

Now you see it, now you don't

Currently at Galerie Dusseldorf is a show, in two parts, that melts before your eyes. Like wily leprechauns, Howard Taylor and Lesley Duxbury offer everything to the viewer only to take it away again.

Taylor and Duxbury are generous artists, though, which is fortunate because the transcendent experience of their work is easily lost. Just when you are taken away, floating in the ambience of soft hues and reflected light, the brain says "stop, I don't understand this, I have to name this experience" and so it is that the sublime is lost to the rational.

However, Taylor and Duxbury work through this quandary. Through a combination of construction and poetry, they invoke the rational side of the mind to let go again. This is the generosity in their process — they offer the viewer continuous second chances. Chasing the sublime is a game of subtle nuances and the work at Galerie Dusseldorf plays in ever-shifting minute degrees.

Taylor and Duxbury's exhibitions at the Mosman Park gallery until April 23 coincide with Constable: Impressions of Land, Sea and Sky at the National Gallery of Australia.

Both Australian artists owe some debt of gratitude to the work of the English painter but Duxbury goes further to reference Constable directly, both in location and in a type of whimsical technique. Some of her works directly refer to Hampstead Heath as a location of Constable's sky

Howard Taylor's *Tracing the Sublime* at Galerie Dusseldorf.



'The soft colour coding that appears on the top of some frames adds contemplation to this referring system of light and diffusion, something Taylor spent years working through in his time down South.'

colour studies, on the back of which he had the habit of writing notes on the day's weather.

Duxbury uses well this nexus point of focused light studies and casual notes on the weather to give the viewer's mind enough room never quite to solidify the sublime. Her prints are often dark and tumultuous,

sometimes so very subtle in their change that I could appreciate not only their quality of observance but the skill in which she goes about her printmaking.

The soft colour coding that appears on the top of some frames adds contemplation to this referring system of light and diffusion,

something Taylor spent years working through in his time down South.

As someone who caught only the tail end of Taylor's extraordinarily creative career I come to much of this work for the first time, viewing it as if it has existed only ever now. Perhaps this is what Taylor's work does to the viewer; its direct engagement re-manifests itself to exist only in the moment and this is why it is referred to as sublime work. But on seeing his small sketches and wonderful pencil work it is possible to understand that this is the case with Duxbury's work, too — all the ruthless research that goes into making a sublime moment.

Taylor's huge legacy is represented in this particular show by a number of smaller scale sketches, studies and three-dimensional constructions.

There are a couple of bigger works, none better for me than the oil on acrylic on shaped marine plywood *Untitled* (Sun Figure Space Screen). This shimmering piece of depth-defying balancing pits broken flat disc against peaked ridge background in a composition only Taylor could get away with.

It both confounds the viewer while enticing them to walk around the work to find the ruse behind the magic.

But there's no ruse, just an ever-changing subtlety that exudes a sigh at the artist's competency and sheer delight in seeing their engagement with their surroundings.

GRADUATES SHOW THEIR WARES

Perth Galleries has on show a group of artists who are no less engaged and equally enjoying the processes of art making. This year's New Works — New Faces (number 6) sees eight recent art school graduates presenting their wares.

Lindsay Harris' *Conjugating*, a big acrylic on canvas, greets you at the front door of the Subiaco gallery. It sums up the maturity of the work on show this year. For the most part the pieces are well thought through and some like Britt Salt's and Di Cubitt's work shows an assuredness that allows them to reduce their work to a softness and subtlety that Howard and Duxbury would appreciate.

Sarah Bell has also applied a reductionist method to her architecturally influenced line paintings. Their confining grids both reflect and use the gallery walls and show a constructed Zen sensibility.

Likewise, Carolyn Gorman's linear constructions and Peter Waller's Boccioni-like space intrusions both articulate a refined spatial aesthetic. Bell, Gorman and Waller all play along that precarious line of design orientated art but their particular influences and social critique give the viewer plenty to work with.

New Works — New Faces ends on April 13.