

### THE BLOG

# Go Figure - Cob Gallery

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**Bob Chaundy**

Freelance journalist, ex-BBC News

Curator Roxie Warder has brought together the works of six young UK-based artists in an exhibition at London's Cob Gallery called Go Figure.

As the title suggests, this is an exploration of the human form in various guises. It's a big, colourful show and a deliberate reaction to what Warder sees as the rather drab state of painting currently on the British contemporary art scene.

“Painting at the moment seems to have gone either highly traditional or quite cold, very minimal and abstract. This has still a lot of abstraction but I think it still holds on to elements of figurative work and I think the artists show that in a new way.”

The most instantly striking painting in Go Figure is Simon Foxall's representation of the actress Michelle Pfeiffer (above) entitled Take Another Little Piece of My Heart. It's one of a series of celebrity portraits through which the artist examines our relationship to culture through popular media such as film and television.



Artwork by Simon Foxall

Foxall, who studied at the Royal College of Art and Brighton University, has performed and written for radio. His work here represents the more traditional end of portraiture. What's most interesting about them is his striking use of colour.

A boldness of colour is also a hallmark of Darrell Hawkins' work though more abstract. His Red Head, for example, consists mainly of a deep red, except for the head! He creates a world in which forms appear to exist in a world of chaos. He cites Grayson Perry as an influence. Based in Kent, where he attended the Institute of Art before Brighton University, he has been exhibited and has curated exhibitions in the county as well as in London.

Kate Lyddon also includes a painting with a bold splash of red entitled *Man Up*. Her work is the most playful and her forms somewhat grotesque. Francis Bacon is clearly an influence. In addition to her paintings, the exhibition includes two of her sculptures, both of comical Disney-esque characters, one of which revolves to create silhouettes projected on the wall. She was recently awarded The Mark Tanner Sculpture Award 2014/15.

Gabriella Boyd is a former Catlin Prize finalist and has exhibited in numerous group and solo exhibitions. A graduate of the Glasgow School of Art, she is about to start a postgraduate degree in Fine Art at the Royal Academy of Art in London.

Her paintings are voyeuristic examinations of relationships, and the merging of public and private spaces. For example, in *Lap* (above), a man and a woman sit at a desk. They are literally intertwined and pose several questions. Who is real, are they existing in each other's imaginations, is it a maternal instinct that is stifling the male or the reverse? The table has a sense of order but why are each of the objects there? Plenty to ponder.

Luke Waller, a graduate of the London College of Communications, paints quaint scenes of people picnicking or relaxing in the countryside. Yet, once again, his use of colour gives each one a twist - faded tones, for example, giving a hint of nostalgia. One of his offerings entitled *Dancing in the Slaughterhouse*, consists of a nine picture storyboard relating a disturbing "domestic" between a Hollywood-type couple.

There's something slightly disturbing/comical about one of Alice McCabe's watercolours - *Girl Giving Birth in a Sauna* - which is exactly what it says on the tin. Another Brighton University alumnus, McCabe lives and works in Switzerland, and performs as well as paints. Typical of her painting is *Woman in Fur* (above) in which forms and shapes merge with each other. Different interpretations emerge from layers, all worked in pleasing colours.

"I think there's a lot of fun in this show," says Roxie Warder. "I think every artist has something very different about their work which not many people have at the moment."

Go Figure runs at the Cob Gallery, 205 Royal College St, London NW1 0SG until 24 August.