

electric angel /the tiny gallery with a big heart

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media release

Tickle My Fancy – a textile art installation by Jan Bee Brown

5th March – 2nd July 2012

electric angel gallery, scarborough, north yorkshire

open weekdays 10am–5pm

or take a cheeky peek through the window...

Tickle My Fancy explores the interconnection between the delicate digital manipulation of French tatting, a poor woman's lace known as 'frivolité', and the feminine libido. Both sensual and tactile, the link between lace and sexuality is explicit yet blurred.

In Victorian times prostitution, homosexuality and 'the solitary act' were seen as a serious threat to morality, middle-class family life and social order.

Believing that civilisation was only possible if sexual desire was regulated and repressed, Freud defined libido as the instinct, energy or force known as the 'id', describing it as 'a chaos, a cauldron of seething excitations'.

Despite its flippant nature, tatting the decorative doilies took hours of careful industry and was often the only form of creativity open to bourgeois women. For lower-class women, tatting and embroidery were poorly paid and many had to resort to prostitution to supplement their wages.

Female circumcision was used in Britain until the 1950s as a 'treatment' for lesbianism, masturbation, hysteria, epilepsy and other 'female deviances'. Unofficially thousands of British girls are still cut every year. Some actively seek the operation to demonstrate their purity and gain the respect of their communities. In their culture not to be circumcised is to be promiscuous.

Jan Bee Brown is a post-feminist artist who works in sculptural felt and antique textiles, exploring the hidden lives of women and how their roles, aspirations and desires have changed in the past century.

Textile art is still regarded as frivolous by a patriarchal fine art system. Jan Bee combines felt and frivolité in a physical, tactile, sensual, manipulative process pleurably immersed in soap and warm water. Fuelled by the passion and pleasure of delicate digital manipulation and compelled by a libidinous drive, Jan Bee picks up lace doilies from charity shops and car boot sales. 'I cannot allow the long hours of patience and skill embedded in each individual piece to be lost and forgotten, cut adrift from their cultural context.'

Tickle My Fancy runs from March 5th to July 2nd 2012 at Electric Angel Gallery, 1 Museum Terrace, Scarborough, North Yorkshire YO11 2HB.

For closer investigation the gallery is open during office hours. However, the work can also be viewed through the window when the gallery is closed.

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