

## ARTS &amp; ENTERTAINMENT

## IN THE GALLERIES

**RHYS LEE: STILL I'D SEA**

Following his somewhat disappointing (and final) exhibition for Karen Woodbury Gallery in 2011, Rhys Lee's first solo show (above) for Utopian Slumps is a definite return to form. Gone is the collaborative clutter, while the dark, deranged figures and busts are back. The main wall, plastered in a grid of 20 acrylic, shellac and ink-on-paper works, is vintage Lee, with primates sharing space with wonky Picasso-esque portraits, creepy clowns and ghouls that veer as close to the absurdist as they do the occult. Tonally, too, Lee is broaching some interesting territory. There's a complexity of palette and texture that gives these works an intriguing atmosphere and weight. But it's not all darkness. There's plenty of humour – particularly in the gaggle of distorted ceramic heads and vessels. Though not quite a reinvention, *Still I'd Sea* is a solid step back in the right direction for Lee.

**Wed to Sat, noon–6pm, until May 25, Utopian Slumps, 33 Guildford Lane, city, 9077 9918, utopianslumps.com**

**COMPLEX MATTER**

Curated by Britt Salt, *Complex Matter* may trace fleeting gestures, fragments and motifs, but it also gravitates around ideas of accrual and crystallisation. These are inconspicuous, temporal moments writ large. Jeremy Bakker's pen-on-paper drawing is a prime example. At a distance, it appears a blurred throng of vertical columns, but with proximity it reveals itself as an accumulated articulation of the present. His pilasters are in fact built from endless repetitions of the word "now", written in the smallest of readable scripts until his collection of pens ran out of ink. Austrian artist Eva-Maria Raab's work, meanwhile, is a literal marker of time. Her framed piece – a white circle ringed by a discoloured field of paint – is a section of her studio wall where her clock hung for 10 years. Craig Burgess' collection of drinking glasses, ceramic vessels and card are empty gestures towards their intended purpose (to hold), while Scott Morrison's stunning video work picturing tall grass swaying in the breeze muddles with time, focal point and perception.

**Thurs to Sat, noon–6pm, until June 1, Beam Contemporary, level 1, 30 Guildford Lane, city, 9670 4443, beamcontemporary.com**

**JON CAMPBELL: TEN YEARS OF NEON**

The effectiveness of neon as a contemporary art medium is regularly overplayed. More often than not, neon work ends up taking the form of bad, confessional concrete poetry, only illuminated. Jon Campbell's various forays into neon text offer a very different take. Playfully revealing, this neon retrospective offers a wonderfully lurid amplification of his much-celebrated studies of everyday Australian vernacular – be it fragments of takeaway menus or much-muttered phraseology. Campbell's work operates on a couple of levels. Works such as *Howzaat*, *Underdogs* and *Shit Yeah* humorously remind us of each phrase's guilty prevalence in our day-to-day parlance. The wonderful *Kebabs* is a little different. It's what we expect to read in neon, only now it's venerated and given pride of place on a gallery wall. With a smile and a giggle, Campbell cuts us – and any delusion of cultural or class hierarchy – down to size.

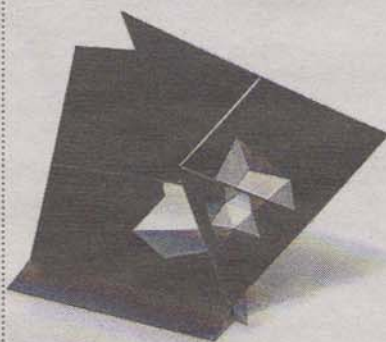
**Tues to Fri, 11am–5.30pm, Sat, noon–5pm, until May 25, KallmanRawlins, 9 Ellis Street, South Yarra, 9826 2470, kallmanrawlins.com**

**ANNE-MARIE MAY**

Anne-Marie May's thermally folded and cut acrylic sculptures have a distinctly architectural bent. While she is known for her delicate bronze castings of otherwise fleeting materials and objects (folded and scrunched paper, for one), these works tend towards hard-edged geometry. Nonetheless, there's more to these works – arranged in a series of six opaque sculptures mounted on one wall and book-ended by a scattering of black and holographic works positioned on plinths at the end of the space and on the floor (below) – than immediately meets the eye. Indeed, these sculptures (and their high-gloss surfaces) emit a particular optical residue that proves their crux. The black works become reflective light chambers; the holographic work throws pools of shifting, shimmering colour. While architectural and structural in guise, these sculptures whisper of architecture's more immeasurable and poetic qualities.

**Tues to Fri, 11am–6pm, Sat, 1pm–5pm, until June 15, Murray White Room, Sargood Lane (off 8 Exhibition Street, between Flinders Street and Flinders Lane), city, 9663 3204, murraywhiteroom.com**

DAN RULE



## COMING UP

**MUSICAL**

An undisputed legend of stage and screen, Julie Andrews (above) will tour Australia for the first time at the end of the month. The Academy Award-winning actress and star of *Mary Poppins* and *The Sound of Music* invites audiences to relive her amazing career in *An Evening with Julie Andrews*.

**May 31, 8pm, Hamer Hall, Arts Centre Melbourne, 100 St Kilda Road, city, \$95-\$695, 1300 182 183, artscentremelbourne.com.au**

**SATIRE**

When a brave knight rides to the rescue of a small village that has for centuries been in thrall to a dragon, there is one small problem. It seems that the villagers have, over the years, become rather accustomed to their own fire breather. This witty, music-filled fairytale takes a sharp and witty look at the corruption and complicity that govern society. With original music by Melbourne comic maestros Tripod, *The Dragon* is sure to be full of fun.

**June 27-July 14, Malthouse Theatre, 113 Sturt Street, Southbank, \$30-\$49, 9685 5111, malthousetheatre.com.au**

**ROCK OPERA**

Religion and rock unite in *Jesus Christ Superstar*. The rock opera by Andrew Lloyd Webber and Tim Rice reimagines the traditional passion play, following the son of God with the heavenly vocal chords from his arrival in Jerusalem to his crucifixion. The Australian production stars Tim Minchin as Judas Iscariot, Spice Girl Melanie C as Mary Magdalene, and Ben Forster as Jesus Christ.

**June 14-16, Rod Laver Arena, Batman Avenue, city, \$99.95-\$153.95, 132 849, ticketek.com.au**

**CABARET**

The Melbourne Cabaret Festival returns for another season of sultry sounds next month. More than 150 performers appear over the 12-night festival at cabaret-friendly venues including The Butterfly Club and Chapel Off Chapel. The festivities begin with the opening-night gala at the Palais Theatre, featuring Motown's own Mary Wilson and New York's Joey Arias.

**June 26-July 7, various venues, melboursecabaret.com**