

SHOWS' DIFFERENT REFLECTION OF REALITY

Art of challenging the norm

Siopis, Brand&Messina At Stevenson Until July 15 DANNY SHORKEND reviews

THE three exhibitions on offer have the effect of deconstructing and destabilising assumed paradigms. Penny Siopis achieves through the juxtaposition of painting and sculpture; Jody Brand through her subversive photographs, and Mitchell Gilbert Messina accomplishes this through reflecting on the over-production of internet video.

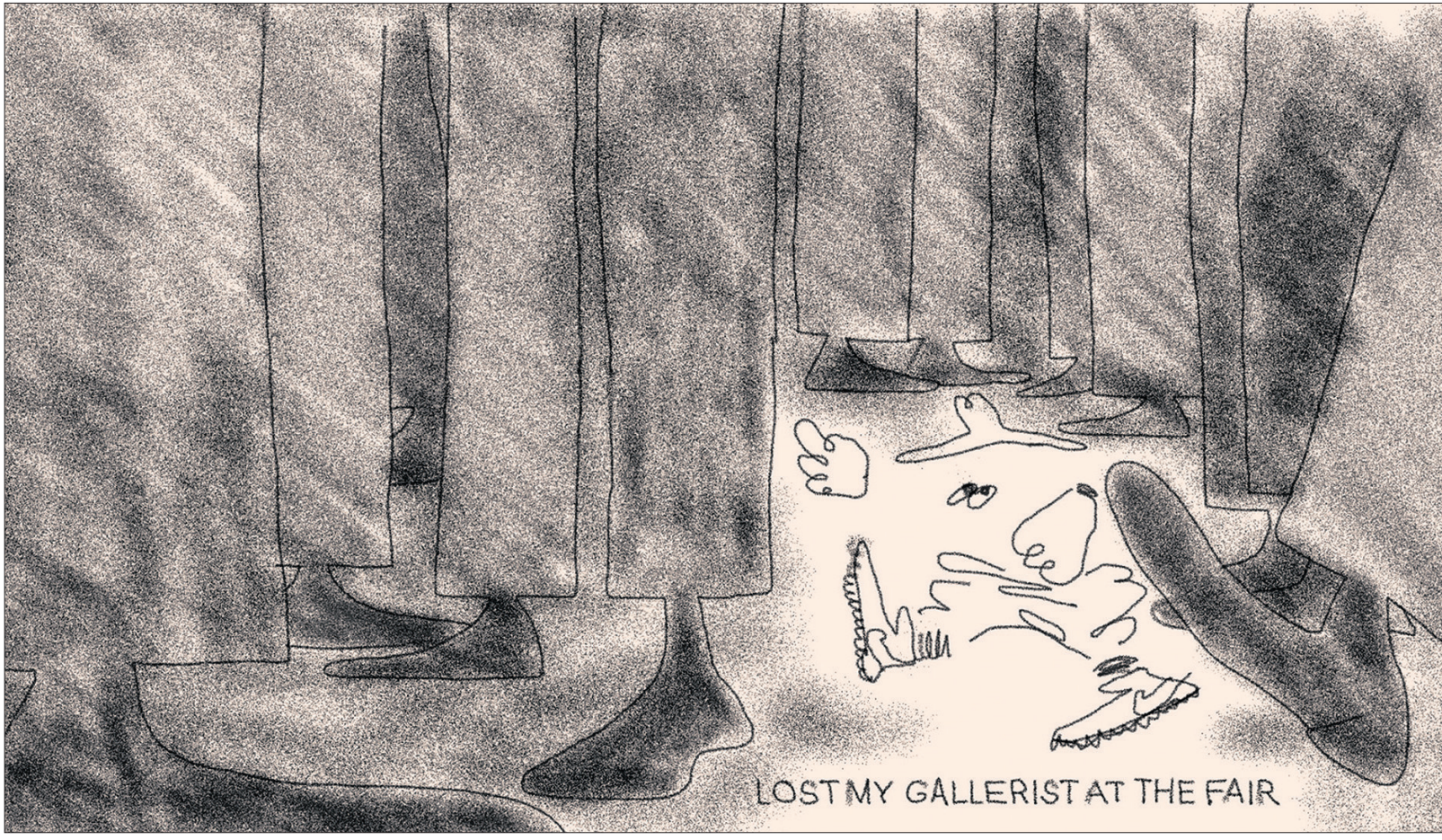
Siopis's familiar glue and ink style present to the eye a flowering cascade of pinks, purples, reds, greens and yellow. Yet this abstract sense of formlessness struggle to become a figure or face that emerge from the flowering forms. This tension between the "real" and the abstract is further articulated in her odd juxtaposition of sculptures (often stuck directly on the canvas surface).

These figures and busts and merely a rock crystal or semi-precious stone create a tension for the very reality of the painting is questioned. This is so as one is somehow disallowed from simple reverie in colour and form, and instead these sculptures, culled from the Western artistic tradition, implicate the painting objects as bearers of a truth other than their aesthetic beauty.

For now, they are unrealities, mere stuff that is poured (consider her video and stills in this light), running beyond the canvas format (she often includes the running and spilling that would occur outside of the canvas frame) and these sensual delights are mere imaginings. There is a third dimension, inhabited by one's attention span is limited further through constant streaming, short clips and a break in any one narrative (which is not necessarily negative).

One gets the sense that it's a video comparable to an architect who lets all the various scaffolding and features of the building be exposed. One gains a second-order reflective view of contemporary culture, wherein information is ubiquitous and accessible, but no order or coherence results. In fact, the great expanse of possibility renders a potential ordering system difficult to discern.

Taken as a totality, the three solo shows invite the viewer to relinquish the belief that one can think oneself out of a spider's net. Instead, one hears the "other" as an echo of one's own scream into the abyss. This is the quintessence of deconstruction – the destabilising of boundaries and intrinsic hierarchies. Yet this is an already old hat and there may be a shift beyond



INTRIGUING: Big Old Drawings (video still) by Mitchell Gilbert Messina.

thus promises the embrace of new narratives, whatever one's assumed ideological agenda.

Messina's video piece also deconstructs assumed hierarchies. It questions the idea of a well-crafted video work by paying tribute to the YouTube autoplay feature. The story is fragmented and haphazard, reflecting on the fact that perhaps one's attention span is limited further through constant streaming, short clips and a break in any one narrative (which is not necessarily negative).

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AIMING HIGH: Art Cannon is one of the works by Mitchell Gilbert Messina.

this wherein "anything goes" and a modernist utopia might exist side by side.

In that respect, the exhibition points beyond its particular aesthetic to a plateau of mean-

ing wherein, in Siopis's words, "physical objects fall in and out of the painted world. Some press their faces against the painted surface, touching their own reflection. What forces pull here, push there? The

republic is a particular public in a world of flux".

In a world of flux, one must still ask what it is that changes, that is, there must be some constant which is to be in flux in the first place.

A laugh with a social critique

Staff Reporter

THE Jive Cape Town Funny Festival has over the years established itself as the city's winter comedic tonic and a "great night out".

Frivolous as it may sound, the festival showcases some of the country's top proponents of humour and serves a more important purpose than just making people laugh – it's a good gauge of how, and what, the population is thinking.

South African comedians are good social commentators, painting pictures with words and using their innate funny bones to add humour to the situation, candy-coating messages and making them palatable to the audience. A message delivered with humour is more easily retained and often shared over and over. You need only think of Trevor Noah and Marc Lottering, examine their styles to appreciate their craft.

Using humour in the message was how comics of old plied their trade. You don't have to go to the court jester to explain the art form, but examine the recent South African situation of pre-1994 to appreciate the craft and acumen of Pieter-Dirk Uys, David Kramer, Taliep Petersen and Mel Miller. All used comedy to deliver difficult messages in dangerous times.

The attributes that comedic social commentators require to succeed include an ability to be sharp, curious, have a way with words, see the world through funny lenses and, in addition to that, possess another set of skills that include the ability to perform in a packed auditorium. Added to this, anyone who puts themselves on a public stage needs the courage of a lion and the hide of an elephant. This is not an industry for the faint-hearted or sensitive.

The old adage of laughter being the best medicine has its basis in science. It's a fact that laughter creates a chemical reaction in the body, activating the pituitary gland to create endorphins, releasing a morphine-like chemical into the bloodstream, reducing pain and triggering positive feelings.

Recent research shows levels of endorphins produced are higher when laughter is experienced in groups. This gives credence to the theatre experience, rather than enjoying comedy alone on television, on the internet or radio.

The unique attribute of the Cape Town Funny Festival is that it showcases a cast of top-class, local stand-up comedians and internationally acclaimed, comedy variety performers. It is best described as a gala showcase, where local stand-up comics meet five-star international variety performers.

The variety acts allow the audience to relax before being required to concentrate, once again, as a stand-up bombards their senses.



MARC LOTTERING

The energy of the show, which differs from performance to performance, is determined by the audience. This is what makes live performance so exciting.

The Funny Festival showcases three outstanding variety international acts from around the world. They include Freddie Mercury look-alike and alter-ego Mario; Queen of the Circus; the world's leading comedy contortionist, Captain Frodo; and London's top leading comic magician, Paul Dabek.

Painting the South African scenario are Marc Lottering, Mel Jones, Dalin Oliver, Daniel Mpilo Richards, Loyiso Madinga and Ndimiso Lindi.

Johannesburg comics Loyiso Madinga and Ndimiso Lindi have both been performing on African stages of late.

Both are regulars in Ghana, Nigeria, Uganda, Zambia, Kenya and Tanzania and bring an insight to the African experience, especially on how the continent views the South African scenario.

Emcee Alan Committie has the difficult task of holding the show together, harnessing the energy and preparing the audience for each act. The confidence and rapport that Alan creates with the audience night after night, lays the foundation for the success of the performance.

Present the above in a world-class theatre, with a great set, lighting and sound, and you have the recipe for a great night out, showcasing the best comedy the country has to offer. It might initially seem frivolous, but analyse the message and start thinking.

The Cape Town Funny Festival runs at the Baxter Theatre from July 10 through to August 6. Tickets cost R190 each and generous discounts are offered on bulk bookings of over ten. Bookings can be made through Computicket.

Beyoncé fans light up the net

Cleve R Wootson Jr

BEYONCÉ fever lit up the internet over the weekend amid reports that Queen Bey had given birth to her twins.

TMZ, the Us Weekly and CNN were among the outlets reporting that the superstar and her husband, Jay Z, had welcomed twins, citing unnamed sources.

However, Beyoncé's social media accounts have said nothing. And many fans in the Beyhive said they were reserving their excitement until the announcement was Instagram official.

In true Beyoncé fashion, she announced her pregnancy with a surprise Instagram post in February, dropping a picture of herself draped in a light-green veil and surrounded by flowers.

Her hands cupped her very obviously pregnant belly.

"We would like to share our love and happiness," Beyoncé wrote in the caption. "We have been blessed two times over. We are incredibly grateful that our family will be growing by two, and we thank you for your well wishes. – The Carters."

Beyoncé gave birth to her first child, Blue Ivy Carter, on January



BEYONCÉ

7, 2012.

The world had to wait two days for the official announcement of Blue Ivy's arrival.

"We are happy to announce the arrival of our beautiful daughter, Blue Ivy Carter, born on Saturday, January 7, 2012," the couple said in a statement to People magazine the Monday after her birth.

Jay Z recorded his daughter's first seconds of life – her breathing, cries and coos – resulting in her featured role on one of Beyoncé's songs. – The Washington Post

SHOWTIMES FRIDAY 16 JUN - THURSDAY 22 JUN

A large table containing showtimes for various venues including Bayside, Tableview, CapeGate, Eikestad Mall, Parow Centre, Covenhoven Square, Blue Route, Garden Route, and others. The table lists show titles, times, and venue information.

Advertisement for the Baxter Theatre Centre, featuring showtimes for 'Suddenlly The Storm', 'The Mummy', and 'The Whole Truth'. It includes contact information and a 'To advertise in the Cape Times' section.