

TimeOut

## Christine Rebet

Art @ [Parasol Unit](#), Islington 📅 Until Thursday March 26 2020 ✅ Recommended ★★★★★



Christine Rebet 'Pom Pom Girls', from 'Brand Band News' (2005) Image courtesy of the artist and Bureau, New York

### Time Out says ★★★★★

Christine Rebet's artwork looks cute. In her hand-drawn animated films you'll find blossoming flowers, galloping palomino horses, old-timey parlour games and neat rows of uniformed girls practising cheerleading in front of a screen. There are scaly reptile feet, ruby red high heels for a grown-up Dorothy and a small, exquisitely detailed kimono.

Yeah, it all looks cute. Adorable, even. But 'looks' is the vital word. All six of the short animations on display here, alongside the original illustrations, deliver hammer blows to the sugary, whimsical world it initially seems you've walked into.

The exhibition, which is the last show being held at Parasol's permanent London base before it closes, opens with 'Brand Band News', a creepy, hypnotic parable about twin sisters in blue gingham dresses who, after being gunned down, spend some version of the afterlife hitch-hiking across the American West. Gunfire rat-a-tat-tats out while sweet images of the good ole US of A remain undisturbed.

A disconcerting lack of reaction to extreme circumstances also characterises 'The Black Cabinet', a two-screen work centred on a group of frilly, plumed aristocrats sitting around a games table in the nineteenth century. They play impassively at spiritualism, summing visions via a seance, but the futuristic ghosts that rise up take the form of a Mussolini-like dictator.

There's also a wordless projection piece about the Arab Spring, and a re-telling of an ancient myth with links to a site in Iraq where British Museum academics are working alongside Iraqi archaeologists. Even the longest and least obviously political work, the tale of a Thai monk, is really a reflection on animals-into-plants-into-humans-into-animals.

But the most interesting is 'In the Soldier's Head', Rebet's film about her father's PTSD after the Algerian War. Dreamy half-pictures expand, bleed, pool and reform into new shapes, desert flowers into a headless odalisque and so on. Cute? No. Surrealistically beautiful? Absolutely.

BY: ROSEMARY WAUGH