

# Playful in vestments

galleries >> mandy wildeheart

It seems Perc Tucker Regional Gallery is on a winner with its playful series of group exhibitions that started in 2004 with *Walk this Way* and was followed up last year with *Perc's Purses*.

This year's 37 contributors have had a lot of fun interpreting the latest title and theme, *Percival Vestments*.

There is plenty of variety, as each artist seems to have found their own unique take to develop a concept for their artwork. Submissions range from the humorous to the political.

Oddly, there are very few male artists involved in this exhibition.

Maybe it has something to do with the previous two exhibition themes focusing on very girly things such as shoes and bags. Whatever the reason, maybe next year will see more males on board.

One of the featured male artists is Townsville's Richard Gillespie, who has bravely decided to cast off his public service job to become a full time artist.

Using recycled metal from a rusted 44-gallon drum, Richard has managed to squeeze in references to Ned Kelly and the Eureka flag to fashion an Australian Pope headpiece entitled *Safe in vestments*.

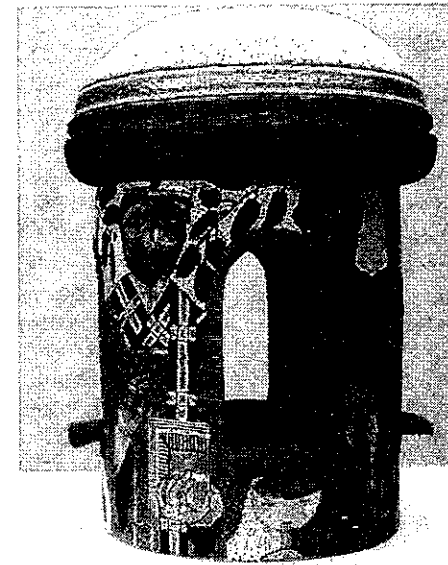
Richard also puts forward some deep questions as he explores the roots of religion, warfare, and life.

Still on religion, ex-Townsville artist, Chris Jakku (pronounce Jacko) has woven an exquisite stole that she hopes one day will be worn by a female priest. With this lofty aim in place, she serves the church a broadside about the lack of acceptance of females within mainstream clergy life.

At a local political level, Alison McDonald appears to take on two systems of bureaucracy with her knitted red tape cloak. The catalogue essays say she is taking on the rapidly diminishing JCU College of Music, Visual Arts, and Theatre program and staff, while her artistic statement says she is referencing the red tape that the exhibition's namesake, Perc Tucker, encountered as Mayor.

Whatever the target, viewers should get a charge out of the draping red cloak that is made from doubled-over red electrical tape using oversized knitting needles.

Victoria Nelson needs a mention for her two series of glass works, which has



Emily Hill's *House of Rome* EM453052



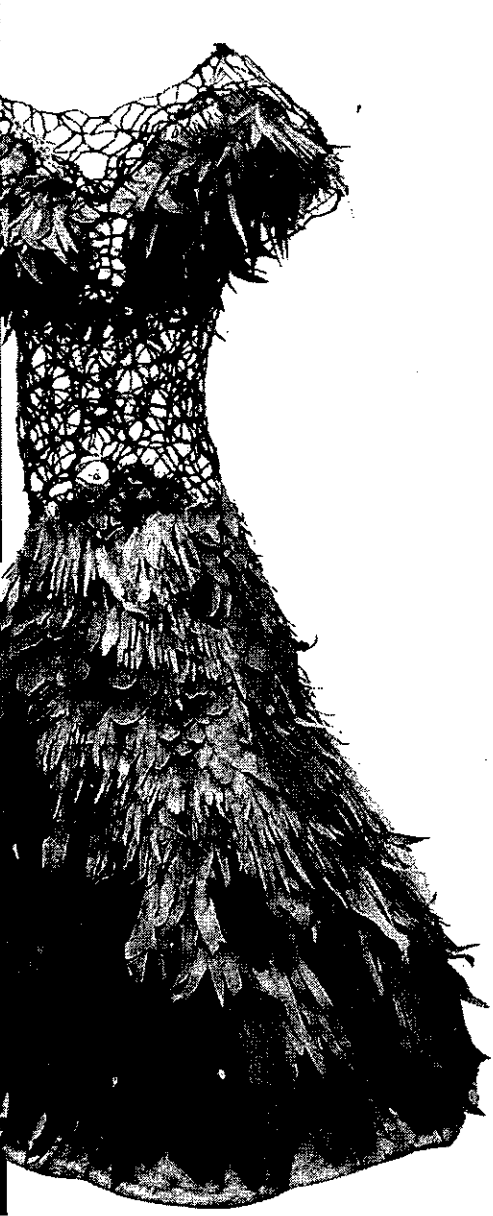
Alison McDonald's *A Bureaucratic Bind* EM453065



Richard Gillespie's *Safe in vestments* EM453041



Donna Foley's *Transsubstantial investment* EM453071



Marion Gaemers' *River Robes* mFM453036

each piece in the shape of a Japanese kimono.

In *Lost in Translation*, she explores the theme of ceremonial garments, and has made small glass robes that provide a cutting-edge contrast between practical and philosophical, and wearable and non-wearable.

One of the more amazingly detailed works is *House of Rome* by Emily Hill.

Three words sum it up: mind-bogglingly detailed! Everything viewers thought about the word mosaic needs to be thrown out of the window.

Emily has formed a small, arched tower with religious iconography on it, but has executed this imagery with painstakingly tiny, tiny tubes of colour.

To get some idea of scale, think back to your favourite cup cake sprinkled with Lucky Dollar cake sprinkles. The mosaic pieces she works with to create these finely detailed images are even smaller than that childhood favourite and are as small as 1mm by 3mm.

Briefly, Jan Hynes continues to delight with *The Emperor's New Vestment*, her subtle play on the Emperor's new clothes fable, while also having a go at the truth behind inferior artwork that is overly hyped.

Viewers will see everything from felt cloaks to cloaks featuring wine corks; to etchings and mosaic vests; or recycled garden waste turned into wearable art

by mother and daughter Dinie and Marion Gaemers.

And wrapping up this review, Sylvia Ditchburn has had a lot of fun creating her funky *Mood Robes for Monitors with Attitude*. This is what every computer monitor and workstation needs to keep it light, bright and properly attired.

Viewers have until May 21 to reveal the layers of Percival Vestments for themselves at Perc Tucker Regional Gallery.

>> Viewers are invited to attend a floor talk by participating artists Richard Gillespie, Victoria Nelson, Donna Foley, and Barbara Pierce at 11am Sunday, May 14.