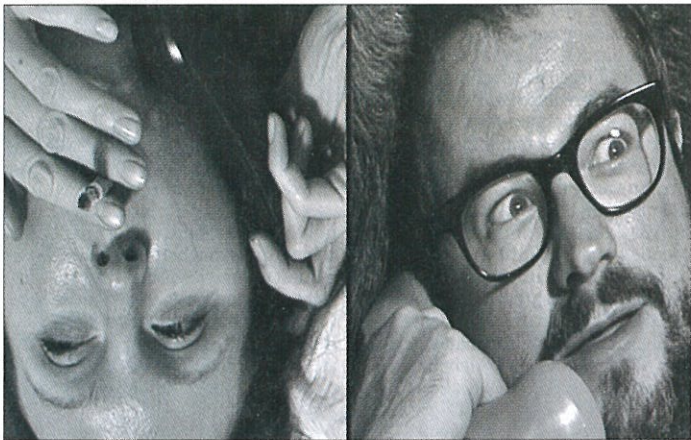


Exhibition of the week

The Halfway House



Still from the video, 'MC4LP' by Lucy Pawlak and Martin Clark, 2007

★★★★★

DomoBaal West End

In the poorly lit entrance, a table and chairs have been set up. On the table is a script of sorts: 'A Dialogue Between Leung and Pawlak' (that's Gil Leung and Lucy Pawlak). But surely no one has exchanges that go, 'How can I help you if I don't know what you're looking for?', answered with, 'Perhaps by seeing something for yourself.' Not implausible characters wrung from the brains of 'Holby City' scriptwriters. Not even artists. Of course, it's put on; the final word, 'repeat', a clue to the hammy, hypnotic state the work conjures.

Pawlak and pals seems to go in for this amusing/frustrating circuitous approach, luring you upstairs with the tick-tocking soundtrack of the looped film 'Scene One'. Stacked on top of one another, three monitors show rooms in a house populated by four

characters. At the top there's a bearded man with a swag bag who ducks into the room on the middle screen to join a grotesque dinner party for some Paul McCarthy-esque leftovers, then inadvertently bursts in on a naked woman on the lav. All are played by the irrepressible Pawlak who also appears in the show's highlight, 'MC4LP', which employs a split screen to deliver a demented pastiche of 'Pillow Talk'.

A recent RCA graduate, Pawlak lives in Poland but is clearly well-versed in the medium's tricks and conventions, as she's also released a kind of director's cut DVD, priced at £9.99, in which the bearded guy from 'Scene One' is revealed to be a pretentious *auteur*. The humour seems double-edged in reference to this halfway house, itself a bit of a grey area between a group show and a solo spot, with a clear star in Pawlak. *Martin Coomer*