

VISUAL ARTS

Ric Spencer



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New gallery turns full circle

Marion Borgelt's 360° is a fitting opening show for the new Turner Galleries in Northbridge

Turner Galleries, formerly the Church Gallery, has opened its new space in Northbridge with what I think is a very apt show — for a couple of reasons.

Firstly, the work is architectural and as such complements the new space beautifully. Secondly, the richly feminine work christens the new gallery space with a distinctly female energy.

Turner Galleries' opening show is 360° by Marion Borgelt, a Sydney artist who has taken up a residency at the William Street gallery. Her work is characteristically of the body. By this I mean her work alludes to the body through sculptural form but also engages in the body as a theoretical space.

Her work can be read as strongly feminist and strongly political but in a more general sense also references

the history of painting and the history of language.

Entering Turner Galleries, you are hit with a large wall of what looks like blue meteorite impact zones. The works are seductively made, bent and wrapped canvases which, in their three-dimensionality, entice a physical response from the viewer.

It's like chest against chest between the viewer and artwork, an interesting method of bringing the viewer into the gallery. Turn around and you encounter what looks like a number of slashed canvases. Along the wall, the paintings open and close, revealing and enclosing, wiling their feminine charms.

These paintings, created through a flat backdrop of one colour overlaid by a number of vertical twisted strips of canvas, have taken Lucio Fontana's slashed canvases

and put them together with Bridget Riley's optical strips to invoke a tantalising response.

This breaking of the canvas was, for Fontana, a peek hole into the cosmos and Borgelt uses it in a similar but rather more fleshy way. Borgelt's work suggests a more entangled connection between the flesh and the spiritual.

On the back of the dividing wall that splits the gallery in two is a small piece of text from a newspaper clipping which goes some way toward explaining Borgelt's work. The text is about the death of a Chinese dialect along with the last person of a tribe.

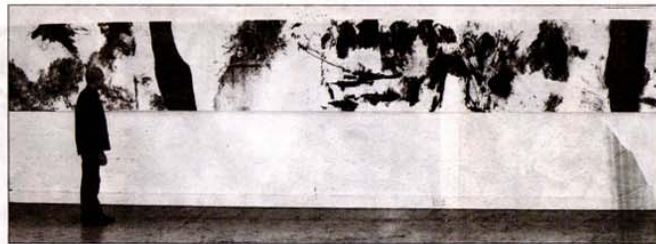
The old woman who has passed away has, in this case, taken with her a whole language, a whole way of knowing, and in the symbolic meaning of this story Borgelt sees a defining relationship. The title of the

newspaper clipping reads: The Last Gentle Voice of Secret Women's Business Lapses into Silence.

The work in the back half of the gallery brings into sharp focus this relationship, as Borgelt sees it, between universal knowing and the woman as the carrier of that knowledge. In glass cabinets, propped up on an angle, are books with symbols carved into them. On the walls, in five glass boxes, are black and red symbols built again from stripped and twisted canvas, this time as a positive form.

Two other pieces chart the lunar cycle, highlighting the link between the feminine body and the phases of the Moon.

Borgelt's work sees it as a symbiotic relationship and her beautifully made curved wooden pieces give a poetic ambience to rhythm, cycles and female intuitive



Clyde McGill with his artwork *Crossing the Border*, an etching and monoprint on French cotton paper.

knowing. Borgelt's 360° is an engaging show worth responding to.

Marion Borgelt's 360° is at Turner Galleries, 470 William Street, Northbridge, until April 21.

At the Holmes a Court Gallery, Clyde McGill is a couple of weeks into a two-month residency. McGill's work is part performance, part video installation, part print-making. Or should I say it is all these things and none because McGill hopes, and you can see this in the layout of this space, that all simultaneous parts of the art-making

process be democratically even and equally valid as the residue of our day-to-day lives.

In the middle of the gallery lies rolled out paper with prints started here and there; on the walls are some completed works; small video screens sit on the table and a large video work backs up against the window.

It looks like the space is forcing him to amalgamate all arms of his practice in a truly egalitarian way and by osmosis alone his performance is feeding his print-making, which is feeding his book-making, which is feeding his coffee-making.

The pragmatics of dealing with this situation as a residency in a gallery makes the work in progress, titled *Finding Where the Edges Are*, look and feel great. His smaller drawings and prints, like *Notes to Cody*, an ode to his first grandson, look very strong in this context.

Clyde McGill is exhibiting at Holmes a Court Gallery, 11 Brown Street, East Perth, until May 20. He will give a residency entrance talk tomorrow at 2pm and an exit talk on his last day on May 20 at 2pm. Book on 9218 4540.