

Exhibition: Captive

Gallery: Sue Crockford, Auckland 2008

The pens Eddie Clemens are using are marketed by BIC as captive pens. They're most commonly seen at banks which is a similar sort of pen. Though with the bail out of the financial economy in full swing I think we're all quite aware of capital's flight into a dematerialised state to make that notion of the bank look slightly redundant. Perhaps that's the locus of the malice lurking behind Clemens vindictive tropes which detour everyday objects, though I doubt it. It's not enough just to pass this off in the agency and accountability of scripture as the "mightier" sword, even if it's encountered through the mechanisation of the cursive act of writing that BIC's ballpoints enabled and the laptop finishes.

Of course, leaky building fiascos spring to mind over the drying racks' perspiration, especially given the gallery's apartment setting. Though this idealised perspiration could be the sort of ambiguous agency Clemens occasionally grants inanimate objects. Though if perspiration lets loose the role of condensation then it's also worth mentioning the harried pace of contemporary life which demands foldaway drying racks. Looming also in their entangled presence is the commodity status of these disposable, parallel imported, units, whose banality never imagined for a second that they could even lease an authenticity. Do these racks not somehow then, weep ?

Let me circle back to capital's relation to captivity. Let me run through Jenny Holzer's slogan, "private property created crime". That of course is an "apt" kind of conjuring, which can be misleading. I don't think it really bears repeating that capital's relation to captivity has long since been eluded though Enron hardly busted the hedge fund acumen popularised by Oliver Stone's Gordon Gecko myth.

Let me then, mention the harried office worker, the trench coat, briefcase and umbrella... Let me mention that these umbrellas are some sort of cobbled together gladiatorial drone weapon, half futurist net and trident, half spring-loaded, domestic burglar trap. Let me also conjure up the image of the self immolating, self loathing freak-out of Francis Bacon's misanthropy. I mean that might be a little too visceral for what's going on but really, look at all that spilt ink, all those bleeding nibs. Look at the way those umbrellas are embedded into the wall. It's the image of being sprung upon, suddenly trapped, suddenly compromised, suddenly captive.