



FEINGOLD @ SMFA

by BIG RED

Two years ago, the curator Lawrence Rinder filled the Whitney Biennial with art that was based in complex technology. Most of it, however, turned out to be quite boring, ill-suited to a major museum show, or just plain lame. One of the few standouts, however, was Ken Feingold's "If/Then": two life-like heads, floating above a box filled with packing material, engaged in conversation. Unlike the websites, digital projections, and mildly amusing interactive pieces throughout the show, Feingold's works felt fully realized, deeper and more complex than anyone could experience in a single viewing, and thoroughly non-technological.

This autumn, The School of the Museum of Fine Arts features "Ken Feingold: New Works" – and it is worth fighting for parking on the Fenway. Featured are three new works: "The Animal, Vegetable, Mineralness of Everything", "You", and "Eros and Thanatos at Sea". Wisely curated by Joanna Soltan, the cozy Grossman Gallery has been divided into three smaller spaces, giving each piece and its accompanying sounds their own space.


Upon entering, "The Animal, Vegetable, Mineralness of Everything" is the first and most shocking encounter. Here, three 'floating' heads (representing an animal mindset, a mineral mindset and a vegetable mindset) discuss an object that appears to be cannon-balls or, perhaps, genetically modified grapes. According to the press release, they 'debate the nature of violence with each other and discuss their fears.' What is amazing, though, is that none of the speech is prepared, so there is no audio loop. Instead, a computer, using a program that Feingold wrote, analyzes the speech and generates a new and unique response every time. The realistic floating heads also have thoughts, angles, emotions and wit.

The most provocative piece in the show is "You", featuring two Feingold heads lying on a small kitchen table, covered to the chin with a bedsheet. One of the heads speaks with a woman's voice, the other in a man's, and "they argue with each other about their relationship, make up, regret their argument, and begin to argue again – each time slightly

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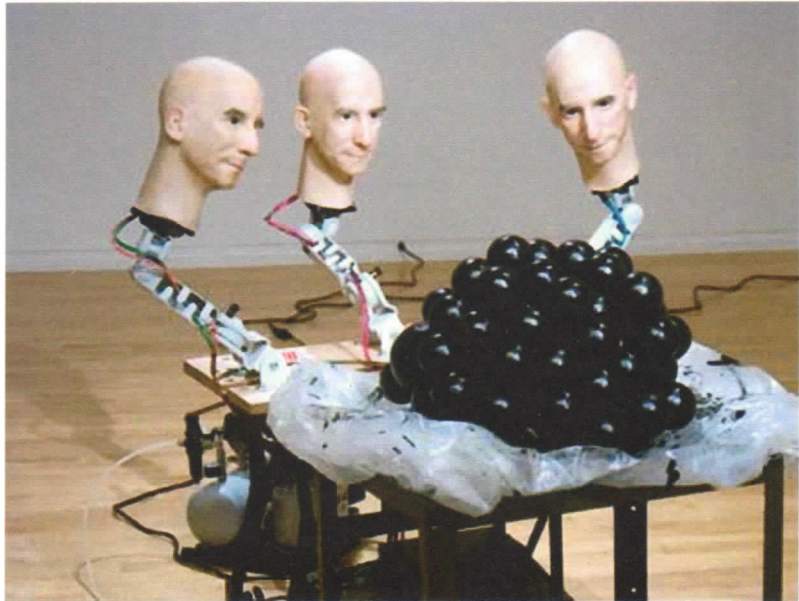


REVIEWS



KEN FEINGOLD @ SMFA

KEN



The Animal, Vegetable, Mineralness of Everything by Ken Feingold



You by Ken Feingold

differently."

The third piece, "Eros and Thanatos at Sea" presents two worn ventriloquists dummies trapped in a fishing net. They are surrounded by 22 speakers, each producing a different voice, who are engaged in conversation about their erotic urges and obsessions.

"Ken Feingold: New Works" is a not to be missed. It is certainly one of the finest shows in Boston in a long time.



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Also:

On September 22 at 12:30pm, Feingold will present a selection of his video works.

On September 23 at 6:00 pm, Feingold will discuss his work.

Both events at SMFA in the Anderson Auditorium.

Links:

[Ken Feingold website](#)

[The School of the Museum of Fine Arts](#)

"Ken Feingold: New Works" is on view September 10 thru October 23 at the Grossman Gallery of The School of the Museum of Fine Arts (230 The Fenway, near the MFA and Gardner).

All images are courtesy of the artist and SMFA.

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