

Galleries

Rembrandts reproduced to exact scale



T J McNamara

In a week with an exceptional variety of art on display we have three shows of unusual interest. The most prominent is *Rembrandt Remastered* on the sixth floor of Smith & Caughey's, which has been transformed into a gallery by the installation of special screens and lighting.

The show is unusual because it is not original works but a large collection of reproductions of the highest order using modern digitalised photography. It also has the imprint of the Rembrandt Research Project, under the guidance of chair Ernst van de Wetering who was instrumental in establishing the corpus of genuine works by the great master.

The special feature is that the 57 paintings are all reproduced in the same size as the originals. It is great to see such exceptionally large works as the famous *Night Watch* and *The Syndics of the Clothmakers Guild*.

It also reveals just how small some of the great man's early paintings were. One of the early works is *The Penitent Judas Returning the*



The Syndics of the Clothmakers Guild.

Thirty Pieces of Silver. Rembrandt was an independent intellect. He rejected Italian ideal forms and had his own version of truth, which gives deep insight into the realities of human character and situations.

The Anatomy Lesson of Dr Nicolaes Tulp is the work that established Rembrandt when he moved from his hometown of Leiden to Amsterdam. In this group portrait, under the intent gaze of his superbly characterised students, the good doctor is showing, on the corpse of an executed criminal, the tendons that work the oppositional nature of the thumb.

You would have to travel through many countries to see these paintings in the original. The range is from the charming portrait of a girl from the Dulwich Gallery in Surrey to works from Russia or the United States.

None of these paintings are ever

allowed to travel. Another gain is the excellent reproduction of the unusual *Christ on the Sea of Galilee* stolen from the Gardner Museum in Boston and never recovered.

The self-portraits mercilessly examine the ravages of time and stress on the artist himself.

Particularly compelling is the *Syndics* group, the chairman rising to address the floor. Dressed in the sombre black customary at the time, they present an immortal image of a time and place.

In these days when many people do not have the same profound knowledge of the *Bible*, perhaps the captions for individual paintings of biblical stories could be more explicit but for the most part this show enables viewers to make contact with one of the very greatest of painters.

The work of Henryk Szydlowski is unusual in several

At the galleries

What: Rembrandt Remastered
Where and when: Smith & Caughey's, Level 6, to September 13

TJ says: A chance to see more than 50 of the great Dutch artist's paintings reproduced in their actual size.

What: Paintings by Henryk Szydlowski
Where and when: International Art Centre, 272 Parnell Rd, to August 30

TJ says: A Polish artist now living in Australia makes work as colourful and joyous as ever.

What: Regroup Reflect Regenerate by Medal Artists of New Zealand
Where and when: Pah Homestead, 72 Hillsborough Rd, to September 30

TJ says: A large and comprehensive 25th anniversary exhibition by a group of professional artists is remarkable in range and quality of design.

ways. Polish by birth and training, his mature career began in Auckland where he exhibited to acclaim in 1978. Later he went to Australia. He continues to bring his appealing style back to Auckland at the Inter-

national Art Centre in Parnell.

His work is totally free of angst. It is whimsical and witty, lyrical and painterly. He fills his colourful paintings with stylised birds and people indicated by bright eyes. Amid these shapes and geometrical forms, a swinging dance of curves, angles and lines give spring to the forms. The style is instantly recognisable, and he creates a world of his own.

Spring in the Birds Hill emphasises rich shades of green, while *Blue Night in the Red Hills* shows his command of atmosphere and the sense of sheltering night.

It all makes an enjoyable exhibition of considerable charm.

Upstairs at the Pah Homestead is a special exhibition that has both daring in design and the utmost refinement. *Regroup Reflect Regenerate* is the 25th anniversary retrospective show by the Medal Artists of New Zealand.

A number of professional artists, painters and sculptors have worked on the medals. Some were commissioned as commemorative or award medals but other variations show unorthodox images, both inventive and clever.

It is a show to linger over. Almost every prominent artist in New Zealand is represented. Look especially for **Marian Fountain**, who has a wide European reputation, and **Marte Szirmay**, strong as ever.

Art matters

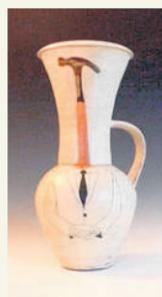
Potter's contemporary signature on ancient silhouettes

From the polytech at Whanganui, a young and brave potter named Paul Maseyk found his way to the Driving Creek Railway in Coromandel. Twenty years later, Maseyk fondly remembers his time among Barry Brickell's trains and wood-fired kilns.

"When I first went there, Barry had all his old steam-powered stuff, old industrial brick-working equipment," he says. "There was a pan mill, where you grind up dry clay. It has great big stone rollers. He had a jaw crusher that ground up old bricks, rocks and rubble from which you can make glazes. There was the pug mill, which squeezes out bricks... everything was there, the clay was up in the



Nick Atkinson



Toolhead by Paul Maseyk, on display at Masterworks Gallery.

hill. It's that rich, red terracotta coloured clay. When you wood-fire the pieces, they come out with lovely reds and browns."

Despite spending four years on and off at Driving Creek, Maseyk has a thoroughly modern style. His vases and pots have silhouettes informed by ancient Greek earthenware, but his decorations come from today.

"I started getting more and more detailed. I studied Greek pots... I did a lot of Greek friezes around the necks of the vases. Around the bottom of the pot I put imagery from my day-to-day life, just as they did. My process is quite simple. I get the clay, make the pot and decorate it with slip [liquid clay]. I fire it with simple, clear

glazes. Instead of using paint I use slip. You take some liquid clay and add stains and then paint with a brush or a slip trailer. I use red clay generally. Then I paint on a white slip which acts as a ground, then I paint the design, fire it once, glaze it and fire it again."

As well as his fine art ceramics, Maseyk also has a line of tableware available at places like Vessel in Wellington and Masterworks in Newton, Auckland, where his latest show opens tomorrow at 3pm. His cups and bowls are individually made and slip decorated.

"I'll draw a picture on it to do-dah it up," says Maseyk, belying his superb craftsmanship honed working for Tony Sly in Hamilton before studying ceramic design

and production at Whanganui Polytechnic. "No one's really teaching it any more. You need the kilns and wheels, and you've got to keep everybody safe. There's gas. Most of the kilns are electric these days. I use LPG and wood. That's a good reason to go up to Barry's, for the wood-fired kilns. He's pretty out there," says Maseyk, who treasures his relationship with this rugged old gent of local pottery.

Twenty seven new pieces will be on display at Masterworks Gallery. "The last set, a set of six I made up at Barry's at the railway, they're one-offs, each with their own theme," says Maseyk, barely hinting at the provocative and excitingly intricate pottery he's about to display.

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