

*[im] mortal mortal*

# Pauline Lavoipierre

*Intrude Gallery*

26 November – 7 December 2004

by Georgiana Archer

## Chasing the uncanny

Pauline Lavoipierre works in photographic, digitally manipulated prints along with sculptural forms. She uses a combination of latex, moulded plastics, plasticine, foam, paint and Vaseline. In previous explorations, Lavoipierre has looked at voodoo, cults, dolls, and other uncanny fields. Lavoipierre's inspiration is derived from a bizarre range of visual and literary references which border on the unthinkable, untouchable and unviewable.

This new work is the result of distilling these complex and varied concepts into a single, refined thought. The exhibition plays out a range of visual manifestations of the grotesque, on the edge of beauty and the uncertainty of our perception. The desire to touch these works is overwhelming but the sensations are repulsive. There is an association formed between the familiar and that which is too confronting to consider. Out of the ornate, traditional, picture frames ooze forms that morph between sexual, organic sea-forms and varying surface textures: varying between wet, plastic, tacky, spongy and smooth.

*Mens Sana* (2004) and *Corpore Sano* (2004) dominate the first room of the exhibition. These organic extrusions bulge obscenely from their Victoriana-style frames expressing the kind of grotesquery that evokes strange reactions such as the desire to suck, pull, poke, and lick the fleshy forms. There is beauty within that is reminiscent of our own corporeality. The horror of determining whether or not this beauty is internal or external conflicts with our tactile desires and brings into question the boundaries we obey within our normative frameworks.

The Victoriana-style frames present an image of grand beauty that represents an era defined by its repression. Instead of containing restrained images of refined gentry, Lavoipierre's frames project forms that cannot contain themselves; they grow, move and express with no regard for niceties. There is certainly an aspect of the abject feminine, the recognisable disturbance that occurs between the corporal experience that as women



Above: Pauline Lavoipierre  
*Mens Sana (Sound Mind) and Corpore Sano (Sound Body), 2004*  
Installation view  
Photo credit: Pauline Lavoipierre  
Image courtesy the artist

we grow to accept and the delicate beauty that even in contemporary society we identify with generally.

*Mens Sana* means 'sound mind' and *Corpore Sano* means 'sound body'. Given that these two works appear more like the internals of some living being, what could Lavoipierre mean? Perhaps she points to the only real certainties in life, that we are formed of organic matter and we are nothing more than this. Maybe a sound body and mind are the pragmatic acceptance of our own mortality and that anything beyond this idea is mere fantasy.

The work presented in the exhibition *[im] mortal mortal* is the result of a two-year exploration into defining the uncanny. Lavoipierre has fused ideas of spirituality, sensuousness, and life or death transition in a search for the strange spaces that exist between what we think we know.

**Georgiana Archer is a Melbourne based artist, lecturer and writer.**