

I WANT TO BE LOIELN DOOLSN an account



29/6/05⁴⁴...the show last night...so many thrilling details, I loved the signs (stop making things!) and the escaped pot plant heap (to

name just a couple) but most of all how those impy Lionel Doolan boys were working the room.. It was quite a

spinner at first, being scrutinised and muttered about, but I thought it was REALLY interesting, mucking around with those codes of how people relate to each other at openings, with them kind of performing a thinking out loud process. Borderline amusing and confronting.

And the energy got so fantastically *DELIRIOUS* for a while there, between the boys and the girls chasing them all around..." email
fragment

Turning up to an opening can inspire a moment or two of presentation anxiety. Approaching the entrance you'll do what you can with your hair, straighten clothes and hope there's nothing stuck in your teeth. Crossing the threshold swells this hyped exteriority, the work suddenly a dim pretext for your arrival to play a part in the galaxy of interactions, signs, signals and social insincerities that greet an exhibition into a world of interpersonal relations on its opening night. Though the gears will change quickly, the moment you're afforded to assess the situation (who's here? who's not here?) from its 'outside' swiftly collapsing as you're swept into it's overflow with a hello, an observation, an exchange. Becoming suddenly of and integral to the human context field of this artist, this exhibition, this gallery. Depending on how at home or in good company you feel inside this 'inside' there might be flash travels back to that outer rim (glancing eyes, things said and unsaid) as a roomful of people go about interconnectedly generating and processing a meshwork of messages and meanings around, about or irrelevant to the artwork they've come to see.

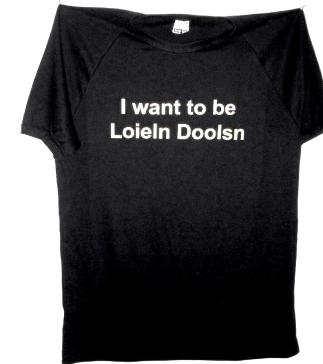
Funny things were happening at the opening of Mikala Dwyer's 'Only one and a bit days to go'.
Planted into this given theatre of interactions seemed to be a cast of players acting at subtly externalising, confusing and frazzling these edges of personal conceit and consciousness. It wasn't obvious at first, and remained slight enough to be unsettling even when you 'got it'.

You'd come in, done all of the above (tempered by use of the bar), started looking at the work and noticed someone was looking at you. Two people actually and more like staring. Two of a number of



28 june - 23 july 2005 darren knight gallery, sydney

young guys you half noticed moving amongst the jam of people, all wearing bare feet and black t-shirts reading...



Unsure of this staring business (*what do they want?*) you give them the slip for the other room and hopeful shelter of friends (*what was that about? what were they saying?*). But soon realise, doing some observing of your own, that as long as you're in the room there'll be no avoiding them and their curiously placed attentions. They'll sidle up to you, admire and finger garments and bag straps, talk softly amongst themselves (*ooh, it looks expensive... how much do you think she earns?*), about you but not to you. Spooked by the proximity and scrutiny you'll try turning the tables and scrutinising them, or holding the eye contact and staring them down at their own game. But it doesn't help much. You feel self-conscious all over again, and likewise alarmed and amused that it's taken this most featherlight of interventions to disarm and disrupt the very codified, prescribed and implicitly understood means by which a body of people at an opening will behave in each other's company.

Now you get it and you relish observing how others respond to these roving gestures and attentions. If any a room was ripe for social experiment it was this one - top heavy with dealers (keywords: 'Venice' 'Basel'), leavened with students and soundtracked by rampant children. Men didn't seem too fussed, finding it slightly unusual to be complimented on their dress sense. Attentively dressed women were ripe subjects left teetering between flattery and frustration, struggling to manage the elasticity of the boundaries these physical exchanges overstretched and realigned. A prominent collector recoiled in horror and pretended whatever it was hadn't happened. Two women approaching the gauntlet-like checkpoint two of the boys set up by perching either side midway up the stairs seemed awfully confronted and asked someone else to charge through ahead for them. Whilst a hyperactive posse of young girls, recognising the guys sense of playful purpose, made it their business to chase and monster them in return - upstairs and down, running, squealing, weaving wildly between artworks and people in a raucous girl/boy pursuit.

Who's 'Loieln Doolsn'? An artist at the opening who'd gone to college with him and Mikala reminisced that Lionel Doolan was a memorable character from the first incarnation of Sydney College of the Arts, apparantly the 'kind of guy' who'd wear a velvet suit (with bare feet) in the height of summer. These days he's living in China and 'I want to be Loieln Doolsn' as we experienced it seemed to have evolved along a collaborative chain of command - from its remote devising by Doolan, in situ instruction by Dwyer and free interpretation by its performers. Meeting one of these performers at a different opening later that week as himself, it was curious to hear how the experience of the performance had been for them, and more so the extent to which they'd been instructed. The loose but central objective seems to have been to route attention away from Dwyer and the artwork during the opening, deflecting onto viewers the sensation of an awkward or intense visibility. That these new pathways subtly heightened the patterns of exchange operative within the larger social body was fitting in a space dominated by Dwyer's work 'Superstitious Scaffold To Let' (2005). A crazed, ad-hoc superstructure of propped and lashed together poles and branches - part of which clattered to the floor on the night, that even more fittingly no one seemed to notice or mind - its chaotic propositional architecture effected a neat analogy to the tenuously aligned machinations of interconnectivity brought into play by 'I want to be Loieln Doolsn'.

lisa kelly

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I WANT

TO BE LOIELN DOOLSN performed by Justin Butcha,
Grzegorz Gawronski, Tom Isaacs, Jum & Ben Terakes, 28/6/05
with 'I Maybe We' 2005 Mikala Dwyer
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