

Skeletons for the human insect

MANY will recall, some no doubt in nightmares, Richard Goodwin's huge, trussed white globe, split on one side and bulging with varied rags, in the 1991 *Perspecta*, where it presided over a miscellany of oddities at the Art Gallery of NSW.

It was supported by a steel rigging that bore nine semi-hemispherical cusps that may have collected the dew of heaven or were used in ritual libations. It was called *Exo Skeleton Pivot*, the bowls and the title now recurring in the climactic show of nine new works at the Roslyn Oxley9 Galleries.

Man and his aspirations have, it seems, lost internal structure and now perform with the use of *exo skeletons*. In 1981 Goodwin expatiated: "Exo skeleton is a term used for the external enmeshment of creatures such as insects. I see the human being becoming an insect through high technology. Technology forming the 'exo skeleton' around the fleshy human body... a man in a car is a simple if crude example of the idea."

Naturally commentators have referred to Samuel Beckett and Kafka or Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children*, as does Anthony

GALLERIES

SYDNEY: Richard Goodwin: Nine sculptures, Anne Macdonald: Seven colour photographs of the Louvre ceiling, David Wales: *Tinies/Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery*

Manu et Mente: 26 instructors from the College of Fine Arts, NSW University/Ivan Dougherty Gallery

ELWYN LYNN

Bond in a brand new book from Oliver Freeman with contributions from Christopher Allen and Jacques Detarucil.

The book brings us to the threshold of the exhibition where those bandages, shells, winding sheets and banners of white cloth stiffened with acrylic resin have almost disappeared to be replaced by the bricolage of steel rods, empty semi-hemispherical cusps, bamboo cans and other clean debris. Lots of it is arte povera as realised not by an artist of the commonplace but by an architect of the eccentric; actually a graduate in proper architecture, that *exo skeleton* often badly enshrouding mankind.

Most tense of the new structures is *Worried Truss for a Nervous Per-*

son (1992); 4.5m long, composed of the internal parts of a piano, it arches with the thrusting and dying fall of Mozart from a floor disc which also has a rigging supporting a large steel sphere. It's about a fragile myriad loosely dependent notes and a seemingly rotating sphere of tough self-sufficiency.

Another is an ancient tricycle with a plough seat where a cane figure, if you like, leaps with the trajectory of a Franz Kline brush stroke. It's titled *Third World Kline* and recalls the fact that Kline once painted in the cheapest available house paints in black and white.

Exo Skeleton Sphere is a crushed, leaden globe accompanied by a trestle bridge like a huge dart; *Apartment E* of cane pretending to be baskets resembles an aeroplane clinging to the earth with suction cusps.

With Ken Unsworth, Goodwin is now one of our principal symbolic and allegorical sculptors, expanding the psychological frontiers of that increasingly mesmerising art.

In an appropriate small room accompanying Goodwin's tattered survivors of the imagination are seven colour photographs with putti and cherubim and rhythmical creatures that cavort on the ceiling above the Louvre crowds. They were taken by Anne Macdonald in her moments of disorientation (when she looked heavenwards to the baroque, ornate and opulent vaults). She knows what art is about and says that the often gold "fragments became almost abstract expressions of rapture. This celestial beauty is preserved by a Midas-like curse. May Midas preserve us all. I now know what to do next time I visit the Louvre, but I doubt I can so concentrate such rich rhapsodies."

Behind the desk at the same gallery David Wales, whose studio is in New York city above what was once Claes Oldenburg's notorious *Store*.

Trick trike: Richard Goodwin's *Third World Kline* at Roslyn Oxley9

has dozens of tiny enigmatic icons in rich frames that trace out a man exercising, the smaller paintings forming his brain and his penis. It abounds in morals, like an Anne Macdonald, and so are physically but not thematically shrunken; they can be carried in a suitcase.

The show of works by 26 instructors at the College of Fine Arts of the University of NSW, is the first part of a more varied gathering later also to be assembled at the Ivan Dougherty Gallery.

Helen Eger presents a finely poised, forcibly balanced geometrical abstraction that looks proudly contented and why not, as it distantly derives from a solid piece of furniture in front of an open window.

Col Jordan's *Interior*, one of his finest works, relishes, as he says, the visual paradox that makes space itself the unpredictable element, invaded here by slicing rigid white bands, or curious of colour on black. It is both refined and relentless. A white, isolated triangle helps confirm his view that "my subject is the process of perception itself."

Something similar could be said of the unfurling lyricism and subtle gradations of Rod Milgate's tribute to Internallitea or Gerard Manley Hopkins or about the overwhelming suggestiveness of Ian Grant's grey landscape. Terry O'Donnell's fastidious drawing and Alan Oldfield's *Raft*, reminiscent of his recent Blake co-winner, where the spars and rigging give a shifting order to the myriad touches.

Ages ago teachers were discouraged from public exhibition; at the moment Emanuel Raft's two works with links, lead and gold leaf are quieter complements to his commanding pieces at Coventry's, just as Peter Pinson's 1984 *Escarpments* signifies the calculated care of his Drawings As Official Military Artist at the Lewers Gallery until June 23.

