

Popcan Review

by Revista

Friday, August 10, 2007

<http://evilfeministwitch.blogspot.ca/2007/08/popcan-review.html>



So we hit up The Pop Can Poll reception over at the Lennox, and I must say, with the help of a few glasses of wine as the night progressed, we had a pretty good time.

The artist, Les Paterson, spent the last two months collecting as many pop cans as possible, flattening them down, and making them into postcards to be sent the House of Commons. Already, Canada Post has been giving him some trouble.

I have to admit, I wasn't crazy about the mixed-media popcan paintings up for

sale. However, the activist element of this show is what really perked me up to this artist.

The crux of his project is to allow people to voice their complaints (or compliments...though it seems like mostly complaints) about the government and to address the popcan postcards to a wide variety of politicians within the House of Commons. While people brought up many issues amongst the cans displayed on the wall, such as Aboriginal rights, women's rights, family care, health care, institutionalized racism and other equally important concerns amongst Canadian citizens, there was an overwhelming theme about environmental responsibility.

And really, the use of discarded aluminum makes a great impact for that concern in particular. Stephen Harper's government has been notoriously lax on environmental issues, even in the face of David Suzuki's tireless activism as well as world summits that have called Canada to task. In true Harper style, our prime minister has not said much in response. I can imagine all sorts of reactions from the House of Commons on receiving can after can after can of political discontent. Hopefully, none of the reactions will include a complete shunning of the cans. Hopefully.

All unmoderated by the artist, the cans thus allow anyone with different views from Paterson to be allowed to speak. There were a few cans addressed to Jack Layton to be found amongst the Harper critics. I think that it's important that the cans be allowed this kind of freedom of speech; it can only be truly democratic if everyone feels like they can freely have a say. Different opinions are important to respect, especially in a political climate, and be made available for open dialogue. I think these pop cans, by being openly displayed in a large space, do a good job of addressing this diversity of concern and opinion.

This show is going on for quite some time. I recommend everyone have a look and take the opportunity to have such a creative say. A box is set up so you can drop your can and contribute to the mass mailing of our culture's environmental waste. Maybe if the politicians take notice of the inherent eco-message, all those other concerns addressed may get a chance as well.

While you're there, be sure to check out the neighbouring bookwork show up on the second floor. Some pretty inventive and thoughtful stuff is on display.

The Pop Can Poll is on until August 19th