

A Review of Hollie Mackenzie's '*Downfall*' by Ami Bowyer

The 'glass ceiling' is a term that was coined in the mid-1980s by Alice Sargent, a Fortune 500 consultant, to describe the obstacles of inequality that women face in corporate America that prevent them from reaching higher positions of power in the workplace. Mackenzie's work in the physical form of a staircase induced this metaphorical image in my mind. I appreciated how at face value the life size structure seemed functional and scalable just as the system of the corporate world appears for women. The Equal Pay Act and Sex Discrimination Act and other policies of contemporary society alike them would feed such assumptions.

However look upon the staircase with a more incredulous eye and realise you have been deceived. The staircase seems a symbol of transition and change; a necessary in-between that binds the spaces of the present and the future together. The staircase implies positive connotations of development and opportunity as it would do in the work place for women attempting to climb the career ladder. But the melting drips and droplets almost mockingly represent the dissolution of change and the prevention of this prophecy. Unable to pursue change and confined to current reality one is left feeling disorientated and dismayed by the lost prospect of an evolutionary ideal society. Instead one is reduced to a disheartened state; alone with the realisation that they ate up the illusion of change and equality in hungry spoonfuls.

It could be argued from a feminist perspective that the patriarchal society that we currently inhabit is the utopian reality of men. If we accept that there are different perceptions and interpretations of utopia it could be argued that women are trapped within a distorted dystopic reality that runs parallel to man's utopian reality within contemporary society. Therefore women are left at the bottom of the melting staircase gazing to the top and longing for their utopia whilst men climb the alternative functional staircase to heaven.