

## **Bunny Boy**

Laura Ford

Bunny Boy was displayed at Houldsworth Gallery in 2004 and then toured to the Aldrich Museum of Contemporary Art, Connecticut where they were displayed along side works from Mariele Neudecker, Matt Franks, James Ireland, Roger Hiorns, David Thorpe, Jim Lambie, Mike Nelson and Saskia Olde Wolbers in an exhibition called Into My World: New British Sculpture. The Bunny Boys were a precursor to the Wreckers installation made for Beaconsfield Gallery, London touring to Houldsworth Gallery in Autumn 2004.

Bunny boy is child sized, but stands provocatively against the wall with felt tubes (resembling bombs) strapped to his front and side. The face stares back at the viewer, but with no expression – the eyes being stitched holes within the fabric. The rabbit like ears do not detract from the shock of the piece, but simply add to our confusion as to its origins, whilst producing conflicting reactions. The figure may produce feelings of fear or pathos, humour or horror or, most likely, a combination of feelings.

The work relates, as previous works, to questions of children and innocence and in that sense the political climate for the work is not of paramount importance. However, Bunny Boy is undoubtedly influenced by the images of war and terrorism that proliferated the media at that time. The bunny boy is both antagonist and victim. Uncomfortably, there seems to be no moral that one can take from these suicide bomber children. There is a suggestion that the concept of childhood innocence is dangerously simplistic, as is the misnomer of a sagacious adult world of politics and reason.

“Ford draws implicitly on the paradox that one man’s terrorist is another man’s freedom fighter, simultaneously heroic and villainous depending on one’s point of view. In manipulating our discomfort, whether it is over the posthumous defiance of a youthful suicide bomber or the fact that our own children like to play at war, Ford’s work is an intoxicating critique of a simplistic view of the world, and a reminder of the consequences of such naivety.”

Gavin Bower

Flux Magazine, 2004