

IN THE GALLERIES



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ALEX SELENITSCH: LIFE/TEXT

Though always located on the periphery of the art world, the concrete poetry genre has held at least some footing in Australia since the 1960s. This often-maligned field - characterised by its arrangement of texts into often allegorical visual forms - has suffered through clumsily illustrative and one-dimensional visual devices. But this extensive survey of the work of Melbourne artist and architect Alex Selenitsch speaks to his rigorous conceptual, spatial, architectural and sculptural approach. While his earlier, purely textual, works exhibit a satisfying conceptual and formal awareness, Selenitsch's works from the 1980s begin to incorporate sculptural and architectural elements. The title piece, for example, sees the words "life" and "text" worked into the timber structural armature of a full-size door - to engaging effect. His later works, both two- and three-dimensional, are especially interesting. Some

outwardly relate to architecture and urban space, with Selenitsch arranging abstract patterns, forms and colours to create collage-like speculations on fictional cities. Others oscillate between chaos and control, shards or timber offcuts arranged in unlikely piles - as if they'd fallen from above. In the end, these works speak of a genuine formal and spatial awareness. Words are not the only constituents of the poetic.

Until April 17; Heide Museum of Modern Art, 7 Templestowe Road, Bulleen, 9850 1500, heide.com.au

SIMONE HINE: TODAY, TOMORROW

Simone Hine's latest work might be framed as propositional fiction. The immersive three-channel video is recognisable yet perplexing. Following the movements of a central female protagonist (who is played by a bewigged Hine), the work weaves together various nondescript scenes to create a tense, loaded atmosphere. Our protagonist wanders abandoned, rain-soaked European streets; she gazes down on a bustling intersection from an apartment window; types, clicks and scrolls on a laptop. A digital memory card becomes a laden and symbolic token; a freeway tunnel an allegory for escape. It's at once recognisable and foreign as cinema. While Hine's devices, tones and tropes are familiar as gestures, they never embrace the building blocks and linkages of narrative. However, it's all the more effective for its abstraction. We're left suspended, searching for clues in a story that never was. *Today, Tomorrow* is showing alongside a sedate video by Tim Woodward in what is, sadly, Screen Space's final cycle of exhibitions.

Last day today; Screen Space, 30 Gullford Lane, city, screenspace.com



(Clockwise from far left) Alex Selenitsch's works speak of a genuine formal and spatial awareness; a still from Simone Hine's video installation *Today, Tomorrow*; one of Patrick Lundberg's painted spheres.

NICK AUSTIN, PATRICK LUNDBERG: ZERO TO HERO

Chloe Geoghegan's curatorial remit tackles the weighty territory of the intersections between the future, place and past - invoking the story of an errant iceberg and a merino sheep named Shrek. But *Zero to Hero*, by New Zealand artists Nick Austin and Patrick Lundberg, leaves a less imposing impression. Consisting of Austin's two happily goofy, cartoonish paintings of bent toothbrushes at work on toothy smiles and Lundberg's rambling series of minute, painted, marble-sized spheres, this is all playful enough. Lundberg's works are especially interesting. They're so tiny and spaciouly arranged that each orb - awash with marks, patterns and other subtle gestures of the brush - becomes a surprise in itself. There's a push and pull: from a distance we're led to consider the wider arrangement and structure as a kind of composition, but to engage with each work on its own requires extreme proximity and concentration. We can perhaps do without *Zero to Hero's* missive - which speaks of using "the convention of space to form a conversation around the inevitability of location" - but the paintings offer playful, magnetic charms. Last day today; TCB Art Inc., level 1, 12 Waratah Place, city, tcbartinc.org.au

