

## Sawtooth Review #18

Sweet Mysterious. 3 July - 25 July 2015

Review by: Tanya Bailey

A brilliant new addition to Sawtooth ARI gallery has opened up this month: The Portal. A reverse-tardis like space (it looks smaller on the inside than from the outside) that was a cupboard and is now a theatrette for experiencing international video art. Inspired. While the space is small, it does not feel claustrophobic and much goes on in there.... Stepping into The Portal for the first time transported me into the world of Sweet Mysterious, an animated piece by Dutch artist Simone Hooymans with music by Norwegian singer and composer Mari Kvien Brunvoll.

The first sequence I saw was beating human hearts morphing into trees. With me being a plant ecologist with a passion for trees, this had me enchanted from the start. Indeed the whole piece kept me transfixed as it flowed from waterscapes to landscapes to bits of both, all tied together with the repeating themes of hearts and trees and sea creatures. I stayed around and watched it from beginning to end again. The music was pulsating, sometimes ethereal and sometimes piercing. It surrounded me in the small space and played a major part in the show.

The audio blended beautifully with the visuals, sweeping me along with its rhythm. The hearts beat along in time with the music as they transform into octopuses, their arteries become tentacles, which in turn become tree roots and branches and back to hearts and arteries again. Throughout the piece we are rhythmically submerged underwater, brought back up through the surface again, taken through a portal in a heart to a pulsating desert then mountain landscape and back to the water again. The intensity of the music matches the busyness of each scene, reaching a crescendo half way through when the screen is full of bright beating hearts and translucent sea creatures pulsating in an underwater scene.

From these intense heights we are slowly soothed by a calming desert scene until finally we arrive back at a single tree in a similar scene to that with which the piece starts. A beautiful, engaging journey through the artists' imaginations indeed. As I stepped out of the Portal back into the chilled yet warm atmosphere. This must be the place in the Sawtooth Space gallery, I felt happy and heartened by what I had experienced in there. Bring on the next journey to places yet unknown...