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Victoria Lobregat. Sydney: Pendulum, 1996

The popular adaption of Buddhism within western cultures is perhaps, to a significant extent, aided by its very adaptability. Organized around the belief in, and the pursuit of 'Nirvana', unlike evangelistic religions such as Christianity, it is a belief that permeates into cultures other than those in which it originated, rather than attempting simply to write over other cultures with a necessarily attendant organization, motivated by missionary zeal.

The icons of Christianity, those ironically graven images of crucifixes and plaster-cast virgins, seek not to merely represent, but to embody the church. They are logos of the church, infinitely loaded. Differently, the mandalas of Buddhism, although inevitably representing Buddhism, seek to be vacant. They are 'ways into' the ultimate nothingness of Nirvana.

However, for Buddhism in the 'west' there is not merely the long cultural habits of Christian iconography to contend with, but the more pervasive icons of consumer culture. The fashionability of labels, logos and names does not need explaining: its something that operates for most of us without having ever to closely consider it.

This work is the noisy clash of the spectacular consumer icon with the visible, but willfully silent, mandala. This is not intended as a mischievous quasi-dadaist juxtaposition of two incommensurate elements. Here, both of these elements represent the personal problematic encountered in the adaption of Buddhism. These icons of consumerism are what 'stands in the way'.

This can be seen not simply in this literal way, but also in terms of the values inherent in western consumer society, of competition, ambition and wealth. Vickie is making no apologies here, nor disowning her westernized cultural. There is not necessarily a negative judgment being cast on consumerism, and there is no feigned attempt to represent herself as being somehow bohemian and 'beyond it'. Rather, she recognizes herself as being subject to our shared culture, within it. Within this work, Vickie is working through this. The work is thus part of a process, a strategy to attempt to reconcile two very different cultural habits of image production. They are distractions, which cannot simply be ignored.

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