

Dallas Art News

Mortality and Death, with a Double Shot of Sexuality – Goss-Michael Foundation Re-Opens in Dallas

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Last week I had the pleasure of attending an invitation only preview of [The Goss-Michael Foundation](#) new space. Goss-Michael has now taken up residency in a renovated warehouse on Turtle Creek Boulevard in the Design District, just steps away from the Dallas Contemporary.

The new Goss-Michael is four times the size of its original location, and hopes to inspire a provocative dialogue around such issues as mortality, death, and sexuality through their exhibited works of famed British artists. These artists include [Michael Craig-Martin](#), [Tracey Emin](#), [Angus Fairhurst](#), [Damien Hirst](#), [Jim Lambie](#), [Sarah Lucas](#), [Adam McEwen](#), [Jonathan Monk](#), [Tim Noble & Sue Webster](#), [Richard Patterson](#), [Marc Quinn](#) and [Rebecca Warren](#). Michael Craig Martin said about the new location, “This space changes the balance of everything in Dallas. Everything will have to adjust to what happens here”.

The curation of the new location is what sets Goss-Michael apart. Aphrodite Gonou’s curation of the space is masterful, as she immediately challenges your ideas about death and mortality upon entering. Sarah Lucas’s *New Religion*, a neon coffin, is strategically placed in the center of the room.

Adam McEwen’s *Obituaries* offer you a glimpse of how your life will be summed up once you have passed. These are 7, 40×29 inch newspaper like prints depicting obituaries of living celebrities. In the end, we are summed up in a page, our successes and our failures. This work lines the wall of the room where neon light radiates against their headlines. We are all going to die.

As you walk through, you are summoned to a much larger room where Damien Hirst’s *Saint Sebastian Exquisite Pain* (2007) floats in blue hued liquid. This is a bull with spears coming out of it. There is a strong sense of defeat and death in this work. The piece communicates an erotic value that was lost on me as those large, dead, cow eyes spoke more of death and defeat than sex and eroticism.

Just across from this work is Marc Quinn’s *Mother and Child (Alison and Parys)*, a sculpture that depicts a woman with severe deformities with a baby lying against her body. The body of the woman is shown with no arms, malformed legs and feet, and has the face of a man. This communicates strength and courage against all odds. This large sculpture sat among war heroes in Trafalgar Square. The juxtaposition of Marc Quinn’s piece inspires a much needed sense hope and strength against the defeat of Hirst’s pain.

Sara Lucas, *Pepsi & Cocky* (2008), sits on the right side, a sculpture depicting two dancer legs straddling each other that are both tired and sexy. Looking on, a large photograph of Lucas sitting with a skull between her legs hangs on the wall. The objectification of women and stereotypes begins to take hold.

Next to this piece is Angus Fairhurst, *A Couple of Differences Between Thinking and Feeling (Solo)* (2003, bronze). The large gorilla has lost its arm, which is lying in front of the piece. Fairhurst was trying to illustrate the instincts that resided inside of him. He was a gentle man and the idea this large gorilla was his internal self has you questioning the idea of societal norms and rules we all obey in our lives.

Tracey Emin, *Hurricane* hangs on the wall in direct view of the gorilla. The painting depicts violent sex. The placement of this painting with the gorilla is like a punch in the face as you exit the large gallery space.

As you make your way back up towards the front, Emin wants you to feel her pain even more with, *Fuck Off and Die You Slag*, in neon hanging above in the large entrance way. The sign is written in cursive, which gives you the sense that it was a quick note left on a bedside of a scorned lover. Throughout the collection Tracey Emin's pain is obvious. She doesn't have the subtleness of Lucas, who speaks more of objectification and the plight of being born woman. Emin has the pain and abuse that some women get by just being women.

In addition to the two gallery spaces, there is a projection room and long hallway. This is where my favorite works from the collection were displayed. Tim Noble and Sue Noble's work, *The Joy of Sex*, line the hallway. These are simple drawings of the couple in various postures of pleasure. The drawings are graphic in their depiction of sexual acts the two enjoy with an up close and personal view. We are reminded by the curator that these works are not pornography because they are not to objectify rather celebrate. I celebrate this hallway, in my way, as it will forever be remembered as the "porno hallway". There is no pain or death in this area, only the celebration of sex and the joy we all feel in the throes of passion.

In the projection room is Tim and Sue Noble's *Dirty Narcissus* (2007), which is a sculpture of fingers, hands, and penises, which when lit; project a silhouette of two faces in profile on the wall. These are not the silhouettes grandma has in her den that is for sure.

The hallway leads to the full kitchen Goss-Michael offers and on the wall facing you is Noble's *The Sweet Smell of Excess* (1998) in sparkling neon beckons you to indulge in its spirits.



[The Goss-Michael Foundation](#) feels more like a statement about art than an art space. It is doing it's best to provoke the Dallas viewer out of their seat and into the world of this kind of Modern art. What will Dallas say in response? Will we follow suit like good little toy soldiers, or will we find a way past the noise and start a new dialogue about art and its place in society today? Time will tell.