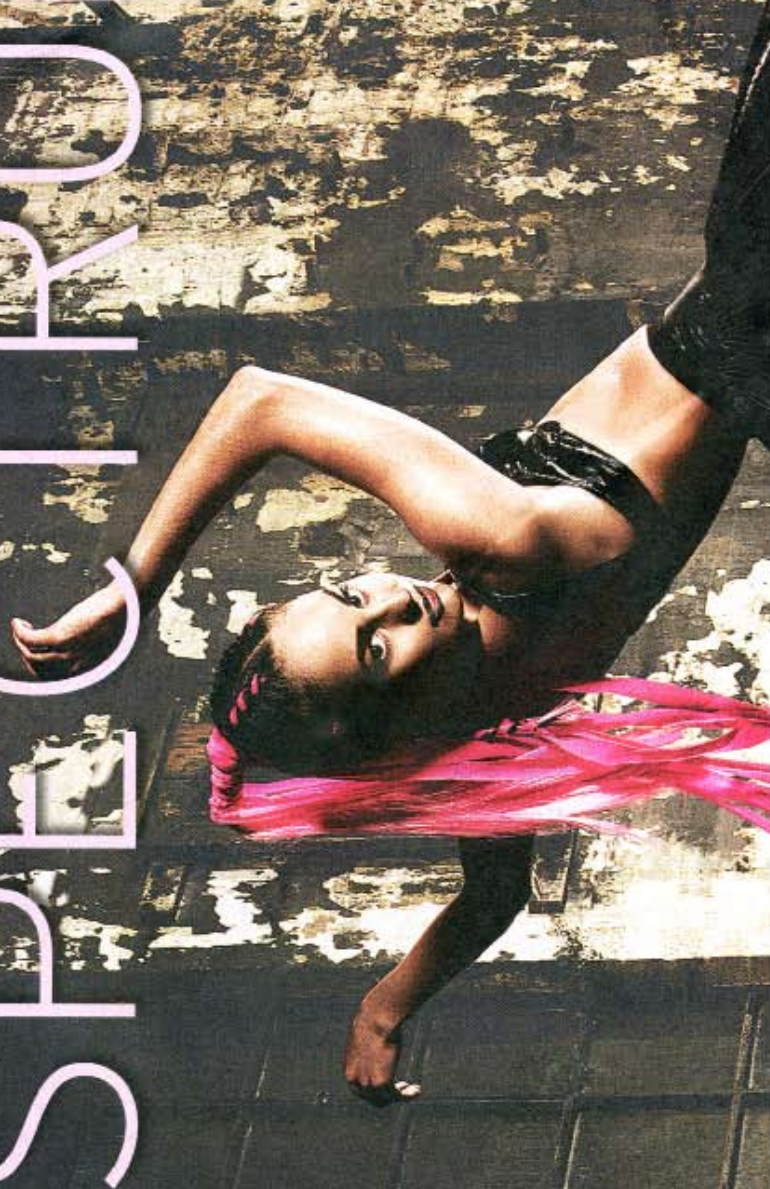


The Sydney Morning Herald

SPECIAL PROMOTION

DECEMBER 15-16, 2007

SELECTIONS



OPEN GALLERY KAREN PAKULA



THE YEAR IN ART

The dynamic hits of 2007, as selected by a team of curators, crosses many styles and fads, even those that are decades old. If Sydney Ball's graphic minimalism (above), Tracey Moffatt's foray into disaster movies and Cressida Campbell's woodblock print of a living room in the mean streets of the eastern suburbs are for the oldies, youngsters will enjoy Sherna Teperson's adorable miniature world on a basketball, Joan Ross's Captain Cook in kangaroo skin and Jess MacNeil's lightly drawn landscape.
S.H. Ervin Gallery, Watson Road, Observatory Hill, The Rocks, 9258 0173. Tue-Sun 11am-5pm. Ends tomorrow.

MARTINE EMDUR

Martine Emdur's hyper-real treatment of the sea has established her as an extraordinary painter of water and life within its depths. For her new show, Emdur appears to have dived below the surface, Valerie Taylor style, to capture swimmers cavorting, floating and freestyling, their bodies suspended against the volume of darkening sea. Bondi never looked so good. *Arthouse Gallery, 66 McLachlan Avenue, Rushcutters Bay, 9332 1019. Mon 10am-2pm, Tue-Fri 10am-6pm, Sat 10am-5pm. Until December 22.*

RENNY KODGERS/STEPHANIE SMIEDT

The artist known by his mother as Mark Shorter dons his Kenny Rogers outfit in a saucy video involving a sauna and frisky blondes. "Renny Kodgers lovers only" are invited into his installation - a sauna with RK's towelling bathrobe and sequined cowboy hat on a hook outside. New York's Stephanie Smiedt is onto something interesting with her large computer-assisted Rorschach blobs, which are facsimiles of smaller acrylic drawings. *Chalk Horse, 56 Cooper Street, Surry Hills, 9699 8999. Wed-Sat noon-6pm. Ends today.*

SNOW FORMS

The Japanese alpine wilderness of ice and steam elevates Luke Hardy's images beyond the clichés of wildlife photography but his recordings of two warring tribes of macaques have a distant and touching grace all their own. Back from the mountaintop, the photographer trains his camera on urban exotica from a tattooed yakuza crotch-deep in misty spa waters to a Buddha buried up to his head in snow. *The Depot Gallery, 2 Danks Street, Waterloo, 0403 754 740. Tue-Sat 11am-6pm. Ends today.*



Send details of exhibitions to opengallery@smh.com.au

Super and lo

As Andy Warhol's own
eternity, the line betw

VISUAL ART JOHN McDONALD

Andy Warhol

Gallery of Modern Art, Brisbane,
until March 30

"WHEN you think about it," said Andy Warhol, "department stores are kind of like museums." This observation is emblazoned on the front of the press kit for the Gallery of Modern Art's massive Andy Warhol show; it is displayed in very large letters in the foyer and on items for sale in the shop. One may also buy T-shirts sporting quotable quotes such as: "I am a deeply superficial person", or "I like boring things".

It's all in the spirit of fun but it is a joke with no punchline. Everything in this show of approximately 300 items is mediated by irony. So when we read that department stores and museums are "kind of" the same thing, we are supposed to smile at the idea while quietly noting the differences between these temples of culture and commerce. Yet to stand in the gift shop and study the array of Andy merchandise is to feel such distinctions are inconsequential.

This is Andy Warhol's grand legacy to world culture: he made it cool to like superficial things; he treated art dispassionately, as one commodity among others. He didn't moralise or seek to educate an audience - he acted as a mirror, reflecting all the mass media junk that provides a white noise accompaniment to modern urban life. His standard tactic was simplicity itself - he depicted those things that everybody already knew about. Nobody ever had to stand puzzled in front of a Warhol picture, unless you were a critic or curator, determined to find hidden meanings invisible to the uneducated masses.