

EILEEN SCHAER - 'PAINTINGS'

Even newcomers to Eileen Schaer's work will rejoice at the wit and fun of this exhibition. I personally have so often enjoyed her cheeky absurdities, her twists and shocks, her puzzles and paradoxes and giggled my way through her teeming pictures replete as they are with birds and beasts, motor cars and churches and humans – all in unlikely and idiosyncratic juxtaposition.

But to think of her work as comic is to misunderstand its purpose; the jokiness is not what is aimed at – it is only a concomitant, a by-product, as laughing is a by-product of the anaesthetic nitrous oxide or laughing gas.

Early in the last century the great Paul Klee (of Bauhaus fame) had a bird walking upside down from the top edge of his painting; this was not a comic stunt; far from it. It asserted the freedom of the artist to go beyond the limits of the logical mundane everyday world, and use a new imaginative power - and what a power – to probe and investigate the deep intuitive processes of nature.

Eileen's work is an invigorating and challenging example of this power. The message is as much in the grouping of the components as in the components themselves – and in the relationship between the components and the frame. That is why she paints to the frame. And her colour's very complex; look in particular at that very strange, vibrant white-like mother of pearl, and very redolent of Gustav Klimt.

The paintings seem to give access to another layer of existence, a layer which is not bound by stultifying rules and customs. I am reminded of the way Dylan Thomas stretched language to transcendental heights, as in

“.....down the rivers of the windfall light....”

These as big, life enhancing images, endlessly inventive, delightfully iconoclastic. Make the most of this treat.

Norman Sayle
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