

Feast for all senses

galleries

by MANDY WILDEHEART

THE current exhibition at Pinnacles Gallery presents itself on many different levels and equally encourages viewers to explore it in many different ways.

Grapple is an unusual exhibition, showcasing art that promotes the use of other senses, other than just relying simply on vision.

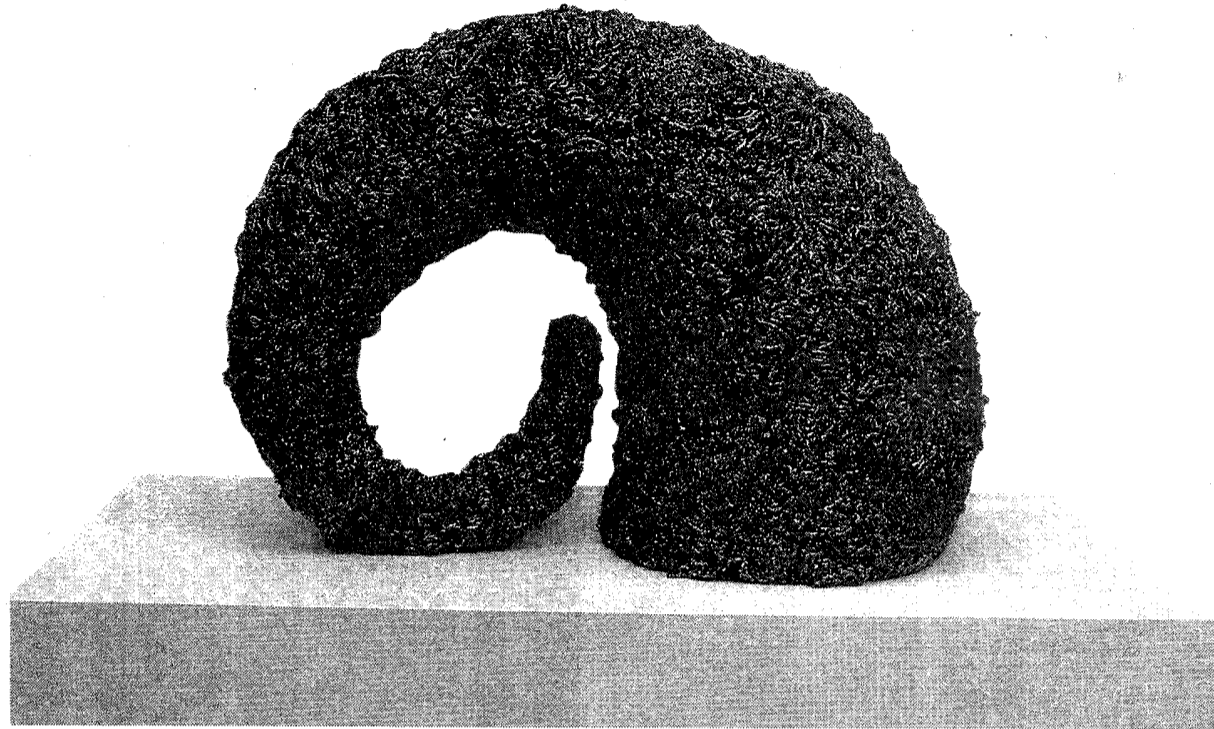
Eight artists participated and they have created a range of artworks that are to be touched, smelt, tasted and heard, with some pieces incorporating more than one sense beyond vision.

Most of the pieces are sculptural and they create an immensely stimulating exhibition, especially at the first instance on a visual level. As one explores the works, the secondary considerations for other senses become apparent and new amusements are revealed.

Not wanting to favour any one piece, *The Soaring Sole Toneaphone*, however, provides a wealth of amusement. Stephen Weis's construction of 'discarded, waste or rejected materials' begs to be touched and 'played' with the resulting sounds and vibrations providing a fantastic payoff.

Christine Prescott has concentrated on the smell of strawberries in her suspended piece, *Ocean Song*, and the taste of honey in her other piece, *Prelude to Ocean Song* (perhaps the only thing lacking is that song by Tijuana Brass).

Using common products, such as stainless steel pot scourers, astro turf, and carpet underlay, Sebastian Di



Mauro has made two organic three-dimensional pieces from each of the three mediums and each pair is presented as a suite.

While the musty smell of the carpet underlay overpowers in the *Pillow Suite*, the feel of the astro turf dominates in *Astro Suite* as one thrusts their arm into the structures. The softness of the steel wool in the *Shimmer*

Suite is deceptive, as the eye believes it will be wiry to touch.

Highlighting how our vision can misinform us even though it is relied on to provide the majority of our information, Liz Woods' piece incorporates the sense of smell to confirm what we see. Her installation, *Think Something Else*, has a central fragrant arrangement of real flowers, next to a similar arrangement of artificial flowers, with a photograph of the arrangement on the other side.

Next to this on the main wall, is another three-item piece entitled *Thread* by Ryan Dunshea. The simplicity of the thick, white, nylon rope that is systematically knotted and suspended from chrome brackets, is interesting and intriguing, in a visual and tactile sense.

If one had knowledge about the ancient Incan counting system called Quipu, one could probably work out what numbers the knotted threads represent.

Ross Barber also uses rope in his installation, *The Rope* a reply to Charles Baudelaire and Edouard Manet, but in an entirely different way. Ross encases eight segments of rope within cast polyester which are backlit and mounted on plinths.

The surface of each one tells part of an account in Braille of the hanging suicide of Edouard Manet's assistant as told by the victim's mother. A sound tape also includes fragments of Manet's version of the event, but the kick in the concept is that no-one gets the full story in either manner.

Two local artists were selected, with Alan Valentine submitting two *Sea Gongs* that viewers might remember from Strand Ephemera. Looking like a cross between a UFO and an alien, these sturdy and well-constructed pieces have a strong presence and make a great sound.

Candace Miles is the other local artist and her installation, *See Stars*, has a galaxy of meanings and concept. Masses of textile and ceramic stars are suspended from the ceiling, inviting people to smell some (with centre holes), rattle others, and touch all.

Leading up to the exhibition, Candace led a series of workshops with vision-impaired people to create a set of ceramic tiles that feature in

ABOVE: Sebastian Di Mauro's Leunig-like *Curl* em093019
BELOW: *The Soaring Sole Toneaphone* by Stephen Weis em093016

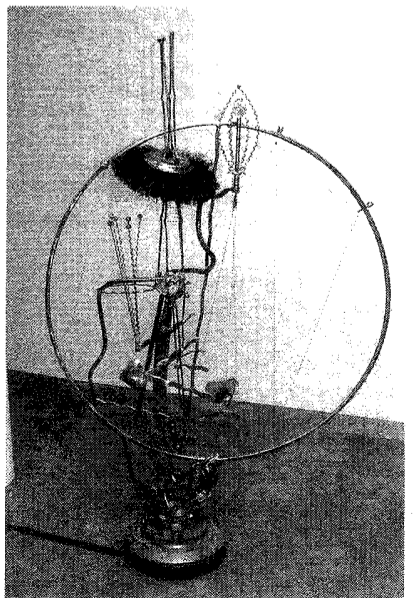
the recently reopened satellite room off the main gallery.

As *Grapple* tours, similar workshops will be conducted with a different participating artist leading them at each location.

It is excellent to see this polished version of *Grapple*, after it was originally presented in 1998 in an entirely different format. Consolidating the theme of having artworks that involve more senses led to the formation of this current touring exhibition.

At the time of the original one, Jacquelyn Murphy and Allison Gray were the director and assistant, respectively, at Pinnacles Gallery and they kept the project within their hands after moving on. Jacquelyn took on the lion's share and curated the exhibition, with the current staff also providing support and assistance to bring the exhibition to fruition.

Get a grip on *Grapple* before it gets packed up on September 21.



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