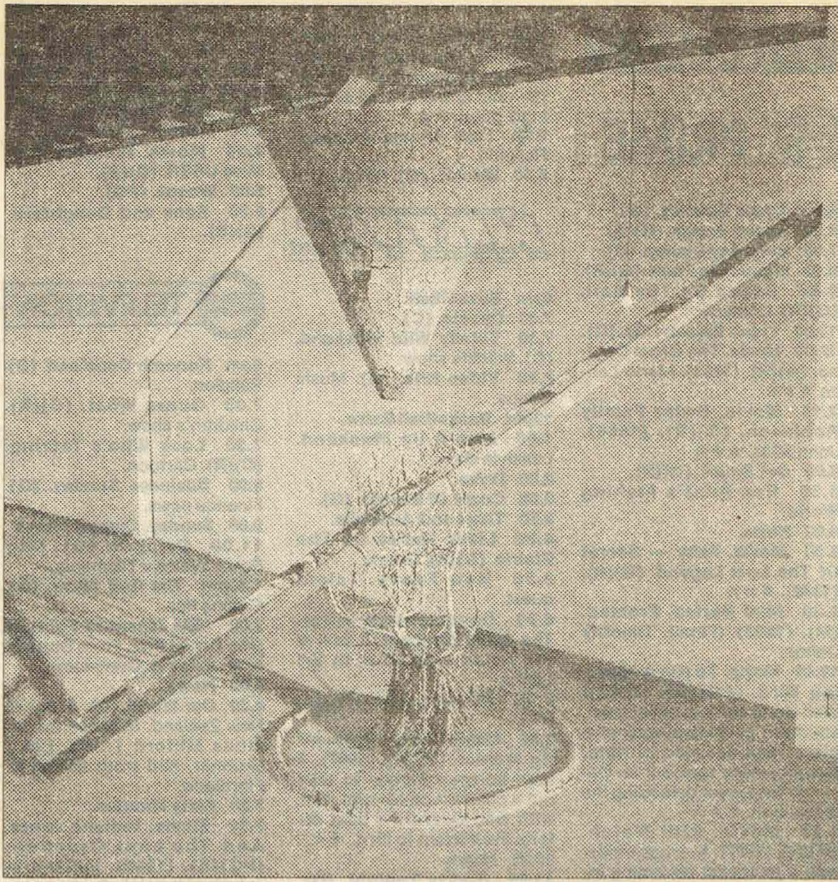


# Arts



SEBASTIAN Di Mauro's *Exaltatio* depicts the see-sawing relationship of natural organic and man-made geometric forms.

## An arena of magic, ritual and mystery

**SEBASTIAN DI MAURO:** *Praeparatio Physica* (Omniscient Gallery, 815 Stanley St until Oct 29).

SEBASTIAN Di Mauro, an emerging Brisbane sculptor, specialises in mixed-media work expressing a quest for ecological and spiritual balance.

This has been familiar territory in contemporary art since Yves Klein created his contemplative blue "void" paintings in the 60s.

Yet although Di Mauro is covering old ground in his latest exhibition — and despite the weakness of his 23 drawings on view — his sculptural work is strong, compelling and thought-provoking.

In this show, Di Mauro proposes that art can be used as a tool of transformation — a



### Art Review by Sue Smith

means of escaping materialism and entering a new evolutionary phase of greater spirituality.

He has filled Omniscient Gallery's dark downstairs cellar space with 12 constructions and installations, transforming it into an arena of magic, ritual and mystery.

Di Mauro uses materials which have powerful and basic associations with nature, culture and ritual — water, olive oil, light, stone, wood and metal — and hence with life, death and the spirit.

*Energy Circles*, for instance, a slab of rough burnt timber with elliptical circlets of tiny winking lights, has the elegant formalism of contemporary western sculpture, but also suggests the force of indigenous art.

Among the sculptures that best demonstrates Di Mauro's ability to reinforce his ideas of balance, energy and spiritual growth with the intense physicality of natural materials — and his fine sense of how a piece should meet the floor — is *Exaltatio*.

This installation achieves a delicate see-sawing relationship of natural organic and man-made geometric forms: a clay cone dripping oil hovers over a ladder ascending to heaven and a mangrove tree inside an inscribed circle.