

TheGalleryChannel

ArtFocus



I am happy because everyone loves me: Téllez Javier
19 November - 18 December 1999

@ [Gasworks Gallery](#)

155 Vauxhall Street The Oval London SE11 5RH UK

t: 44 (0)20 7582 6848 • f: 44 (0)20 7582 0159

e: gallery@gasbag.org • w: www.gasworks.org.uk

Review by Olivia Plender

I am happy because everyone loves me has an unusual fairy-tale quality which you may not expect to find in an installation where the central video footage comes from training sessions for psychiatric nurses. In the circular projection on the back wall of the gallery, people in institutional clothing restrain violent patients. There is a small hut in the middle of the room, door invitingly ajar. A warm light emanates from within and the voice of Dean Martin sounds deceptively as if it is coming from somewhere far inside.




Javier Tellez, 1999

This MDF construction is just big enough for one person, with a bench, a couple of hospital blankets and small bird boxes lining the inside of the walls. Sitting down watching the video through a circular hole the projection appears as if it is floating. Dean Martin sings "Volare (nel blu di pinto di blu)" which goes something like "...no wonder my happy heart sings, your love is giving me wings..." Strangely, at this point viewers may find themselves beginning to enjoy the video. The song has an uplifting effect like an advert and the figures seemed to move with the music. I felt as if this was far away from reality, cocooned in an environment of institutional cleanliness with the sensation of sitting inside someone's head.

It is only upon exiting that the significance of the nest boxes becomes clear. The hut is itself a large architectural model of a garden bird box, which opens up a wealth of meanings and absurd narrative associations, including the Edward Lear story about the man who went mad, thought he was a bird and started nesting in trees. Inside this construction one builds up an enormous amount of empathy for the imagined patient who lives in a reality of polar opposites. Violent outbursts and hospital blankets contrast with feelings of flying, and of extreme elation.

In order to make this piece Tellez worked closely with the Royal Bethlem Hospital and staff, who have since become cautious about it because the video focuses only on the more violent aspect of hospital care. However my feeling upon leaving was that these institutions are something extremely necessary. In this installation their trappings are at once soothing and claustrophobic. Incidentally, the bird boxes are made by patients staying in the hospital. An odd detail underpinning a very sensitive piece of work.

	<p>HOT DEALS SAVE UP TO £145 on Dimension desktops and Inspiron notebooks Expires 28/01/04 Offer details</p>	
---	--	---

LYCOS search in