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Liza Konovalov
Tender Loving Care
September 6th – October 12th, 2019.

Through found and personal objects, humour, and colour, Liza Konovalov's *Tender Loving Care* shows us what is possible when we treat our objects with compassion. In looking at the value of objects and "stuff," not for their material cost, but for the people connected to them. These disparate objects and ideas come together to create a cohesive vision. *Tender Loving Care* highlights the value of relationships and the love people share.

Tender Loving Care illustrates the shift between private and public spaces. As we peer through the window, we are transported into another world, reminiscent of a dream, or an enchanted bedroom landscape. Taking inspiration from Peter Maxx's psychedelic motifs and colours from the 1960s-70s, we become immersed in textures, colours and patterns. The back wall is painted as a bright colourful landscape with shades of pinks, purples, smiling clouds and a sun. The mixed media installation includes collage, drawings, ceramics and found objects. A chandelier is installed with sparkling

gem shaped beads, catching the light and reflecting it back at the viewer, allowing us to become immersed in the space. A second hanging sculpture is embellished with translucent plastic beads, doll and cast ceramic heads, and plastic objects in bright yellows, pinks, oranges, and purples.

A model train slowly circles through the space, rhythmically humming along the oval track. A whimsical atmosphere is created through colours reminiscent of dreams, sunsets and clouds at dusk; it's like looking at the world through lilac coloured glasses. The work is both nostalgic and humorous using these distinct items collaged into new art objects, anchoring them in our memories and childhoods.

The display features personal and art objects from the artist's life. Each item has been carefully curated, each sharing the same value and importance to the work as a whole. The installation acts as a celebration of not only of objects, but also of our relationships with other people. Objects hold sentimental value because of where they came from, who gave them to us, and the memories associated with them. Liza's work shows the viewer a genuine collection using found and gifted objects from the people in her life. For example, her sister's childhood stuffed animal has been incorporated into the display, with the promise that it shall be returned unharmed.

The eclectic, visual fullness and maximalism illustrates a vibrant, compassionate world. New, mass-produced store bought objects lack the emotional weight of gifted, found or handmade pieces. The desire for things, fullness, colour, and vibrancy is in

stark contrast to the contemporary/modernist idea of the white cube. Minimalism has become synonymous with gentrification, upper classes, and wealth. When we think of the modern art gallery, the minimalist white cube is often synonymous with “good”, “contemporary”, “new” art. Objects with notches, bells-and-whistles are seen in a negative light; as low-brow, junky, kitschy. Our relationship to stuff is difficult, especially while simultaneously critiquing Capitalism and consumerism; the critique of Capitalism isn’t, “we should not have stuff;” rather, it’s to be considerate and mindful of the stuff we do have.

Being critical of planned obsolescence leads us to question what objects we do value, why we want certain products, and which objects hold social versus personal value. The quality of our relationship to the things we keep has been diminished in a world where everything is seen as disposable and is telling of how we as a society treat other people and our planet. The art we make and keep sends a message of who we are and what is important to us.

Ultimately, art doesn’t need to be isolating, heavy and austere. Let’s instead escape into a better future; let’s dream together of a world where we can escape to. *Tender Loving Care* strives to have our everyday lives saturated with color; with stuff. Objects act as tethers to other people, helping us to immerse ourselves in spaces that radiate care and affection.

At present, the current world is “a dystopian hell-scape” said Liza when we chatted over coffee¹. On the surface, the work is aesthetically pleasing, humorous, and joyful. When we look a bit closer, we are being shown what we are currently lacking in our society. This dream of a future, that centers on community, inclusion, trade, and accessible transportation highlights the gaps in our current world and points to basic human needs which are being overlooked. The work acts both as a symbol of hope for the future, and a warning of what is at stake.

These luxurious textures, colours, and objects are loud and demanding of attention and notice. *Tender Loving Care* highlights the value of compassion and interpersonal relationships, and the ritual of gift giving. It looks at wanting, the desire to look at stuff, of visual decadence and the need for a connection to other people and ourselves.

-Lucia Wallace

¹ From Interview with the artist, August 14th 2019