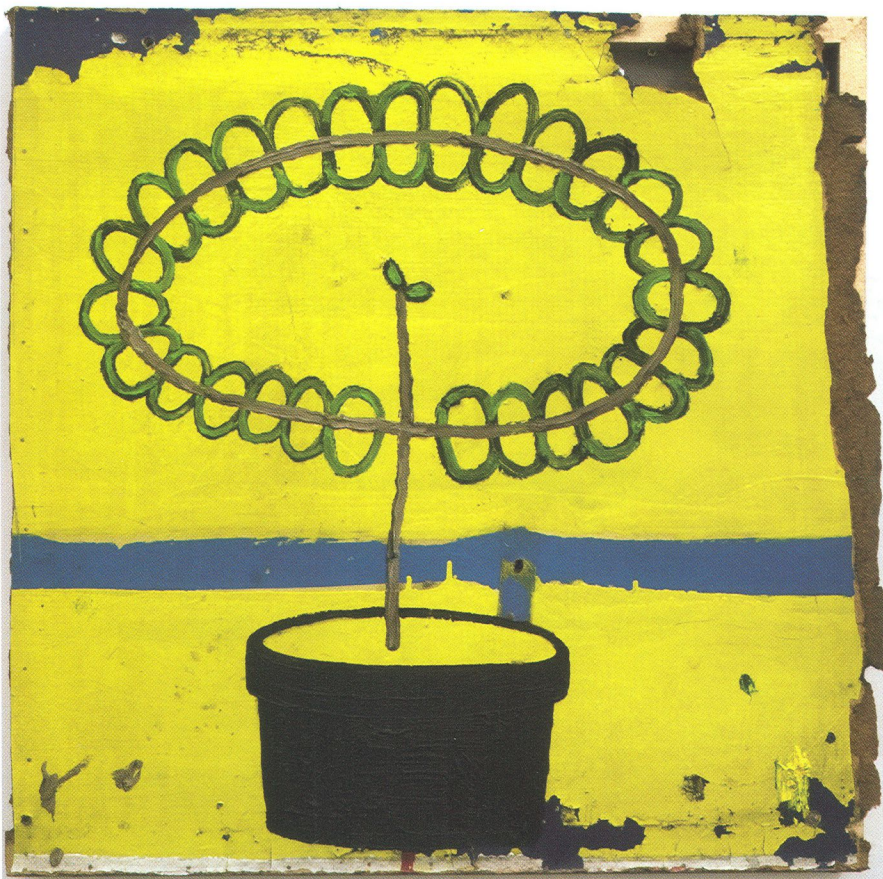


Nevan Lahart Ugly lovely

99

Blah Blah Blah
Circumventing the narrative
Gobble-d-gook, Gobble-d-gook,
non linguistic forms of
Yady, Yady, Ya.
active forces that
Blah Blah's
subjective subliminal
perception
yiddy, yiddy, ya
Contextualises the context
of underlying structures
That navigate empathetic
analoguous analogues
Ummmm.....
Interesting
Put simply, Nevan won't stray
too far from flowers.¹



Nevan Lahart
Tribute tree, 2007
oil on board
60 x 63 cm
courtesy Kevin Kavanagh Gallery

Flowers, plants, foliage and still lifes are done to the death and heavily loaded with a plethora of inescapable references. In that context, Nevan Lahart's *UGLY LOVELY* is, on the one hand, a refreshing approach to the ever-beloved, slightly artistically ignored cactus, and on the other hand a twisted approach to potted-plant fanaticism.

Greeted with a barrage of paintings and representations of potted plants on tacky tiles and dazzling backgrounds, I became hungry for iced biscuits, Party Rings, Café Noir, or just some Liquorice Allsorts. Mustard, pink and neon green assaulted my eyes initially, but after a brief period of adjustment it all brought me back to my younger years. The paintings are giddy renderings of cacti, plants and cages, coupled with a mind-cajoling wonderland of defamed objects. The structures looming overhead or grabbing out from the walls make for a good literal example of giving you a child's perspective.

The language of play and games is evident throughout *UGLY LOVELY* – Tetris, Mouse Trap and Lego – but particularly in some of the free-standing works. These block/netted structures come straight out of an '80s video game. A childlike feeling ensued as I tiptoed around the space with these objects towering over me; they were seemingly unbalanced, with the ominous capacity to topple over at any moment. While thinking about *Darwinian tree of knowledge* (2009), I couldn't but help recollect the board game Mouse Trap; I'm not so sure how Darwin would feel about that parallel being drawn. Then again, how would Moses have felt chatting away to God through a *Burning Tetris bush* (2009)? Would he have ignored God's attempts to impart a task to him, and just become enthralled with getting to the highest level of the game?

There's the sheer audacity of the titles as puns; take for example an object which consists of five 7up bottles, cut up and placed over a piece of strip lighting, so that from the distance it looks like one exaggeratedly long green plastic bottle. Puzzled and unsure, I consulted the sheet.

Ahhhhah...(laughter)...interesting: *10 Litres of electrici tree* (2009). (This is a fine example of an artist using the title of the piece to paraphrase the work, which can be a crutch.) *Wouldn't it be fabulous to have a home that could take it?* (2009) opens up even more dialogue about what we might pay for and bring into our homes. If I had the funds, I *would* take it home for the sheer fact that I laughed so much. I felt sorry for the stag's head reaching out into the space, wanting so desperately the right to grow from its mount or simply be housed.

