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Mad about the Freo hub

VISUAL ARTS

Mad About You/Peter Dailey:
Apparition/Sally-Ann Rowland: Bums on Stars/Michael Bullock: The Trail of Time: the Sandalwood Project
 Fremantle Arts Centre
 REVIEW LAETITIA WILSON

The numerous corridors and heritage rooms of the Fremantle Arts Centre are occupied by four exhibitions. They present a diverse range of offerings, from historical and traditional, to naturalistic, surreal and pop.

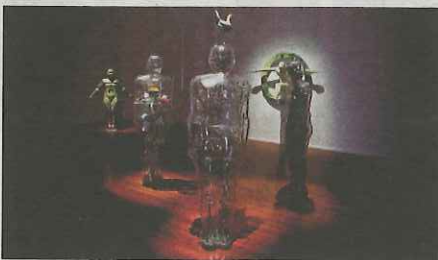
Mad About You: 40 Years of Fremantle Arts Centre is an inward-looking assemblage of works celebrating the social, cultural, personal and historical presence of the centre. Two-dimensional and sculptural representations of the architecture dominate the show and make for an odd sense of dissonance where you find yourself looking at the building you are also standing within.

Overall, the historical weight of this exhibition is palpable and it gives one the sense of stepping into a sepia-toned photograph.

The darkly idiosyncratic history of the place as a lunatic asylum and old women's home comes to the fore in several works, such as *Looking and Seeing* by Holly Story (assisted by Coral Lowry). This piece is a series of wooden boxes embedded with a peephole that affords a view into intimate photographic moments during its time as an asylum. The viewer peeks into another world and another time, into the paths and suffocating atmosphere of the everyday lives of the women once housed within the building's walls.



Collected: Mad About You, original image by Noel Doyle (Studio Ten), 1979.



Connected: Peter Dailey, Apparition: The Syndicate II.

In stark contrast to the visual density of this remembrance of a haunted building that has become a pumping cultural hub, is Michael Bullock's show, *The Trail of Time: The Sandalwood Project*.

The scent of burnt wood hangs in the air of the room. The visitor's gaze is directed toward a sculpture at the far end which accords a synchronicity to the scent as a collection of patinated bronze objects appear like desert detritus emerging from a fire. These twig-like forms are poised vertically, seemingly dancing across the table like desert ghosts scampering over hot coals.

Again, a striking juxtaposition

emerges when leaving this room of naturalistic poise and entering the hallway containing Sally-Ann Rowland's show, *Bums on Stars*. Here art and commerce fold into one and a number of the works on display are available for purchase at the gift shop.

The works use text in the form of clichéd phrases applied to such merchandise as pencils, tea towels, mugs and posters. This makes for a quaint array of objects, both familiar in their everyday materiality and unique to the artist's sensibilities and personal experience.

Finally, local artist Peter Dailey presents *Apparition: The Syndicate II*. This is a series of figurative sculptural works commissioned over two years by the Syndicate group of art patrons.

The room is darkened and what light there is subtly falls on a number of cumbersome bodies dispersed throughout the space. They are unusual corporeal conglomerates, heavily symbolic and evocative of surreal dream states. Internalised and externalised prostheses contaminate their being in the form of mechanism, architectural arrangement, flora and fauna, which coalesce in varying combinations. Some of the pieces are reminiscent of the work of another local sculptor, Hans Arkeveld.

This selection of shows makes for a pleasant weekend afternoon gallery visit. As with a candy store there is enough variety to please everyone. However if candy isn't your thing, there is always the possibility of simply contemplating that celebrated view from across the road of a building that has moved with the tide of the times, ever-beckoning new winds of change.

■ All four exhibitions run until June 2.