldn't we care about the treatment of animals used in the art we consume?). In the description of another work, the term "found birds" invokes a much more specific personal experience that the commonplace expression "found objects" normally used to describe readymade objects incorporated into an artwork.

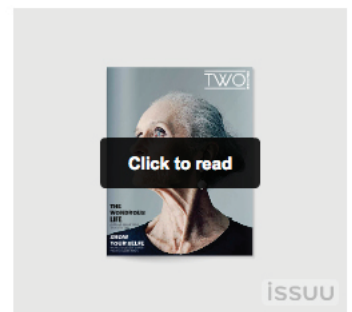
While each piece is interesting and engaging on its own, the impact is strengthened by the highly successful exhibition set-up. Dimmed light and spot illumination create a hushed atmosphere perfectly suited for works which, in most instances, deal with the relationship between life and death. The centre of the show, both literally and figuratively, is occupied by an installation of taxidermy birds, which immerses the viewer in a paused movie scene — or in a three-dimensional version of a cartoon-strip image. Vera Klute's work is visually attractive, immediately impactful and accessible, yet moving and thought-provoking, this exhibition is a wonderful addition to the first set of shows opened in the RHA this year, and is a definite point on the arts must-see list.

Vera Klute, *Deadweight*, continues in the RHA Gallery until 23 February. Admission free

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