

## **The milk carton kids of the 80s (vital symbolic work in the context of panic domesticated).**

What should first strike one as they enter this exhibition is not a lightning bolt from above (hastily drawn outline), but rather how clearly the texture and obsession, that lives within Grace Crothalls aestheticised and reference heavy dialogue, has been translated into being.

This is not a show about religion, nor is it a personal exegesis.

*Father and son/ Body and stomach/Adult and child/Flammable and not/Knowledge and naievity.*

The dualities in the architecture, spatial layout and design dictated by first appearances are what appear to initially sit at the core of Shelter House.

But, as one is accultured into the space, what is gradually exposed is how these relationships are purposeful in their disproportion; unevenly prearranged to weigh in on a power dynamic. Never reaching equilibrium, the cycle of energy flows one way like an hourglass, requiring intervention to be upended. It is a metabolism of sorts.

*It is a welcoming embrace and then a cold shudder.*

Further instituted by the series of texts present in the secondary room; "End time Prophecies", "Love only god", "this demonstration seeks to teach children about the elasticity of sin"; the contradiction of effervescent colouring in, moody hazed painting, seductive banners and carpeted walls allow the overall gestalt to float between ideology and form; always reasoned to survive conceptually in aesthetic/essence.

*An occultic stew pouring fantasy on fantasy.*

The door separating the two spaces, glassy and institutional, suggests a transparency that does not really exist. The gem that protagonises a quest unspoken, what this membrane actually comes to represent is a portent for acid reflux.

*Wise digestive body with pop syncopated metabolics; construed metaphysics.*

Abject in all regards, as something befitting a body horror advance into satanic panic, (and the fluids therein); the bodily exposition is succinctly summarised by a game of Operation.

*Filmic technology as a prosthetic for human memory.*

It is to be remembered at this point that Satanic panic is considered to focus on an entirely fictitious conspiracy. Framed via a losing battle between tradition and a newly secularized world, fantasy bled into reality, media fueling the moral risk society. Technology and science were brought close to the center, slickening the sacred space into a global mogul.

*If this show was a treatise on fluid it would be about a viscose tapioca like false orange cheese. Based on something real but then stretched and sinewy when lifted, whipped to a foam on demand.*

Crothall touches on this through purposeful adaptations of capital mainframes and neoliberal textures. Further activating the unheimlich corporality. The brand of the megachurch, playing with pop culture and big experience, similarly pre-ordained, and concreted by highly stylised aesthetics.

*But the vhs was GA*

Dealing with the big thematic tropes is never fun nor rarely is it pulled off, but let's be clear, Shelter house is very far from a foray into reverence unless you have a keen eye for Lynch. So inherently tied to a dialogue of the nineties, this exorcism of potent fantasy inebriated with reality, (the ilk from which came the school dungeon and fudge cake consumed in Matilda) has a distinct horror tinge to it.

It is perhaps no mistake that Rosemary's baby is classed as the ultimate satanic film, when one comes to consider Horror as the discomfort in domesticity, the antidote (though not proliferated as such) to a nuclear family bundle.

Shelter House relies on a naivety that only when present, pulls abstract units into a running narrative. The sensation that is created, becomes a thing of its own, and it is this thing that Crothall speaks to. Exploring complexity through abstraction whilst invoking cinematic grammar; dramatic effect here is an ode to Kuleshov, justly exposed in the editing.