

Dig below surface

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HEAVY on concept, Anne Lord's exhibition, Tools of Change, is putting on a strong showing at Umbrella Studio.

Anne is a lecturer at the School of Creative Arts, James Cook University, and this exhibition is the third in a series of four exhibitions she has planned as part of her PhD requirements.

At first glance her exhibition in the rear space of the gallery seems a little light on for substance, but it's worth the effort of digging beneath the surface to uncover the depth of meaning.

Usual gallery practice has been discarded as the artworks are unframed; spacing between the works is random at best; and the idea of a uniform hanging height at eye level has been totally abandoned.

Most archival considerations, such as using pH-balanced paper, are also overlooked. But these oversights aren't attributed to Anne or the gallery staff having a bad day or being ignorant of requirements. This is where Anne has really layered her exhibition with concept.

The focus of her observations are tools, particularly old and decomposing ones, and this process of decay is reinforced in her art processes and its presentation. Much of the artwork is already on the way to decay as Anne wasn't precious with the works and she walked over some and overtly damaged others in her studio.

During Dr Linda Ashton's opening speech for the exhibition, she revealed aspects of Anne's motivation and approach to work practice.

'Anne's art and philosophy are very much more concerned with the changes which occur in original forms over time,' she said.

Anne also seems to have approached this body of work with a hierarchy of process showing a progression from artefact to artwork.

Her exhibition comprises a display case featuring old tools; sketch pads; photos of her sketches; enlargements of these photos; watercolour paintings from the sketches; and then topped with an audiovisual presentation projected into the Vault space.

The variety of approaches also reflects a movement from past to present as the methods range from traditional skills, ie sketches in a notebook, to new multi-media technology as demonstrated with an audiovisual presentation. Layered upon this is the concept of actually having four exhibitions over a period of time as part of her PhD studies, rather than the standard of just a single exhibition.

Previous exhibitions were Absence at Umbrella Studio and Watersheds and Basins at Flinders Gallery, with the last being planned for University Queensland in Brisbane early next year.

During a recent conversation, Anne confirmed much of what Dr Ashton said about her exhibition. Especially relevant were the comments regarding how her 'conscious blurring between art, artefact, antique, heirloom, implement and junk is important in the realisation of this exhibition'.

This is evidenced by some of Anne's works being considered art today, but they will become a worm fest in the future. Anne's choice of ordinary paper for her large plan images inevitably means the

paper will decay and the remnants will return to the earth.

This exhibition of work is a partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy Visual Arts JCU.

>> Tools of Change will last until March 18 at Umbrella Studio.

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