

## *The Evidence of Love*

# Cassandra Tytler

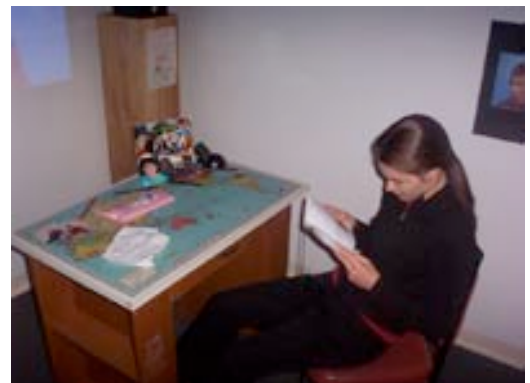
*West Space*  
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by Lily Hibberd

Being a teenager is not an easy time. Dramas, angst, tears, passions and pimples are symbolic of this tormented phase of life, and one of the things about getting older is that you start to find it hard to remember what it was really like. With the exception the infamous director of the movie *Kids*, Larry Clark, this act of forgetting is in most instances a case of voluntary erasure. With a whole lot more humour, and a lot less preaching, a recent solo-show at West space brought it all back to us. This was the work of Cassandra Tytler, who encapsulated the intensity of adolescence in her mini-drama video and installation, *The Evidence of Love*.

The problem with a lot of installation art is its conflation of the real with the fictional. The arty set-up of the scene is often too artificial, and so it was completely refreshing to see Tytler disposing of these conventions. The usually urbane Gallery 3 became a teenage girl's bedroom, with all of the telling signs of adolescence: pin-ups, clothing strewn about, and the pages of an open diary that revealed the dark passions of a 13 year old. It was a bit like those museum creations where they transport the entire bedroom of some dead and famous figure, but the difference is that they tidy it up for the museum. Not so in *The Evidence of Love*, where you had to step over an unmade single bed to get to the illuminated desk to see the open diary. It could have been awkward but this was really unpretentious, so much in fact, that another (unnamed) co-exhibitor felt completely comfortable having a nap on the single bed the night before the show opened.

Amongst all of this, the video came off incidentally. The projection on the wall facing the doorway was large, but not incongruous. This was cleverly done by integrating the subject matter in the bedroom into the video. This is a feature of installation art that is normally used the other way around, with props from the video being thrown into the installation to boost the reality kick. As pure video, the work stood apart from convention in its narrative form. Tytler presented us with a story: the age-old tale of the broken heart. Now, people don't mind a love story, but it is a bit hard to take the small universe of a teen-crisis seriously... it is all so terribly *Neighbours* in soapy, melodramatic kind of way. So the narrative structure escaped the dreaded criticism of art fashionistas by being heavily loaded with irony. What's new? Well, Tytler is a master of the form. In terms of a documentary style piss-take, *The Evidence of Love* was the best thing I've seen in ages.

*Lily Hibberd is a Melbourne-based artist.*



*All images on this page: Cassandra Tytler  
The Evidence of Love, 2004  
Top & bottom: Video stills  
Images courtesy the artist  
Centre: Installation shot, West Space, 2004  
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