

Mario Dalpra, Daryl Austin,

Ted Jonsson

GREENAWAY ART GALLERY
39 RUNDLE ST, KENT TOWN
JULY 17 - AUGUST 11

Of course he's never been the same since his sea-monkeys died. Ted Jonsson's mixed media tableaus speak of something tired and rotten behind the dazzling premises and packaging of our society. 'Wornoutism' is a gag gift to the lost continent of modern art, a box of dead rats, underwear scraps and a dadaist feather duster; all very wry and grim. What's most successful about Jonsson's work is that in utilising found ancient materials (distressed wood frames/boxes, burlap, rusting metal ornaments and fittings) for pieces relating to contemporary social issues, he has created intricately crafted pieces that seem to relate to some greater basic truth - as if it's your obsessional grandad who's been creating these mini golgothas out in the back shed for the last thirty odd years in order to assess the reality of communism, current affairs and Christ's fall into the muck.

Selling the Snake Oil depicts Ray Martin as human butthead, toadying tool to Kerry Packer, lynching the underclass (herein the Paxton's hanging by their necks against a backdrop of dole forms and employment ads) to the greater glory and divertissement of his master.

In works like *Ground Zero* and *The Last Communist*, Jonsson seems to revel in a strangely joyous sense of striving amidst the evident morbid decline. The small human figures (too well proportioned to be called doll-like) demonstrate a keen eye for movement, bound up in strips of cloth like the binding used on the hands of boxers and the feet of dancers. Turgid with a sense of suppressed energy these pieces hold your attention. Initially whimsical, the titles and hidden details (mandala designs, carved-up copy of the United States Declaration of Independence) give you a little more to mull over.

Upstairs on the mezzanine are four expert oil on canvas works by Daryl Austin. 'Jacob's Dream II' comes on like an intentional parody of the early cubist experiments of Bracque and Picasso, only instead of sticking a swathe of wickerwork seating or wall-

paper to the canvas he has intricately rendered the effect in oil. If, like me, you are naive enough to still be impressed by people who can really paint then you'll want to give Austin's work the once over. At long last art that bears up to close scrutiny; the detail involved in these works will have you squinting at the canvas for tell-tale signs of cheating collage, but it's all talent.

I'm not sure what Austin's getting at by disassembling a self-portrait down to pixels and a patchwork of completion (*Reconstructed Self-portrait*) or whether the colour scales incorporated into *Exhibit One* are to be considered as anything more than a perverse joke. Maybe I'm just astonished by the clarity involved in Austin's art; oh well, that's more than I usually get these days.

Anyone who's ever lived in a crumbling low-rent house and marvelled at the exotic mildew creeping through the salt damp on the bathroom wall should appreciate the texture of Mario Dalpra's 'You Anna'. Dalpra splatters and scratches up epic canvasses at once reminiscent of abstract painters like Kandinsky and the interior wall vandalism of a toddler with a box of crayons, but then the primitive scrawling style of *Lunch Time In the Country*, *My Lovely Time* and *After Work* is intentional rather than juvenile, so it's probably worthy of some consideration even if, by comparison with the rest of Dalpra's work, they demonstrate a wilfully obtuse and haphazard aesthetic. *In a Hiding Place* and *The Dream* are more successful, incorporating bright colours and solid, textured surfaces in a manner which is both simplistic and striking.