

The Tomorrow People

Curated by Tessa Laird and Joyce Campbell

Gavin Hipkins, Joyce Campbell, Ani O'Neill, Ronnie Van Hout, Saskia Leek, Daniel Malone, Violet Faigan

26 September – 27 October The Physics Room and toured to Lord Mori Gallery, Los Angeles, 5 January – 9 February

The original television show, *The Tomorrow People* hovers on the edges of my memory, with vague images of their resplendent faces, the smooth BBC synthesised computer voice that would make Steven Hawking jealous, and like a lot of my memories, I remember a quality of the light, bright white light that swallows up slim figures clad in stretchy jump suits. I remember that for some reason they thought that they were better than everybody. I identified with that.

In fact I spent a lot of my childhood time staring at inanimate objects in a vain attempt at telekinesis. This lasted into my late teens. Despite the fact that the rocks never lifted off the ground, the spoons never bent, and I could never get those earthworms I cut in half to join up together again, I still knew that I was special and different. I explained this to my friends in a number of ways. I was from another planet. I was magic and psychical. From the future. I could see the true nature of things, my eyes filtering out all the trick subliminal messages that fooled all the other fools. I felt I was always on the verge of shedding my person skin to reveal the splendid humanoid alien reptile that I knew then and still know that I am underneath.

The artists in *The Tomorrow People* are also different: perhaps they too are better than you or I. Homo Superior? Maybe. Do they form words like smooth river stones and drop them one by one in the lakes of each other's minds? Maybe. Have they, finally, in a last ditch effort to communicate something, anything, that doesn't bow to the tyranny of language and might still actually work, even just a little, turned to art? Certainly. Whatever the case they are all tuned to the same psychical radio station.

What is perhaps most remarkable about the artists in *The Tomorrow People* is that despite their disparate forms, techniques, aesthetics and media, their works speak to, nay, babble at one another from across the room. They are altogether convivial and engaging, and relish these connections as much as they revel in the chance encounter – a perfect pastel shade of carpet, or an excellent op shop treasure. Their works weave together cheerily like Ani O'Neill's crocheted baby bonnets but still have a Gavin Hipkinsish critical edginess and the piss elegance of Ronnie van Hout's elegant piss up. The works of Violet Faigan, Saskia Leek and Daniel Malone read, vogue and give shade to one another, and all the works, in their own way, show a world view from an isolated pacific island. Inflected with the fluid dichotomies of regionalism and globalism, their works infect and dissolve into the wider world like Joyce Campbell's images of various substances dissolving into other various substances.

Dan Arps

