

# Exhibit mirrors society's failures

Mirror, mirror on the wall who's the victim of it all. We are all victims of society today. It is art's responsibility to mirror society's failures in the hope to motivate change.

Sue Coe's Police State, currently on exhibit at Hoyt L. Sherman Gallery in Sullivant Hall, is committed to social and political issues. Coe mirrors society and her reflections are unpleasant to view. Coe said in *ARTNEWS* "if people know the facts, they'll change the system."

The system doesn't want us to know the facts. We do not emotionally experience social injustices through the commercial mass media because we have become complacent observers of the television screen. Violent scenes have no more significance than commercial advertising.

In the mass media experience, the only political dead bodies are in some other country, the homeless are on some other street and the victims are someone else. Coe's images change all that.

Coe is a social protest artist who has not compromised her work in the popular press. She is a contributor to *the New York Times*, *Mother Jones* and numerous other publications in the United States and Europe. Her nonobjective illustrations broadcast information for the purpose of social change.

Mass media tells the people what they want to hear at a safe

## OVER THE EDGE

TRACEY JOLLAY

distance that doesn't intrude in our lives. Coe's work confronts the viewer with critical realism. Her illustrations document life with an emotion that most of us refuse to feel in our safe environment. She does not avoid the painful, complex issues of our day in her nightmarish reality.

As a social commentator Coe believes she can help the underclass of our capitalist democracy. The viewer confronts society's worst aspects, and is forced to see what we usually ignore or is ignored for us. If one is not moved by her work, than one has been anesthetized to today's inhuman social realities.

Coe's subjects are the everyday people and events she experiences. Society today operates under the weight of economic constraint. Coe's work represents the harsh reality of its victims.

We have become complacent and do not try to find another point of view. Coe's work is an alternative perception of the events that affect us and the world we live in.

Coe's work encompasses our vision with its exaggerated tabloid scenes. We are forced to see her

perception of events. Her view is direct, candid and deadly accurate. Coe's vision is nerve shattering.

The subjects are political violence, poverty, rape, racism and economic abuse. Coe's subjects are always portrayed as victims of a society that has descended to a lower level of humanity. A society who only feels a moral response to those who have money or to those in power.

In her work the people are ghostly skeletons marked by the ravages of their experiences. Their macabre faces speak of the complacent decadence that encompasses everyday life. They are emotion-filled forms that have been destroyed by a society that has no concern for the victim. A society that only has concerns for economic institutions.

Her palette reflects the harsh realities of life. The dark tonality represents the suffering and causalities of a world that does not care for those who cannot afford a voice. The only highlight is the red blood of its innocent victims.

The exhibit is not a pleasant experience. It is like a meat packing plant: we all know where the hamburger comes from but we don't want to experience the slaughter. One will want to walk quickly through it to avoid the realities it presents. Force yourself to evaluate Coe's message and re-examine the world we live in.



Courtesy of Sally Baker

"The Money Temple" by Sue Coe. Coe will be autographing copies of her Police State catalog at SBX, 1806 N. High St., today from 5:45 p.m.-6:30 p.m. She will also give a lecture today at 7 p.m. at the Ohio Union on the state of politics in culture.

The catalog from the exhibition of Police State, with text by Mandy Coe, speaks eloquently of Coe's intentions for her art. The back cover explains it all... "To think and act as a human being in a system set up for profit is to be classified as a criminal. To protest innocence is to become subversive."

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