

Manifesto Gallery is a cheerful alternative

VISUAL ARTS

BY MAUREEN FENNIAK

REVIEW

Works of Darren Lipinski and Edmund Haakonson

Manifesto Gallery
10043 - 102 St.
Exhibit continues

An alternative to the traditional gallery environment that aims to bleach away sensory distractions with white walls and silence, Manifesto, which recently opened on 10043 and 102 Streets, orchestrates sensory din through the best of all methods: words, pictures, music and caffeine.

The café, gallery and used book store, co-owned by Carol Fadden and David Kravinchuk, bills itself as an "alternative gallery" presenting innovative and affordable original work by up and coming artists and designers. "We don't believe in rules about art," said Kravinchuk. "We're interested in challenging elitist stereotypes about art and we're committed to working to developing the profile of local artists. We hope to be an alternative to more conservative venues."

The current show on exhibit at Manifesto demonstrates the open-text policy of its proprietors. On display (and for sale) is the work of local artists Darren Lipinski and Edmund Haakonson. These two artists could not share a more incompatible sensibility. The quintessential Odd Couple, Lipinski (Oscar) is self-taught, works in a pop tradition, and speaks in a visual language of low culture vernacular, while Haakonson (Felix) has an academically trained art-histori-

cal consciousness. Fortunately, in the gallery as on TV, they each have their own room.

David Lipinski's pop images have an unpretentious weirdness and wit. The pieces, painted on plywood, pay homage to the realism if not reality guiding his aesthetic. Highlights are *St. Bukowski*, Lipinski's icon of the patron saint of literary low-life realism along with *The Super New You*, a pop-Goth maze of line and color. A series of earlier pieces that figure various representations of the word 'bend' is also of interest. The serial aspect of these pieces evokes, in a subtle and deceptively sophisticated manner, the spirit of conformity the word suggests.

In contrast to Lipinski's stand-up pop is the neoclassical extravagance of Edmund Haakonson's

male nudes. Large, grand and gilt framed, these painstakingly glazed male odalisques (typically, a nude female slave girl lounging in an opium den), with their rich drapery and sumptuous colors, are sensually gratifying in the rich heavy manner of all things decadent. However, a rather cloying figure to begin with, the male odalisque is a tough call for anyone to play straight. Haakonson, with his gender-bender angle, cannot avoid falling prey to parody. His are burlesque odalisques. I half expected the fleshy sumptuous figures to step out of their frames and join voices in a chorus of *A funny thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*. Alas, this was not to be.

Nonetheless, performance is on the menu of upcoming event at Manifesto. ●



Candace Brvdon/54

Variations on a straight theme: Billed as an alternative to traditional galleries, Manifesto's gallery is bent out of shape with an eclectic combination of pop and neo-classic art.