

LONDON

Sophy Rickett, Rut Blees Luxemburg, Carey Young

Plummet

4 - 31 December

Three artists are invited to install work in a one-bedroomed apartment on the sixteenth floor of a council tower block in that no-man's land between the City of London and the borough of Hackney. One looks at the familiar space of the city, one at the mysteries of outer hemispheres and one at the ground level of urban detritus from which we more often than not, avert our eyes. In this eerie white space, far above the streets, the viewer is disoriented – apart from the white walls and the clean spaces, there is nothing here to suggest an art gallery. All around, in the

floors below, people are living their lives, calling the council about blocked drains and faulty fittings, contemplating the terrible possibilities of a broken lift, two small children and a pushchair. Neither 'art' nor 'life' has the greater relevance here. The organisers of the Plummet gallery have no philanthropic leanings towards 'the community', simply because, in that strange way the 1990s has thrown up, they are the community – both a part of it and separate from it, as all members of all communities are.

The three artists participating in *Stream*, Sophy Rickett, Rut Blees Luxemburg and Carey Young, have inhabited this singular space and participated in its fantastical nature. High above the rooftops, Rut Blees Luxemburg has made a giant photo-piece, 'Vertiginous Exhilaration' in which she looks down from the top of the tower block into a stained modernist abyss, green and slimy, with a few helpless cars positioned at its

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end. It would be terrible, we know, to fall, but the temptation of soaring downwards through space to inevitability is there all the same. This staring downwards destabilises and excites.

More fantastical than are Sophy Rickett's photographs of women seeming to urinate, standing as men do in dark corners of city streets. Why can men pee in public when women don't dare to?, and why can't we share that furtive bravado of the caught-short male? The dark pools in Rickett's photographs are the urban excrescences we step to avoid, viscosities we don't mention, adverse signs of life on the hard grimy surfaces of walls and pavements. Like looking down and wondering what it might be like to fly, this is a taboo subject. It's good to see women artists making work which gives a new twist to the old questions of gender and identity and realise that feminism doesn't have to be so well intentioned and full of fixed agendas as some

might expect. Rickett's piece is a rumbustious comedy, as fitting for a billboard as a gallery, a good big satire with a potent political edge.

After all this directness, Carey Young's piece on the city, science fiction and cyberspace seems more elusive. Young asked noted writers to choose, from a shortlist, the image that closest approximates a picture of cyberspace. Doris Lessing (for one) just didn't see the point, and perhaps it was an impossible aim, to marry pictures of the modern city with a projected vision of cyberspace, to attempt to link the real with the imagined in such a literal way. While the phenomenology of the 'real' space which we inhabit is still mysterious, how do we approach the conceptual realms of the cyber?

Out there, down there and round the corner from the kebab shop, the city as seen by these three young artists is as intriguing as it ever was.

Val Williams