

VISUAL ARTS

Ric Spencer



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A tale of garlands and beasts

Holly Story and Geoff Overheu strike very different chords in their reading of landscape at Turner Galleries. Both equally in tune with the need to shift our perspective on the use of resources, Story's *The Gift* and Overheu's *Everybody Knows* are personal narratives using recognisable, yet culturally diverse symbology.

The dividing wall at Turner Galleries has been shifted well towards the front of the galleries', bringing Story's work into a more intimate space.

And intimate is the key here, a precious ambience of offering and acceptance is the pervading atmosphere of *The Gift* which, in its beautifully fragile and hand-skilled books, prints and rosettes, places the artist within the schema of biological transference.

Found cloth, buttons, received natural materials, mainly from the banksia, and chosen forms of outcome combine to exude a reverence towards the artist's position within the flow of things.

Indeed this may be the main message from *The Gift*, acknowledgement of the artist as a conduit between material coming to them and their reworking of that



Close-up: Holly Story's *Garland for Haemodorum, Bosseaea and Pisolithus*.

material to present to others in a different form. Story's work positions the artist as mediator, as the accompanying artist's statement reads: "An exchange . . . if done mindfully, results in a growth of the soul."

In *The Gift* there is a sense of non-ownership of the material but complete ownership of the artist's part in the process and this duality makes for conscious artwork.

After Story's last experimental work at the Moores Building, I was looking forward to seeing more video work. The positing of the key theme of transformation would only be helped by greater variation in technology.

Coming out of this intimate zone and walking around the wall and into the much more expansive back part of the gallery, the viewer is

immediately confronted by big, garish and extravagant works. After some readjusting, it doesn't take long to recognise Overheu's trademark dead bloated cows strewn across the gallery like the aftermath of some massacre.

Overkill it might be but Overheu's *Everybody Knows* could do with some culling of less successful works. The "paintings" need more consideration but whether lying prostrate on the floor or hung as canvases the big carcasses of cows and pigs have visual impact while being less than subtle in their message.

Overheu has shifted his work slightly in adding some kitsch elements and just a bit of bling here and there, there's also no doubt in the quality of his casting methods.

Together these elements take us on a journey of reverence once again,



Extravagant: Geoff Overheu's *The Lack of Memory in the Field of Dreams*.

but on this occasion it's a reverence to the all-pervasive consistency of the earth.

For Overheu, in contrast to Story's art of transformation, there is no denying that in the end this place will outlast you — and this despite your own illusions. Overheu's reworking of Michelangelo's *Pieta* in his tragic comedy, *la pieta*

macropoda, is fantastic as is his three bronze dead cows, which take the place usually put aside on the wall for ducks.

Story's *The Gift* and Overheu's *Everybody Knows* are at Turner Galleries, 470 William Street, Northbridge, until June 20.