

KATE WERBLE GALLERY

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BRock ENRIGHT

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This is a personal account of purchasing an artwork from Brock Enright. After a year-long wait, last month I finally received "Koala Bear Parcell". Subverting expectation is central to Brock's art practice. This is my experience...

The burden of my desire was a ratty koala bear that had witnessed one of Brock Enright's elaborate kidnapping projects. It conveyed the tangy mix of innocence and cruelty that I go for in art: a discarded stuffed animal bearing negligible signs of fraternal hazing; its paw jammed into a plastic beer cup; its fur coat matted with crusty foodstuffs.

Brock once advised, "Never taunt a rattlesnake". Though self-referential, the warning equally underscored his knack for spurring provocation in others. The longer he delayed the koala's release, the more I nagged; not only about the time lapse but of his claim that all sculptures, or 'Parcells' as he calls them, arrive in special Plexiglas containers. After a manic email exchange, he phoned to inform me that delivery was imminent. He also asked me if I liked fish. The question troubled me. Smokescreens abound throughout his work and nothing is random. Participants from his ongoing VIDEOGAMES PROJECT pay to experience the thrill of kidnap and torture. During client pre-screening, answers to questions on topics such as 'secret desire', 'pain threshold' and 'ultimate fear' determine the structure of their particular kidnapping adventure. He once told me about a client who feared regurgitation; shortly before her capture, a pool of vomit appeared outside her apartment door and sparked a panic attack that eclipsed the exhilaration of abduction. In Brock's hands, foreplay thwarts the main event; he disengages when you desire him the most.

Later that week Brock made good on his promise and the "Koala Bear Parcell" materialized in an extra special Plexi encasement. A Fish also appeared — well, someone dressed in a black garbage bag, sporting a plastic fish mask and flippers, arrived bearing an ordinary cardboard box. Open, the box resembled a pauper's coffin; its black mottled interior reeked of ash and magic marker. Inside laid the koala, cup and all, impossibly crammed headfirst into a large transparent flower vase. A friend asserted the koala's predicament to "Looney Tunes on LSD", and in a way, I guess Brock is that distorter of perception, mood and behavior. He is a mythmaker of adolescent folly; a modern-day Ferris Bueller unleashed in a David Lynch landscape. In Brock's warped universe, every action contorts viewer expectation and a fish can relinquish the object of your desire. The 'Koala Bear Parcell' is in my living room now. I feel him watching me.

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