



art with
marina saint martin

Return to childhood freedoms, surface tensions versus emotional ones and the intricacies of drawing are among the themes explored by three Coast-based artists all showing this month

Artistic vision that's in the bag times three

Three local female artists, all with very different approaches to their art practices, are showing in a triple solo exhibition at 19 Karen Contemporary Artspace, Mermaid Beach.

Sonya G. Peters (gallery 1) is exhibiting *From the Paperbag Series Another space*; Fiona Kennedy-Altoft is showing *Jocular* in gallery 2 and Hannah Smith displays *Eat, Sleep, Have Visions* in gallery 3.

With *Jocular*, Kennedy-Altoft looks at the human psyche via canine, centaur-like figures.

She remarks of her anthropomorphic work that 'dogs and people are similar in many ways'.

Both, she says, are 'instinctive, affectionate, wild, disobedient, compliant and, at times, blindly loyal'.

"My new paintings explore aspects of human behaviour that compare to animals," says Kennedy-Altoft.

The works invite the viewer to escape 'the ceaseless demands of adulthood' and to, albeit temporarily, rebel against expectations of responsibility and reclaim their childhood via her playful use of colour and her quizzical attitude towards her lovable hybrid figures.

The series provides a storybook, enchanted world where the viewer can respond to instinct, dispensing with roles such as mother and provider – who lose identity in the ceaseless demands of domesticity.

From the Paperbag Series Another space, is the work of Canadian-born local artist Sonya G. Peters, who worked as a graphic designer after completing a Diploma of Applied Arts in Illustration at Sheridan College, Ontario, before moving to Australia in 1991.

Peters has since completed a Bachelor of Fine Art with first class Honours and a Master of Visual Art at Queensland College of Art, Gold Coast, where she now teaches. She was awarded the Philip Bacon Recommendation Prize and was last year shortlisted for the Stan & Maureen Duke Art Prize Gold Coast.

From the Paperbag explores the 'humble materiality of the paper bag' which serves as the catalyst to 'metaphorically investigate the intangible aspects of human experience', explains Peters. The two-dimensional surface, the paper bag, operates as the interface by which the interior space of consciousness and the exterior space of the physical world converge.

"It is here the paper bag as a surface/ground effects a fusion between the act of



Eat, Sleep, Have Visions, 2009, by Hannah Smith



Left: *Phew ... That Was Fun, 2009, by Fiona Kennedy-Altoft*
Right: *Birds of a Feather, 2009, by Sonya G. Peters*



becoming and the act of being, through the process of mark-making," says Peters.

Hannah Smith's collection, on the other hand, works through a range of mediums including ink, pencils and embossing. The artist muses over an automatic drawing process, which results in patterns recalling an organic and almost microscopic world which are 'fluid-like in motion, yet bound through mimetic tension'.

In her studio practice, Smith takes on what she describes as 'an obsessive quest' in the making of her works, spending countless hours in repetitive mark-making.

"When I create these works, the process is energetic and direct," explains Smith. In all its intricacies and myriad of patterns, each work requires countless hours of concentration.

"When I begin there is no initial concept or resolution in my head in dictating how I will create this drawing. The drawing must slowly reveal itself with intuitive choices."

19 Karen was opened last year by Terri Lew and Mariam Arcilla to create platforms for networking between artists, creative organisations and the general art-appreciating public.

This triple solo exhibition is a good example of how they are addressing their mission statement.

From the *Paperbag Series Another space*, by Sonya G. Peters; *Jocular*, by Fiona Kennedy-Altoft; *Eat, Sleep, Have Visions*, by Hannah Smith, at 19 Karen Contemporary Artspace until July 4

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