

**Still point, studio paintings
and Blue Room**
Greenaway Art Gallery
Until August 9

IN South Australian Living Artists Week, it is appropriate to review work by local artists. One of our best younger painters is Daryl Austin, who has evolved from his geometric abstractions involving grids and blots to photo-realism.

His new work, in his exhibition *Still point, studio paintings*, is just as playful and meticulous. These paintings are not normal still-lives, moving far beyond the unquestioning position of many "Sunday painters". They allow the viewer into the world of the artist by using the mimetic form of traditional painting to mount an argument for its continuance.

This schizophrenic nature of Austin's output draws immediate parallels with the great Hungarian artist Victor Vasarely. Known mainly for his op-art designs – and now their marketability for decor and kitchen utensils as much as decoration – Vasarely was also a superb graphic artist, equally skilled with pencil and flat surfaces in plastic abstraction.

Daryl Austin's *Studio Painting #3*.

Austin's pencil drawings evoked pleasures for me similar to those experienced when I saw Vasarely's graphic work in his two foundation museums in the south of France. Simple subjects are depicted with equal adeptness in oil on linen, whereupon he exploits intrusive elements from his working environment to provide two or three pictures in one.

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These are arranged with the skills of an abstract formalist and are connected with visual links and games, such as rendering the illusion of transparency of the canvas, so the image looks through into the studio behind the work. Some images look through cut-out segments in the picture plane, or simply create the illusion of what the back of the picture might look like and con-

ceal. From a technical point of view, this is outstanding work – but its implications for future approaches make it a highlight of the year.

Deborah Paauwe's suite of large-format, c-type photographs in her exhibition *Blue Room* is connected by a strip of lavender blue painted around the room. The images seem autobiographical, in an experiential sense, but less preoccupied with post-colonial themes.

Rather, they enter similar territory to some of the early paintings by Anna Platten and, in their own way, present a child's-eye view of the world. Here are the perceptual afflictions of the very young, the insecurities aligned to such perceptions and the fixations of childhood.

Also showing is Queensland regional artist Kim Guthrie who, in various installations and collage paintings, takes a shot at generalisations and conformity. Take time to examine Johnnie Dady's *Untitled notation* installation on the front of the gallery, a piece of sympathetic design that offers innumerable possibilities for jazzing up dull architecture.

Adam Dutkiewicz