

Fill Death Do Us Part



Janice Gobey
Central Goldfields Art Gallery, Maryborough - Victoria
14 Feb – 22 March 2009
Image: courtesy of the artist.

While bombarded with red-heart chocolate decorations and intoxicated by the ideas associated with love on the 14th day of February, artist Janice Gobey is onto a different vibe. At Goldfields Art Gallery the mood is somber with a body of work that confronts the harsh realities that are equally associated with the ideas that underpin this day. Gobey was born in South Africa and relocated to Australia about 8 years ago. She has been exhibiting since 1997 and is continuing sturdily. On her profile; she mentions her background in psychology and sociology which feeds her interest in people especially the relationship between men and women.

I got married in 2007 and my wedding gown still hangs in the same suit-cover, on the same hanger with the same marks and smells of one of my biggest days. As I quickly moved my eye from one gown to the next, I wondered what story would accompany my gown. I reminded myself – which was not hard, the reasons why I married the man who was at the foyer of the gallery.

Gobey's display methods are significantly unsettling; the vintage gowns hanging against the wall reminds one of garments that are poorly cared for or even dehumanized bodies in comparison to the occasion that they represent and her choice of words in the supporting text (fat, balding, biological clock, good catch, etc) suggest the perception of unappealing growth that comes with marriage.

With her magnificent oil paintings with titles such as; *I'm loving myself in this dress* and *My love will transform you*, the viewer is transported to the day when the bride to be chose to see the perfect wedding day and to remain hopeful that hers will be a happily ever after.

While others might read the artist's tone as somewhat an attack on the institution of marriage, I believe her point of view is indicative of the darker side that gets obscured by the glamour of the wedding day. I commend her for her courage and ability to confront this unattractive side of the institution.

Find out more about Janice Gobey on www.janicegobey.com