

## IS IT BEAUTIFUL YET?

I LIKE SOME WORKS OF ART (VISUAL, LITERARY, PERFORMANCE, ETC.) AND NOT OTHERS. I DON'T KNOW WHY. IN THIS SPACE, I TRY TO UNDERSTAND MY PREDILECTIONS AND MY PREJUDICES...NOTHING MORE. IF YOU'RE LOOKING FOR A CRITICAL REVIEW OR AESTHETIC IMPRIMATUR, LOOK SOMEWHERE ELSE.

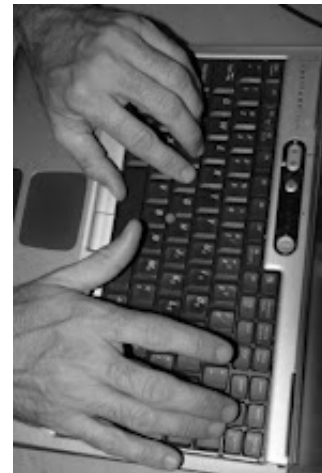
SUNDAY, JANUARY 30, 2011

### Josephine Durkin's "When I last saw you..." at Lawndale

Josephine Durkin's "When I last saw you..." attempts to "suggest, mimic, invite or isolate human gestures, activities and relationships." She does this by using objects--fans, pillows, desks--to function as human surrogates.



from [www.lawndaleartcenter.org](http://www.lawndaleartcenter.org)



I blame my hands

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#### ABOUT ME

##### DEAN

I'm interested in what interests me, aesthetically. If this sounds self-

Then she manipulates them into ambiguous positions of opposition in which their relationships are unclear. Are the two fans holding up the pillows? Are they each trying to force the pillow into the blades of the other? Are they balancing against one another for support? Are they being separated by the pillow for their own good? Are they being kept apart at another fan's insistence?

Each artwork articulates an abstract dialectic. However, they're not completely abstract. The object distinguish themselves. Fans, pillows, desks, tall, short, pink, blue, green, wall-mounted, floor-mounted--these are subtle differences but distinct enough to enable the audience to hang their interpretations on.

"The utility green fan must represent someone from the working class."

"The beige pillow must be an Asian sex-slave."

"The short fan has got to be someone with a napoleonic complex."

"The tall blue is a sexually frustrated male."

"The brown one must be African-American...or Latin-American...or south-Asian...or a tanning accident victim from Memorial."

Of course, these reactions are the real subject of these works. Durkin's denied us our default designations. The narrative isn't ready made. We have to build them. Had she used people or gender or culturally-specific objects such as a gun or a vaccum or a wok, we would reflexively reference our connotations informed by our culture and experience. These pieces with their very stylized differences enable us to habitually, automatically form a narrative and then deconstruct it to examine the connotations of associated with our visual literacy. (Why don't I free-associate the color brown with my hair/eyes/nipples instead of a Latina's skin?)

That may not be pretty, but it is beautiful.

POSTED BY DEAN AT 9:37 PM

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absorbed, it is. Although not as an end unto itself (I do not pretend to be an arbiter of good taste or judge of good art), rather as a means to understanding aesthetics, I write to explore and understand my own aesthetic judgement and reactions. I have only my aesthetic experience to draw from and so I do.

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