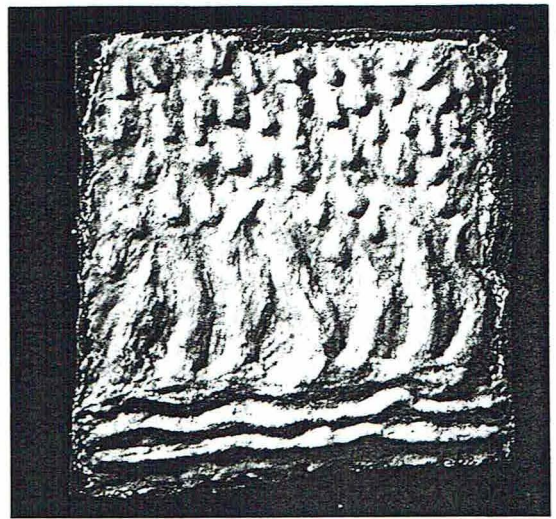


**Dawne Douglas, *Luminaries*, 1994.** Installation. Wax paper, dry, natural grasses, leaves, bones, wood. 6 x 3000 x 5 cm each.



**Sebastian Di Mauro, *Distill*, from the Underlay series, 1994.** Plaster, wax, felt, mounted on board. 35 x 35 cm.

The immediacy of these and many of the works of the exhibition is made all the stronger by their being life size. With this scale comes an insistence and self assertion which Kaspari says has been an integral part of Art Houses experimentation with diverse media.

The written word is used often in the works, most obviously and very successfully by Bickman in his sculpture *My Little Man, My Little Man, My Little Man!*. Here excerpts from popular magazines, advertising, television, and the artist's own musings cover three intersecting timber men. 'What is soul/ For heaven don't die/ Sex is forever ... The doctor can x-ray you and me/ Every cell in your body and never see you ... The man behind the voicemaster/ Royal Wedding/ Jack the Ripper ... Alma Park Zoo/ Longbeach Mild Australiaaa.'

The exhibition produced a very strong sense that Kaspari's interaction with these participants in the mental health Programme resulted in their finding new positive ways of expressing and identifying themselves. Kaspari's work, both on the walls and during her residency has been able to generate and hold a unique exhibition of disparate works together.

rosemary hawker

**Dawne Douglas, Sebastian Di Mauro, Michael Liddle**  
Magazine Space, Eagle Street Pier,  
Brisbane

Dawne Douglas, Michael Liddle and Sebastian Di Mauro recently held an exhibition of works interrelated through their interest in an environmental ethic.

Dawne Douglas's *Luminaries* included ten alluring waxed 'scrolls', loosely draped from ceiling to floor and lit from behind. These translucent surfaces enlivened with textures of muslin and crinkled paper, have a variety of leaves and fronds from the forest or ocean floor embedded into them. Despite obvious visual seductiveness,

these works are not merely driven by aesthetics. Douglas's scrolls are the supports for nature's bricolage: lacy leaf specimens, grasses, (dead) black mangrove seedlings that refer to invasions of the littoral zone and rainforest, areas that should be sacrosanct. At the foot of each scroll are offerings of small bowls, bound objects and fetishes. These items, oriental in attitude, are essentially ritual offerings or *prayers to nature*. While all relate conceptually, each panel has its own distinctive quality due to the different materials used. Beyond the spiritual concerns (but connected to them) the work is reinforced with an ecological ethic—Douglas's desire to bring us back to nature by 're-sacrilizing the planet', is gently suggested in her dignified use of natural materials. These materials refer to transformation, from sprouting seedling to disintegration where each plant form is chosen for its shape and texture, suggesting a kind of 're-spiriting'. Inherently, her message suggests that some aspects of nature will endure in spite of us and that we humans (and some plant and animal species) will disappear within the next century.

Sebastian Di Mauro offers numerous small works on underlay carpet—his metaphor for the pulling away of surface layers of life. In these works, Di Mauro attempts to question difficulties involving transition from old to new aspects of thinking. Motifs from nature are built up, in a pleasing white texture of plaster and wax. Despite their lack of colour they display an engaging vitality and energy achieved through moulding. His titles are derived from Alchemy and nature, among them *Chamber, Potential, Combust, Vapourize, Distill*. Concerns with life and after-life are addressed through metaphors of alchemical transformation—natural, spiritual, emotional and chemical—seen as part of the process of moving towards immortality. His *Fountain* relates to the consequences of the way we use materials. *Potential* refers to the touching of and connectedness to the earth and *Glimmer* is concerned with the themes of 'inner' and 'outer' coming together. *Ascend* is an image of a tree within a wooden boat as a metaphor of passage of the boat of the dead, as well as regeneration. How, one might ask, do these ideas relate to the environment? Di Mauro considers that these references

refer to change and *transformation* of attitudes towards a more ethical treatment of the environment.

Michael Liddle's works are less emotive and his academic scientific training in biology and environmental science emerges through his more factually informative and eco-political approach. By placing electronic media in front of portraits of his ancestors and himself as a young man Liddle indicates changes of world perspective and of population numbers from the different eras. His work consists of three sets of paired text and photocopies of photographs of his great grandparents in 1850, his father and himself as young men (within their own time frame) in England with the respective world populations for each period. Liddle uses three discourses, the official, authoritative, formal, mode of scientific textbooks, of print media, as well as the more personal connotations of family members who have experienced different environmental conditions during the twentieth century. Propped in front of the first set is *The Green Prophet*, a 'strip' light-emitting diode display warning of the dangers of green-house gases, rising temperatures and populations, signalling the Earth's limitations. An electronic board records changing world population levels and the amount of rainforest area being cleared of trees.

Liddle's work has an activist, political agenda which was more obvious in his previous exhibitions at Parliament House. His aesthetic is subordinate to his concepts and he appears to use information and technology in an effectively subversive manner. While technology is used primarily as a construct to support capitalistic notions and masculine power by domination and surveillance, Liddle subverts this to warn us of environmental destruction by capitalism and technology. Liddle's art draws the viewer's attention to ecological concerns, perhaps more efficiently than do other scientists who rarely attain exposure to non-scientific audiences.

These three artists are essentially ecologically driven, in the best, ethical and environmentally concerned sense, bringing their work into the arenas of ecology, education, political action, eco-feminism and spirituality.

jane magon