

Art Review
Metro News – Manchester

Louise Gardiner ♦♦♦♦

Sept / Oct 2001.
Cornerhouse Cafe, Oxford Street, Manchester, 11am to 8-30pm.

With the dash of the magic wand, the grim industrial world of L.S. Lowry has suddenly and inexplicably been outfitted in the garish cast-offs of 'Slade' guitarist Dave Hill in this witty and imaginative collection. Taken from sketches of people on the street, Gardiner renders the pzazz of these modern urban scenes in the unconventional medium of embroidery, augmented with acrylic paint. This clash of artistic processes reaches its most entertaining contrast in 'Chill Out', where a deck spinning DJ – shaven head and shades, smoking a fat cigarette – is depicted in a format more usually found above fireplaces.

In pieces such as 'Dialogue and Dog' and 'Northern Lads' and 'Against the Grain', the stereotypical 'oop north' men folk in their flat caps, moustaches, raincoats and pipes are transformed from their grim street garb into a dazzling vision more reminiscent of a Ken Russell movie costumed by Gaultier.

The women take their turn in the spotlight in 'Birds of Paradise', and 'Swinging Chics', where rows of Beryl Cook-style matronly frumps suddenly take on the aspects of characters in the gaudiest of musicals, clad in glitter, headdresses and roller skate regalia, high kicking their way home from the shops.

Even the relatively dour In The Clouds, which shows a procession of people with heads bowed beneath a heavily clouded sky, has a glam rock zing about it.

This vibrant collection almost dances off the canvas.

ROB HAYNES.