

## Sonia Boyce *Like Love - Part One*

Spike Island presents a new multi-media installation *Like Love - Part One* by renowned British artist Sonia Boyce (1962). This new body of work includes drawings, prints, hand-made wallpaper, an animation and an audio work. *Like Love - Part One* has been developed through a residency at The Meriton School for Young Parents, Bristol which the artist undertook across 2006-7 as part of the Spike in the City programme.

Central to Boyce's practice is the act of working with other people in what she terms "improvised collaborations" and here the artist has taken extracts from conversations with the young parents, creating a visual and textual dialogue that speaks equally of young desires and insecurities. This installation does not, however, set out to be read as a portrait of the young women nor does Boyce intend to expose private lives in the public realm. Instead, the quotes are derived from the students' reactions to a work of fiction, thus distancing their responses from their lives. Words and phrases have been further pared down by the artist so that they hold multiple, potential readings. For Boyce each phrase also suggested its own rendering, hence the diverse range of typographies and media within the exhibition.

The pervasive use of a photographic group portrait of Boyce's collaborators - their first ever school wide photograph - manifests itself as a recurring semi-abstract motif within an expanse of silkscreen printed wallpaper, subtly paying homage to the artist's associates, while avoiding sentimentality or affectation. With similar intent, an ambient audio artwork emanates from high in the gallery and mingles with a poignant a-cappella song written and performed by students and sisters Naiidine & Nikita Watts, which makes up the soundtrack of a textual animation, adding yet more contrasting tonal layers to installation. Works constantly hover between tenderness and distance whilst information is revealed and concealed through a number of formal devices, including the shimmer of the wallpaper. Throughout the installation Boyce seeks to create a fragmentary experience of longing and raise wider questions about the nature of due care in contemporary life.

Thus, although specific in its collaborative origins, *Like Love* explores universal concerns surrounding community cohesion and the concept of care - the emotion we invest in others and in the making of works of art. Taking as her other inspiration Roland Barthes', *A Lover's Discourse*, Boyce uses the combination of labour intensive and utilitarian processes to underscore the testimony, adamant posturing, ambivalence, longing and sometimes-tenuous nature of relationships.

Works from Spike Island will tour to partner venues the Bluecoat, Liverpool and The Potteries Museum & Gallery, Stoke on Trent, who will in turn set up their own collaborations, generating new elements for their installments of *Like Love*. No one manifestation of the show will be the same and the accumulative processes of *Like Love* will be documented in a joint publication.

*Like Love is commissioned by Spike Island and is an Arts Council England National Touring Exhibition in partnership with the Bluecoat and The Potteries Museum & Art Gallery.*

**Like Love - Part Two**  
the Bluecoat  
30 Jan - 28 March 2010

**Like Love - Part Three**  
The Potteries Museum & Gallery  
03 July - 31 Oct 2010

---

With thanks to Lucy Byatt, Rachel Connelly, Stuart Bunce, all the staff and students of The Meriton and in particular Maggie Royle & Carol Bowery, Martyn Grimmer & Spike Print Studios, Linda Florence, Sian Western and London Printworks Trust, Stephen Stuart-Smith of Enitharmon Press, staff of Spike Island and the Arts Council of England. Special thanks to Naiidine & Nikita Watts.



## ***Like Love - Part One*** **Sonia Boyce**

Gallery Entrance

An installation inspired by a residency at The Meriton School for Young Parents, Bristol in 2006-7. All works were produced 2007-9.

Clockwise from entrance:

*I wish (Naidine & Nikita Watts)*, digital animation, DVD, duration 3m 17s, looped.

*let's go together*, digital print.

*emotional*, mixed media (pencil, glue, acrylic, glitter) on paper.

*feel like cry*, gouache on paper.

*you decide*, digital print.

*she would have found it hard*, mixed media (pencil, glitter) on paper.

*he would have left her*, digital print.

*he finally wanted it*, mixed media (pencil, glitter) on paper

*Like Love*, digital print.

*I'm not a boy*, mixed media (acrylic, stamp) on paper.

*Is this love that I'm feeling?*, etching.

*I think she wanted it*, stamp on paper.

*near the end he was so excited*, digital print and pencil on paper.

*2 change*, audio, CD, duration 3 mins 21 sec, looped.

Wallpaper:

Like Love Edition, photo silkscreen.

Block of coloured prints – anti-clockwise from bottom right:

*we are english*, screen print.

*shocked*, digital print.

*so amazing*, Giclée print.

*angry*, digital print.

*disappointed*, digital print.

*the family probably would have put a lot of pressure on her*, digital print

*baby, baby, baby*, diptych digital print.

*sorry*, digital print.

*sad*, digital print.

*young and mouthy*, digital print.

*mum said*, frosted vinyl on glass.

*you've changed*, vinyl text.

Large format available on request – please ask at reception