

WEEKEND

The Arts

Reflections on architecture

THE last two decades has seen a profusion of hybrid art forms in the institutions of fine art. There has been an appropriation of mediums and formats traditionally within the grounds of theatre, music, dance or literature, and the grafting of these to concepts loosely rooted in a visual art tradition.

In this atmosphere of art without boundaries it is quite clear, why architecture, a discipline so practically bound to the world, has been left "out in the cold".

In initiating a travelling exhibition, "A Place of

what's on
at the Museum

ELAINE HAXTON, PRINTMAKER. Elaine Haxton, an Australian artist, has been working since the 1920s as a painter and designer. In 1965 she turned to printmaking.

This first survey of her printmaking activities by a public gallery has been assembled by the Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery. Catalogue \$3.50. Until May 15.

PORT ARTHUR POTTERY. Pottery made at Port Arthur after the closure of the prison. Most pieces are the work of James Price who operated a pottery, 1888-1912.

Also assembled by the Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery. Catalogue \$4. Until May 30.

LUNCHTIME CONCERT. Friday, May 6, 1.10-1.50 pm. Young Conservatorium instrumentalists directed by Lyndal Edmiston. Presented by Tasmanian Conservatorium of Music.

SUNDAY AFTERNOON AT THE MUSEUM: Gallery Concert, Tasmanian Conservatorium of Music. Jane Edwards (soprano), Jonathan Allen (violin), Ricky Edwards (piano). Tomorrow, May 1, at 3 pm.

WE ARE OPEN FROM 10 UNTIL 5 EVERY DAY

Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery
5 Argyle Street Hobart

A PLACE OF
CONTEMPLATION

Architectural attitudes to space

An exhibition of proposals submitted
by seventeen Australian architects

Tasmanian School of Art Gallery
University of Tasmania, Mt Nelson Campus

APRIL 18-MAY 14, 1983

Gallery hours: Mon-Fri 10-4, Sat 10-12

A travelling exhibition prepared by the Tasmanian School of Art Gallery Committee and assisted by the Commonwealth Government through the Visual Arts Board of the Australia Council.

Contemplation — architectural attitudes to space," Paul Zika, a lecturer in painting at the University of Tasmania, has attempted to reopen some dialogue between these traditionally allied fields.

He has gone about this personally inviting 25 architects to submit proposals in accord with a short, though complex, brief. The 15 submissions received constitute the show.

The aim of the brief was to exhibit work that "highlights the decision making process" in the "evolving" of architectural space — in this case one that "elicits" a contemplative or reflective response and all with the rider that work be done on two A1 size sheets of paper.

The central technical problem seemed to be in evoking the physical presence of place, while still exposing the process. Only one submission took the obvious two-sheet solution.

Most were satisfied with focusing on or around one or two aspects of the tripartite brief (architectural space, process, contemplation).

This had the dual effect of providing variety, though at the cost of robbing the show of its potential depth.

Through the use of the blind spot test as metaphor, Norman Day deals with "true" and "false" notions of contemplation. In dropping a neat wedge between conducive and inductive space he raises the question of how active should (or can) architectural space be in "eliciting" a reflective state.

Wally Barda, no stranger to gallery space, makes the minimal architectural intrusion upon the landscape — a window frame. The frame sits as threshold and signifier of the viewer, view relationship.

The frame's reference though is also to the picture plane, and its role in the rationalisation of sight through the perspective systems that translate space solely on its, and not the eye's terms.

So it is not just the pivot for the reflective see-saw but the condition and object of the contemplation itself.

Chen and Robinson provide an appropriate foil to this condition of western vision, citing Hokusai, "Experimenting . . . I hung the moon on various branches of the pine."

This implied movement carries through into many of the works either via a simultaneity enmeshed in a plan, section, elevation scheme or more effectively through the articulation of architectural sequence. Of these Viney, Hill and Willett's work stands out.

Jennifer Hill's pathway leads one to expect nothing. It is a series of "climaxes", releases and deflections strung together with Palladian restraint.

A path, that may be intentionally, courts the risk of letting contemplation leak, through cracks in its timing.

Willett, though conceding least to the gallery context in his Glenelg pier structure, resolves all aspects of the brief with great clarity.

His process from the initial shift through words — contemplation, reflection, symmetry, palindrome, Glenelg, noon — to the finished structure is clearly readable.

The exhibition exists as a fragile bridge between estranged friends, art and architecture, and as that is a worthwhile precedent.

The ambitions of the show are realistically pitched, though for the fans of the obscure, dramatic or quasi-relevant it may well fall beneath their excitement threshold, all being calm in this little white teacup until May 14 — no scones or even cream, just the reflection of the window.

— Stephen Lees