

For eternity, the sea with its mellifluous ebb and flow has been used as a metaphor for change and transience resulting in a watery, baptismal catharsis. The idea of fluidity and motion was key to Pablo de Laborde Lascaris' previous exhibition, so this year's offering, *Tide*, is a stark reminder of what happens when the seas of change cease to flow and stagnation follows. There's something harsh and unforgiving about the spindly, arachnid skeletons of the amassed structures. The word structure seems more applicable here than sculpture. Sculpture implies a sculptor who imbues the work with a sense of his or her perspective and belief in how the subject should be represented. The sinuous, unfinished looking tendrils of wood seem as if they are mid-construction. One could possibly argue that there is the influence of the vacuously synthetic Dubai, a port built on sand in an almost Biblical challenge to the inevitable tide of fate. The human element seems to have been removed. Sails wait for a breeze that will never come and everything has a parched, arid quality accentuated by the running motif of rock salt, which brings with it its own connotations of a timeless minerality. In essence, it is the skeleton of the sea after the sun has parched it, a cursory gesture towards the absence of change and flux manifest in the metaphor of the tide.

There is some light relief in the Giorgio Morandi-esque 'still lives' of water bottles in Venice. They are deliberately placed in a pseudo-superstitious fashion to ward off feral cats and, more importantly, the ever-present tide that threatens to delve the home of Titian, Giorgione, St Mark's Basilica etc. back into the swamp from whence it rose. Superficially, these still lives seem to be an outsider's view on the customary foibles of the locals, but on deeper inspection, they present us with the local's paranoia in trying to prevent the sea from engulfing them even if their method seems somewhat ludicrous and risible. However, the Venetian's fear of being engulfed is a one off in the midst of all the dry salt and partially constructed shells which speak of a tide whose apogee was some time ago and hasn't thought to return since.

The exhibition, therefore, isn't sad but contemplative. Rather than the jocular playfulness of the last show where every piece resembled a play thing be it a mobile, a rocking chair or a whole host of other toys, *Tide* is more stark and pensive. It reflects on change and the delicate balance in attitude that's needed to cope with it: too much in one direction and we become like the paranoid venetians; too little in the other and we strip bare the source of our vitality.

An obvious critique would be that in an age of depleted fish stocks, global warming and pollution, the exhibition simply exists to raise certain questions as to the potentially apocalyptic route humanity is headed down unless we change our gluttonous ways. The work however, is wonderfully idiosyncratic with its Jules Verne style contraptions, which appear long abandoned by both humanity and a curiously absent sea, lucky to get twenty instead of twenty thousand leagues of depth. The beauty of presenting the viewer with simply the end project of all this decay and parched stasis is that it allows them to muse on the possibilities as to how the works look like that, thus alerting them to the problems already mentioned without foisting these dilemmas on them. There is tremendous subtlety in how the pieces convey their messages and it allows for a much more subjective view of what they may mean.

The exhibition, therefore, muses on change in both a very personal and very profound way: change in our lives, change in our society and change in our climate, all set to the paradoxically permanent and mutable metaphor of the sea and the great swell of the Tide.