

ARTNEWS

Punching Above Their Weight: Three South London Galleries to Watch

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Shows at The Sunday Painter, Jupiter Woods, and Arcadia Missa

Arcadia Missa

“pindul’s rewards: Pier Paolo Pasolini and Carlos Reyes”

The title of this show is a bit misleading, for although Pasolini is in the show, he is more a muse and source than a participant. The artist in full view is Carlos Reyes and in this exhibition he takes a series of political posters that Pasolini created in 1949 to reinvigorate and contextualize. Why Pasolini? That was spurred by the show’s organizer, Alessandro Bava, who invited Reyes to work with the Centro Studi Pier Paolo Pasolini as Bava saw an affinity with Pasolini’s archives with Reyes’s own. Is there a link? Yes and no. The works in the show incorporate Pasolini’s archived text and images with consideration and variety but there is a topical quality to it all. There seems to be a lack in synthesis or direct connections between Reyes and Pasolini, which belies the intended affinity, but this is not necessarily a bad thing as the alignment has produced work that opens new doors for both.

Although the direct link may be vague, it did not leave one lacking in engaging works to view. Of particular note is *Laser-Etched Dried Reishi Mushrooms* (2015), which are placed on the floor and walls and are exactly as the title describes. These mushrooms are bizarre objects. They look prehistoric and seem like they could be wood, stone, or paper. They have a texture that seems like suede but also like a painted surface. What is laser etched onto their surface is text from Pasolini’s posters as well as cartoon images of a slightly maniacally grinning man. There is something unnecessarily absurd about it, but it is nonetheless compelling to look at.

The mushroom can also be seen as a metaphor for networks. The concept of information being a spore, reaching out and spreading through medium, through generations, and through influences may be the most interesting underlying concept of the show. This can be seen in other works, including the large hand-painted film poster shipped in from Taiwan that forcefully stakes its ground in the exhibition space, as well as in *Gauze Mesh Shirt*, which is doubled with a *Laser Etched Denim Shirt* that has Pasolini’s text burned in the back. These works feel like afterthoughts of former narratives that may or may not link to the show’s focus, but that seems okay. Just the hint of a relationship is enough to spread a branching idea.

Reyes is an artist that doesn’t give it all away. There is a sense of restraint even within the experimentation. His works are not resolved or complete in a one-to-one way but rather they are investigations into ideas and materials he already uses or has just discovered. This deliberately paced, almost scientific quality in working makes Reyes’s art, and the pieces in the show, slow burners, which is refreshing both aesthetically and mentally. In this time of flash-and-dash art, to see work that may not hit every note perfectly but is hitting them honestly is rare and exciting to see.