

Arts Hub Australia

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News Item

VISUAL ARTS REVIEW: Yvette Coppersmith's 'Gallery'



[image courtesy of: Y. Coppersmith - Rob 2008, oil on masonite, 61x45.5 cm]

Portraits are paintings, sculptures, photographs, or other artistic representations of individuals where their face and their expression is predominant in the composition. The likeness and/or personality, and sometimes even the mood of the person is depicted and conveyed by the artist if he/she is able

to project the subject's essence successfully via the medium chosen.

Yvette Coppersmith - the featured artist at the Metro 5 Gallery – is such an artist, who can indeed capture and project the moment, the feeling and the character of her subjects with seemingly minimal effort, and just a few brush strokes.

Yvette Coppersmith is a young artist, who graduated from the Victorian College of the Arts in 2001, with a Bachelor in Fine Art. She has been the recipient of numerous awards over the past few years, including the Portia Geach Memorial Award in 2007 and 2008, an award which is viewed as one of the most important recognitions of the talents of Australian female portrait painters. In February of this year, *The Australian* called Yvette "*the face of art's future*", understandingly so, as she displays a talent and conceptual skill which is beyond her youth.

Meeting Yvette is a delight. She is soft spoken and by her body language one gets a feeling that she is a bit shy as well. She explained the motivation behind the 'Gallery' paintings was 'her way to address her own social anxiety' via the camera and paints. Not uncommon amongst many creative people, including performing artists who are overwhelmed by a sense of angst when faced with the need to interact with the public, on a personal level.

Armed with a camera and a vision, Yvette first photographed her subjects – gallery curators and owners – at the Melbourne Art Fair last July, where 80 galleries were represented in stalls throughout the enormous Royal Exhibition Building in Melbourne, Victoria. She further explained, that it was by this means that she was able to successfully introduce herself to the galleries, without the fear which comes along with saying "*hi, my name is... and I am a painter...*"

Posing her subjects in the raw uncontrolled light of the exhibition, with whatever background and props available in

that instant, was not necessarily the ideal way to capture the moment but, it needed to be done right then, right there, almost guerilla-like. All but three individuals, conceded to being immortalized by Yvette's brush and oil paints, becoming part of the 'Gallery' project, (perhaps because they too felt a little self conscious). She then sketched and painted the portraits on masonite, an unconventional base, but chosen because of the warm and neutral colour it provided, also because of the unfinished feeling it conveys, which –in a way–represents the environment the subjects' images were captured at the fair.

More than twenty paintings were created by Yvette in a very short amount of time, just a little over three months. I believe that it is this short and self-imposed deadline, which actually pushed her to execute a series of paintings which resonate a rough, casual and elegant energy incredibly well.

She has captured the moment, the subjects' persona and essence. Yvette introduces us – the audience – to her subjects, almost in person via her paintings. I feel as though I now “know” Helen, Charlotte and Rob.

Yvette Coppersmith's 'Gallery' is at the Metro 5 Gallery in Armadale, VIC, from 10 December to 23 December 2008.

Gordana Andjelic-Davila

Gordana Davila is an Arts Hub reviewer who hails from Serbia, Italy, the United States and now Australia - and she has been creative in all of these countries!