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Fabricated objects help us understand

Ted Snell | September 20, 2007

IF the process of making art can simply be described as giving ideas a visual form, then the present exhibitions at Galerie Dusseldorf in Perth are exemplars of artistic practice.

Mike Singe and Janis Nedela fabricate objects that expand our understanding of the world by pushing at the boundaries of our sensibility and forcing us to see new possibilities in the objects and experiences we encounter each day.

In *Mid Life Crisis Approaching*, Singe creates a portrait of his two hands and his two ears in the diptyches *touch and sound* by using an inked date stamp pressed down on to raw canvas. Each time he pressed the stamp on to the surface, it automatically moved forward a day, so he began with the day of his birth and ended the paintings on the day his exhibition opened.

The myriad dates are assembled carefully to create a convincing representation that documents his life so far by recording how the passage of time has shaped his hands and ears. It is such a simple idea yet, like all of Singe's work, it is potent because it is so accessible and so redolent with meaning.

Likewise, his aerials for *Divine Intervention*, beautifully fabricated from metal coathangers in the form of the Star of David, the Christian fish, the crescent moon and the Sikh dagger, seem ready to plug into your television to download divine inspiration.

Then there are the recycled Australian landscape paintings, bought in junk shops, cut up and reconstructed to form an elaborate European chalet-style bird feeder and a Roman mosaic floor decoration that disclose the cultural baggage brought to these interpretations of the local environment by this group of amateur artists.

Singe ranges across many mediums, from his extraordinary toothpick sculptures to the exquisitely carved plaster *Podcasts* of 26 pairs of signing hands recording the letters of the alphabet, but each medium is perfectly suited to the extrapolation of each new idea.

Nedela has been playing with text and exploring the form of the book for the past quarter century and in his new works he uses the formal layout of pages and palindromes as the basis for an elegant new group of acrylic books that sit on metal shelves circling the gallery. Some are funny, some poignant, but the frozen text suspended in the pristine acrylic has a ghostly and enigmatic quality that slowly colonises your mind.

Mike Singe: Group Show

Janis Nedela: Running Backwards

Galerie Dusseldorf, Perth, until October 7. Inquiries: (08) 9384 0890;

www.galeriedusseldorf.com.au.