



It can be witty but it's not fun

IT IS scarcely necessary to refute the notion so lightly bandied about in art circles that "art is fun."

Art is not, never has been and never can be classified as "fun."

But this is not to deny that it may legitimately contain the element of wit and humor.

Indeed, in some instances wit becomes a sustaining force in artistic expression, as for example in the contemporary "action culture" that includes kinetics, inflatables, body art, etc.

Wit then is the soul of levity in Eventstructure, the programmed creation of a Dutch-Australian duo, Theo Botschuyver and Jeffrey Shaw.

Advertised for appearances at Pinacotheca Gallery and Elwood beach, it is more substantially installed at

Tolarno Galleries until May 3.

Eventstructure is good entertainment. Its trouble is, as with other types of action culture, that it tries to marry the visual arts with mechanics and the performing arts.

This involves maintenance and sustained physical effort both of which are foreign to the visual arts.

Bearing in mind its likely impermanence we can enjoy Eventstructure for its aptly allusive, amusing and inventive aspects.

The hairy, photographed skin of a naked male torso breathes in and out like the diaphragm of a bull frog, clothes flap in wind created by an electric fan and the pungent smell of ozone and sun-tan lotion wafts from a pressure-pack concealed in the cyclorama of a fashionable beach resort.

Best visual bon mot of all is the photograph of the semi-circular entrance to the St. Kilda Rd. Arts Centre — with running water cleaned off the "fish window" by a windscreens wiper.

★
AT POWELL Street Gallery, wit enlivens the ceramics of Lorraine

Jenyns, a ceramicist who conceals a sculptor's feeling for intimate, volumetric shapes beneath a frivolous facade.

These small, fairytale pieces are presented with panache and a flair for exotic decoration that gives them a quaint Islamic look and relates them to Eastern traditions.

★
A RECENT, delicately beautiful show that came and went virtually unnoticed at Georges Gallery was the display of Rosenthal Relief porcelains now, alas, on their way to South Australia.

Featured in it were the colorful porcelain multiples of Vasarely along with pure white

reliefs by Hartung, Pomodoro, Uecker, Wotruba and others, all impressive in their austerity.

As pointed out in the catalogue, Vasarely's art "expresses a feeling of well-being and happiness." Which is not the same thing as wit, of course, but is by no means dissimilar in the effect it produces.

★
PAUL ZIKA's modular abstracts (print rooms, Powell Street), are sophisticated contributions to local print-making.

Variations of single, basic shapes and colors appear to be Zika's aim.

Which results in flawless finish but leaves one questioning the attitude that produced it.

However admirable they may be, perfectionist accomplishments by young artists always

leave vague feelings of disquiet.

Perhaps because they suggest withdrawal rather than adventure. Like turning one's back on life and going into a monastery.

★
FACELESS grey shadows with smudges of pink and blue enlivened by line give David Voigt's paintings (Toorak Gallery) a stygian existence hovering between impressionism and chiaroscuro.

The best of them are the two "Cup Day Crowd" pictures. Most of the others could do with a strong cubistic tightening up of loose ends.

★
A VENERABLE looking self-portrait by the VAS president, William Frater, deservedly won the Cato (\$200) prize for oils at the Autumn Exhibition of the Victorian Artists Society.

The Norman Bros. (\$100) prize for water-colors went, less deservedly, to Robert T. Miller for a dull portrayal of a hackneyed subject.

What mitigates against any excitement in the seasonal VAS shows is their utter predictability.

The VAS Council it seems is badly in need