

Daryl Austin

at Greenaway Art Gallery: 24 Sept - 22 Oct

Daryl Austin's latest paintings and drawings on show at Greenaway Art Gallery continue to explore his characteristic preoccupations.

They reveal the artist's forensic eye for disquieting, even sinister detail in still-life arrangements of apparently innocuous objects. The title ***Nature Morte/ Peintre Mort*** (dead nature/ dead painting) offers enigmatic clues.

Daryl paints his studio as a closed world of mirrors but not windows, where exterior reality cannot penetrate. Sprouting weeds disturb the otherwise careful order of the studio environment. In some, a fox pelt introduces an unsettling incongruous air of pathos. Nails piercing a fetish sculpture reappear piercing the easel and the stretcher in other paintings.

It is a world of subdued shades of brown, beige, grey into which the green weeds appear as invaders, aliens from another more natural world.

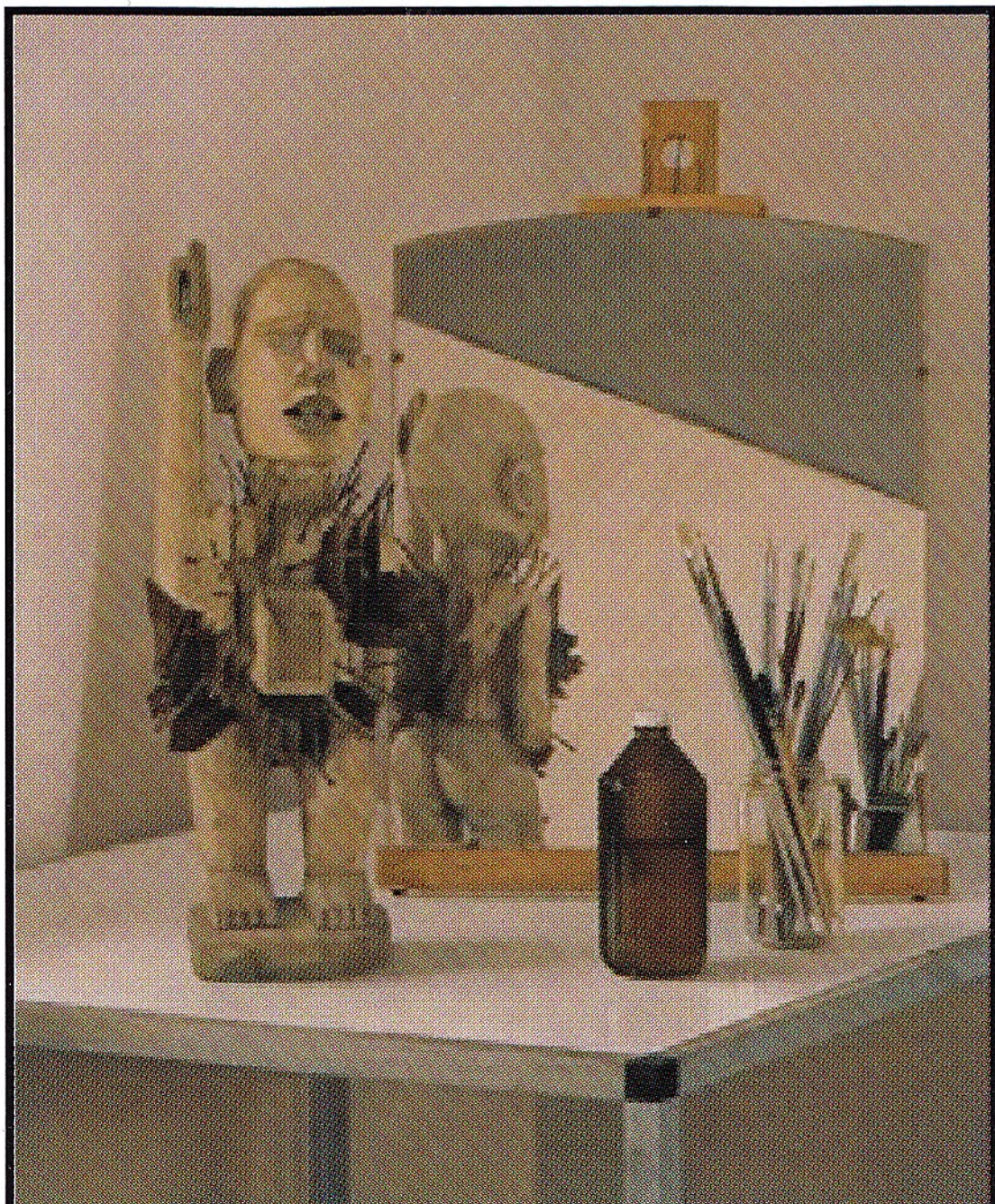
The artist's eye is perpetually analyzing and intellectualizing the notion of painting things, painting self, the act of representation. He paints with fine brush strokes, the mark of the artist's hand barely visible. These are the opposite of the emotional overload of expressionism. Feeling is tightly controlled.

In his artist statement, Daryl Austin states:

"I seek to make works which may be at times reflective, philosophically speculative, perverse and paradoxical, intellectual and intuitive, in mood wry, quiet and melancholic."

In addition to the paintings, the exhibition includes a suite of four small drawings rendered with exceptional finesse in pencil, charcoal and ink on vellum. With their faded silver gelatin images and locks of hair, all drawn with trompe l'oeuil virtuosity, these drawings appear as reliquaries, imbued with private memories of places and people. Yet, in the artist's world of illusion, nothing can be taken as what it seems. These may be random images from an op shop or they may be from the artist's own past. They have a rare, melancholy beauty.

Margot Osborne



Daryl Austin, *silverlight fetish*, oil on linen, 87x71cm, 2005