

OPEN GALLERY LISSA CHRISTOPHER



INTERIOR DISASTER

Francesca Rosa has photographed a far north Queensland home that is decomposing in the wake of Cyclone Larry, approaching the project as if she were recording a crime scene. The resulting images (*Interior Disaster #5*, pictured) are gripping and unexpectedly beautiful. Amid the flayed ceiling fans, buckled walls and mattresses turning to compost, intact domestic items such as a jar of peanut butter and a light globe become poignant reminders of human habitation. *Gallery 4, Australian Centre for Photography, 257 Oxford Street, Paddington, 9332 1455. Tue-Fri, noon-7pm; Sat-Sun, 10am-6pm. Until August 22.*

CAPTURED

David Fairbairn's intriguingly layered multimedia portraits of older Australians are finished in jittery black and white lines. Fairbairn describes his work as "a forensic mapping of an energy field". *Stella Downer Fine Art, 2 Danks Street, Waterloo, 9319 1006. Tue-Sat, 11am-6pm; Sun, 11am-4pm. Until August 23.*

COLLECTING PASSIONS

This rewarding exhibition of 104 modernist creations comes direct from the walls of Justice Roddy Meagher's home. Meagher has been buying art since he was 18 and his private collection includes works by Picasso, Matisse, Rodin, Jean Cocteau, Grace Cossington Smith (*Wardens' Meeting*, pictured), Joy Hester and Margaret Preston. Standouts include Stanislaus Ostojka-Kotkowski's *Two Horizons*, painted in 1966, and a joyously cheeky, untitled Cocteau sketch of a naked man and woman drawn in 1958. *University Art Gallery, Science Road, University of Sydney, 9351 6883; Mon-Fri, 10am-4.30pm; Sun, noon-4pm. Until September 27.*



ALSO RECOMMENDED

Edward Burtynsky at the Australian Centre for Photography, Paddington (until August 22); Lydia Miller at NG Art Gallery, Chippendale (until August 15); Scott Cardamatis and Joseph Saad at Global Gallery, Paddington (ends today).

Send details of exhibitions to opengallery@smh.com.au. No attachments larger than 1Mb.

Back to nature in a creative utopia

A remarkable exhibition featuring hundreds of works has helped struggling communities in Japan reinvent themselves.

VISUAL ART
JOHN McDONALD

Echigo-Tsumari Triennial
Until September 13
Niigata Water and Land Art Festival
Until December 27

LAST week I sat in a community hall in rural Japan, drinking sake and eating Australian beef. The local school choir sang and toasts were proposed in honour of the friendship that exists between the Urata region and Australia. Around the walls stood local people wearing red aprons emblazoned with the word "Aussie".

Unusually for an art-generated event, this evening was notable for its cheerfulness and total absence of snobbishness. There was no heavy-duty networking, no careerism, no opportunity for reputations to be made or unmade. It was simply an appreciation of Australia's participation in a unique exhibition: the fourth Echigo-Tsumari Triennial.

Spread over 700 square kilometres, incorporating almost 280 artworks, the triennial covers the greatest area of any international exhibition. Visitors can buy a ticket in the shape of a passport for 30,000 yen (\$400) and drive from one display to the next or take one of four bus tours. The truly dedicated can join all four tours, with four itineraries. After two days on buses I had seen no more than a tenth of the show but to see everything would require the best part of a fortnight.

The triennial is remarkable not simply because of the vast area it encompasses but because so many venues feature multiple artists and installations. For instance, an old school - rechristened Fukutake House after the chief sponsor and producer of the triennial, Soichiro Fukutake - is

worth one small stamp on your passport but contains room-sized works by numerous artists or groups of artists. It ultimately becomes hard to calculate the number of participants or their countries of origin. The previous triennial included 330 artists from 47 countries and this year it is bigger.

Another unique feature is that a certain percentage of works will remain as permanent installations, maintained by volunteers in the community. It is almost impossible to imagine this occurring in Australia, where vandalism is a national pastime.

The process begins when a venue, usually an old farmhouse, is purchased by a private or corporate sponsor and donated back to the community in its altered form. These deals are brokered by Art Front, Tokyo, a private gallery and exhibitions agency run by the charismatic entrepreneur Fram Kitagawa. Even allowing for the financial crisis, Art Front has been able to fund this year's show entirely through private and corporate means. Once again this would be virtually inconceivable in Australia.

This may seem wondrous enough but perhaps the most extraordinary feature of the triennial

is its utopian ethos, which aims at a revitalisation of the region through art. The first step came in 1996, when Kitagawa was approached by the authorities of Niigata prefecture to do "something creative" that would help facilitate the merger of towns in a rural area of north-western Honshu.

The new Echigo-Tsumari region was created from the union of six smaller towns in Japan's famous "snow country".

In the humid summer months it is a fabulously scenic place: a vision of mountains, streams and winding roads, interspersed with brilliant green rice paddies and traditional farmhouses. During winter it enjoys the highest snowfall of any inhabited area at this latitude. Villages and farms can be cut off for weeks at a time.

This is the setting for Yasunari Kawabata's novel *Snow Country* (1947), which tells the story of the doomed love affair of a city dilettante and a country geisha. The sadness and loneliness that feature so persistently in Kawabata's work reach a kind of perfection in this setting, where people have been battling nature for more than 1500 years.

Nowadays the region is no less beautiful but loneliness and



Time share ... Miho Nakamura - as Tamami the White Dog - at his *Absolute Exchange Gathering*. He swapped visitors' personal items and plans to return them to their rightful owners in three years.

acga AUSTRALIAN COMMERCIAL GALLERIES ASSOCIATION

ANNANDALE
110 Trafalgar Street, Annandale From Aug 12 **BRAM BOGART** Solo Show
9552 1699 Tues-Sat 11-5 Group Show **SHIRLEY KANEDA, IRENE CHOU & LARRY BELL**
OMIE: Bark Cloths from New Guinea Last day

AUSTRALIAN Galleries
15 Roylston Street **PETER WEGNER**
9360 5177 Tues-Sat 10-6
24 Glenmore Road **ANN THOMSON**
9380 8744 Tues-Sat 10-6 Sun 12-5

LEGGE
183 Regent Street, Redfern **ALAN JONES** Crime and Punishment
9319 3340 Tues-Sat 11-6 **CATHERINE HEARSE** Flowers from the Coromandel Coast

MARTIN BROWNE FINE ART
57-59 Macleay Street, Potts Point **GROUP SHOW**
9331 7997 Tues-Sun 11-6

TIM OLSEN
63 Jersey Road, Woollahra **MATTHEW JOHNSON & JO BERTINI** Last day Sunday
9327 3922 Mon-Fri 10-6 Sat 10-5 Sun 12-5 From Aug 11 **EMMA WALKER** New Works

UTOPIA ART SYDNEY
2 Danks Street, Waterloo **KYLIE STILLMAN** Form Guide Last day
9699 2900 Tues-Sat 10-5

WATTERS
109 Riley Street, East Sydney **FRANK LITTLER** Paintings
9331 2556 Wed-Fri 10-8 Tues & Sat 10-5 **VICKI VARVARESSOS** Paintings Last day

www.acga.com.au

2009 Mosman Art Prize
8 August - 6 September

Mosman Council congratulates the winners of the 2009 Mosman Art Prize

First Prize \$20,000
won by **Alexander Lavroff**
Amish bucket with capsicums in colander

Allan Gamble Memorial Art Prize \$3,000
won by **Suzanne Alexander**
Looking for Sydney - Cockatoo Island

Commendation Prize \$1,000
won by **Craig Waddell**
'Olley' The General

House of Phillips Fine Art Young Emerging Artists' Award \$1,000
won by **Adelaide Slater, Passages**

Judged by Margaret Olley AC

Mosman Art Gallery
Cnr Art Gallery Way & Myahgah Rd
Phone 9978 4178 www.mosman.nsw.gov.au
A Mosman Council Cultural Event

andrew mcilroy

Plunge
New Paintings
Opening 6.00pm Thursday, 13 August
Exhibition dates 13 August - 2 September

@ Art Equity Gallery
Level 6, 16-20 Barrack St, Sydney
Contact: 02 9262 6660

Scott Cardamatis & Joseph Saad
Withstanding Fire

A collection of unique sculptural hangings crafted from rare and unusual native seed casings.
Saturday 8th - Sunday 16th August
Global Gallery, 5 Comber St, Paddington
www.globalgallery.com.au
www.ausecoart.com.au

CELIA PERCEVAL & MIN WOO BANG
OPENS TODAY - 11 AUGUST

Wagner Art Gallery
39 Gurner St, Paddington NSW 2021 T: 9360 6069
E: wagnerart@bigpond.com W: www.wagnerartgallery.com.au
Gallery Hours: 10:30-6 Mon-Sat, 1-6 Sun