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CHUCK + GEORGE

at McKinney Avenue Contemporary + CentralTrak
by Todd Camplin

Texas has a few playfully absurd duo artists. The Art Guys from Houston come to mind with their showy performances. Another duo is Chuck and George which has taken Dallas by storm with two exhibitions going on at two art institutions: the McKinney Avenue Contemporary and UTD's artist-in-residence space CentralTrak. Chuck and George are the art personas of Brian K Jones and Brian K Scott. These two artists work individually, but also as a collaborative entity.



The Chuck and George alter egos work is similar to their own works, but the scale and imaginative installations increase tenfold when they collaborate. I remember the very odd show at Conduit Gallery's project room where Chuck and George turned the space into a nightmarishly cartoony living room. I was reminded a bit of cartoons like Ren and Stimpy or Spongebob. I thought maybe I was looking into a Tex Avery inspired, grotesque cabaret set piece. No doubt that style is expressed on a larger scale at CentralTrak. Chuck and George spread out their works along the walls while accenting the work with decoratively loud elements.



McKinney Avenue Contemporary show titled Magnetron Parfait - Chuck and George

Much of the work reminds me of folk art, but twisted and pulled to the limits of what folk art generally portrays. A kind of Waxahachie, Webb Gallery show gone mad. If you want an overview of Chuck and George's work over the past 25 years, then this will whet your appetite. Although I get the feeling that it would have been better to see much of the work when it was originally shown, because you would get the context Chuck and George created with their work, which would help create a more consistent message. Though I did see a theme running through the show. Several of the works celebrated their partnership through depicting portraits of themselves. But be warned, it can be a bit risqué for the faint at heart. I however, was not afraid.



CentralTrak was something old, but if you want something new and something in a blue building, you will have to go midtown to the McKinney Avenue Contemporary. The MAC's show is a more coherent Chuck and George installation of post-Pop Pop. After all, how can I not think of popcorn when looking at microwaves? Objects rotate inside simulated microwaves, while lit with a variety of colored lights. A giant Claes Oldenburg style plug is on the wall. Small bags of products were on one wall, like a store display. Garish wallpaper adorned a wall as well. The MAC show is really quite fun, very goofy, and to be honest not my normal taste in art, but their commitment to ambitious installations is infectious. I admit I was repelled by their work at first, but gradually I have come around to considering their vision of the world.



The McKinney Avenue Contemporary show titled Magnetron Parfait...Beware! will continue to entertain through May 9th. The MAC also has their artists talk on April 29th from 6PM to 9PM. CentralTrak will be showing Who's Afraid of Chuck and George which will run through June 13th.