

Questions Of Heritage And Aesthetics

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NEOPHYTES V.

Gallery 101 Annexe until 17 March.

Young Greek-Australian artists are exploring territory close to home and a long way from their heritage, writes Freda Freiberg.

FOR THE Antipodes Festival, the annual cultural festival of the local Greek community, curator Eva Gaitatzis has put together an exhibition of art works in various media, produced by 18 artists of Greek-Australian background. Neither a sentimental celebration of Greek heritage, nor an assertion of parochial pride, this exhibition demonstrates that they are grappling with a wide range of contemporary concerns, aesthetic and thematic.

Those artists that address their Greek heritage do so critically.

For example, the broken plates and flowers (fresh and dead) in Gina Kalabishis' installation, *A Question of Fractured Time Escaping Reality*, evoke traditional marriage and funeral customs, in such a way as to provoke reflection on domestic violence and the gender imbalance in Greek society. Dimitri Bradas' box-framed assemblages employ traditional folk puppets, known as karaghiozis, and the haloes of traditional religious icons, with a light touch of parody, and some whimsy, suggesting his distance from, as well as affection for, the folk traditions.

Polixeni Papapetrou's photographic tryptich, *Neo-Classical Bod*, exhibits the posed proud figure of a female bodybuilder on both sides of classical columns, celebrating the symmetry and solidity of classical Greek art but, at the same time, submitting it to critical revision, by disturbing the conventional distinction between male kouros and female kore. Other contributors betray no overt Greek influence, formal or thematic. Arthur Michalopoulos's paintings and Elli Ioannou's photographs depict Melbourne urban landscapes, poised between stillness and movement.

George Matoulas's oils and bronzes, and Sophie Anaplotis's computer-manipulated photographs, share an interest in formal abstraction and experimentation.