

Art

Jasmina Reljic's *His Favourite Jeans*.

Lies, love, and even more lies

Charlene Vella

Jasmina Reljic, Romina Delia, Elisa Von Brockdorff, Teresa Sciberras, Enrique Tabone and Christine X are all exhibiting installation pieces inspired by their experiences with dishonesty, not necessarily with a lover, but of its various manifestations.

'Deception' is indeed the exhibition title and chosen theme. This year, Valentine's Day and Carnival fell on the same weekend. The irony of this got many thinking, including the six exponents of this show. To them, Valentine's Day reminded them of past insincerities. Indeed, the atmosphere in the beautiful barrel-vaulted space was an edgy one, but that was evidently intended.

"One must at least learn not to mess with some of these impassioned women"

The six emerging artists participating are all women, which apparently happened by chance. They come from different backgrounds and their varied artistic training and personal interests and characters can be gauged.

The result is a mixed bag of exhibits, some more memorable than others, but the venture is commendable and an enjoyable one nonetheless. The more feminine pieces were by Enrique

Christine X's *Dollar Bill y'all*.

Tabone and Jasmina Reljic, the latter being an exhibition of corsets and dresses, and the former being classified as interior decor.

In *A Dazzle Escape*, Tabone takes the meaning of deception literally and personifies the act or rather, the consequences, of dishonesty. In this case, it was on a woman, the victim, whose natural remedy to cure herself from her experience of deceit, is by shedding her skin in the hope of leaving past experiences behind.

Reljic's *His Favourite Jeans* is perhaps a silent tale of revenge at a lover, whereby a woman has

created outfits for herself out of his most dear denim.

Von Brockdorff's *To Squeeze or Not to Squeeze* is a straightforward yet fun installation that cleverly plays on the theme, where hands are symbolic of the gestures. You have to walk beneath the water-filled surgical gloves that dangerously hover over your head as you enter the vaulted space.

Christine X's *Dollar Bill y'all* is bold and questions many things American, and the suspicious nature of the way many things are implemented, which inevitably affect the rest of the world.

I was most interested in Sciberras and Delia's work. Sciberras takes a unique approach, with paintings of non-real and non-representational objects in five small, almost miniature, attractive and moving drawings, each consisting of a solid composition and form and sensitive use of colour.

She is deceiving the viewer. Whatever the real objects used as a starting point for these drawings were, they have been churned into something beautiful by Sciberras' able hands and intellect.

Another bold contribution is by Delia. She is fascinated by the

beauty of the female form. Voluptuous or less so, the female figure is always foremost in Delia's paintings. However, it is not paintings that she is exhibiting in this show.

Breathe is a set of photo stills Delia took when on an artistic EU-funded exchange held in Denmark a few years ago. The photos are of a partially nude woman in an aquarium wearing a long dress but which is often floating above the figure, revealing her naked body beneath it.

The biblical quotation on the creation of man comes across as somewhat tongue-in-cheek when presented with the female nude crotch. It is sensual yet precarious, but a comfortable apprehension is felt, and a bold *chiaroscuro* (probably an unconscious result of her love for Baroque art) permeates each shot. Is it uncontrollable physical carnal desires that cannot always be controlled and are the cause of much deception?

Are these six women spiteful about a lot of things or are they just availing themselves of their emotions for this exhibition? All one is able to say is that the stronger exhibits have proportionately stronger feelings being expressed.

Negative energies are part of a force, a vicious cycle, that may perhaps never be destroyed. We can try to stay away from it but not always manage to fully escape it. One can forgive and try to forget, or contribute to this cycle. One must at least learn not to mess with some of these impassioned women.

'Deception' is open until Sunday, at 43, Lascaris Wharf, Valletta.