

# THE DAILY CALIFORNIAN



“D-L Alvarez / MATRIX 243”

D-L Alvarez’s first solo exhibition, which recently opened at the Berkeley Art Museum, can be seen as a lesson in macabre. Alvarez’s show asks questions about the inter-connectedness of entertainment and terror. With only three pieces, it was a bold statement on pop culture and the nature of fear.

The first piece in the collection, “Fade to Black,” was composed of white shelves of varying sizes that hold color-coded VHS tapes. The tapes were most likely carefully selected, not only for their fit in the color scheme, but also for their cultural relevance. There are classic horror movies represented like “Rear Window” and “Aliens” as well as more light-hearted comedies like “Big Daddy” and “Joe Dirt.”

Though, the main set of the collection was “The Closet,” composed of graphite drawings that Alvarez worked on between 2006 and 2007. These are interpretations of stills from the movie, “Halloween.” They show unmitigated, pixilated terror.

The drawings have cubist influences, with distorted planes of viewing and deep shaded blocks that confuse the viewer’s eye. However, the inaccessible nature of the warped stills is actually transcended by the overwhelming sense of horror that the drawings emanate.

Of the set of drawings, the most fearsome is Jamie Lee Curtis’ death scene and the picture afterward which is a close-up of her twisted, screaming face. The voyeurism of the piece was applied heavy-handedly with the audience understanding that there was a closet door between the viewer and the victim, accounting for the distorted appearance of the images.

The last piece in the collection is the supremely unsettling “Something to Cry About (I and II).” These are two awkwardly splayed, full-sized body suits made of a patchwork of children’s clothing. Their appendages are at disturbing angles, making it seem as though they were in mid-fall. Made to evoke serial killer Ed Gein’s human skin suits, Alvarez takes a footy-pajama, juvenile reminiscent approach to a subject of complete terror. It’s a show that probes unsettling questions: Do we go to horror movies to fulfill a lust for voyeurism? Why do we treat horrifically grisly acts as a source of entertainment?