

As the global bust continues, it raises the spirit to see someone having fun with the leftovers from the boom.

Paul Caporn's work has always been industrious but in Reconstruction Works at Turner Galleries he makes industry itself his subject matter — more specifically the building industry and the incidental nature of its material culture.

A large-scale plastic toy digger — or is it a small-scale, real-life digger — greets you at the door, sitting proudly on top of a heap of discarded plastic flotsam and jetsam. The mound and the digger are both resplendent in yellow and this heaving mass of gold, in its isolation, is a self-sustaining micro-economic miracle.

The pile of plastic, dug up by the digger, provides the material that builds the digger while also providing material to make other goods. Once these goods are used they are discarded to be buried by the digger — later to be dug up, I presume, to make other plastic diggers and more plastic goods.

Without getting into social theorist Anthony Giddens' micro and macro structuration, it's fair to say that Caporn's yellow digger The Golden Age is an excellent visual analogy for WA's economic system as it relates to globalisation. I also think it pretty much sums up our species' incredibly deft nature of building (and making) for the sake of keeping things moving along.

Caporn's work is a site of production but a site slightly askew of the norm. Elsewhere in the gallery things aren't going that well — indeed one crane has toppled to a nasty end.

Slump, to keep the economic analogy going, also says it all and it's also a terrific individual piece. Taking up a considerable slice of the gallery, the crane in Slump is made from the type of interlocking soft rubber used in kids' play; in fact a lot of the pieces in Reconstruction Works use children's toys. The crane



**Creative cycle:**  
The pile of plastic, dug up by the digger, provides the material that builds the digger while also providing material to make other goods, like the crane in Slump, above.



has indeed slumped and fallen into a heaving mess; almost it seems to be crushed by the weight of its task.

Other works include a series of bug catchers which have somehow caught neon construction signs and a number of safety helmets driven hard through with long nails. Perhaps the pick of the show for me is the very subtle Between the Lines, a wonderful Debra Gurney-like cast acrylic painting built around the bubble levels that keep your building

lines straight. There sometimes seems no end to Caporn's ingenuity and composite sense of aesthetics.

Another equally entertaining show at Turner Galleries is Emily Mabee's Light. Also based on construction, her paintings are built from pliable "tubings" of acrylic paint, squeezed out of a bottle, dried and then woven or carved into what could be

an almost limitless number of variations.

The carvings are perhaps too reliant on op-art but the weavings definitely resonated with me. Some more tightly woven than others, their lush translucence oscillates in a fizzing fashion. Woven in various patterns and hues, these works — with titles like Flare, Daylight, Dusk, Blush and Ember — affect the

viewer through their tactility and engagement of memory.

In some way the works bring to mind a retro aesthetic, making me think of plastic woven chairs and orange retro lights.

Paul Caporn's Reconstruction Works and Emily Mabee's Light are at Turner Galleries, William Street, Northbridge, until May 16.

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