

# Around the galleries Dan Rule

**WHAT** Peter Hennessey: My Hell's Gate

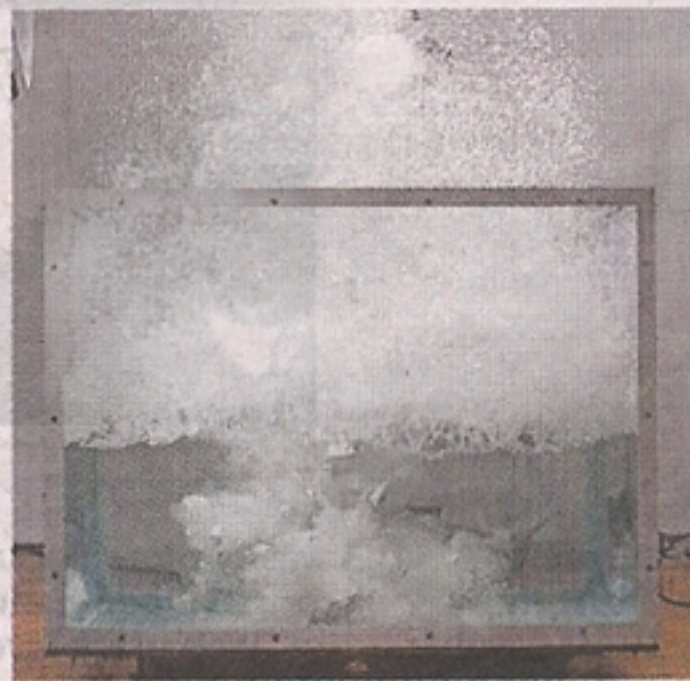
**WHERE** Gertrude Contemporary Art Spaces, 200 Gertrude Street, Fitzroy, 9419 3406, gertrude.org.au

IN A detour from his vast, balsa and plywood re-creations of space-race machinery, Melbourne artist Peter Hennessey has restaged and documented a downscaled version of the infamous detonation of rock formations in New York's East River in 1885; thought to be the largest planned explosion until the atomic bomb, and which effectively ushered in the explosive era. Hennessey detonated a plaster casting submerged in a tonne of water (encased in a reinforced Perspex cube) and documented the blast via videos and still images. The results are striking. While the slow motion videos and large-scale photographs evidence the explosion as aesthetic spectacle, the cube — which rests mutely in the centre of the gallery, shattered plaster lining its base — acts as an ominous, sobering past tense, a dualistic quality that comes to define the show. *My Hell's Gate* resonates with unsettling beauty and outright brutality; the stuff of the big screen and modern militarism. Hennessey confers the explosive status as both cultural artefact and the epitome of dehumanised violence. Runs alongside Jesse Jones' filmic work *Mahogany*. Tues to Fri 11am-5.30pm, Sat 11am-4.30pm, until February 27.

**WHAT** Rhys Lee: New York-Peru

**WHERE** Block Projects, Level 4, 289 Flinders Lane, city, 9662 9148, blockprojects.com

THE title of Rhys Lee's expansive new body of work may insinuate notions of place and travel, but Lee's journey seems as



deeply psychological, even metaphysical, as it does geographical.

Across 96 arcane, wonky, ghoulish ink-on-paper works — created during stints in New York and South America — the Brisbane-raised artist merges the diaristic with the summoning of corrupted souls. A sketch of a sleeping

dog sits in the midst of hellish portraits; hollow eye sockets and hungry, dangerous mouths offset splay-legged monster-femmes and mutant faux-porn. More cute dogs and puppies pop up here and there, as does an erection from a headless male torso. It's disturbing, crazy and droll. Lee's vision may be dystopic, but it's never so bleak to be suffocating. Wed to Fri 11am-6pm, Sat 11am-4pm, until February 27.

**WHAT** Ede Horton: Perspective;

Ian Bunn: Spinning Pop

**WHERE** Shifted, Level 1, 15 Albert Street, Richmond, 9421 0884, shifted.net.au

EACH of these shows finds its grounding in a particular sense reinterpretation. Created after a four-month residency in Berlin, the petite, finely detailed black

and white glass sculptures that comprise Ede Horton's *Perspective* suggest that nothing is quite as it seems. A pair of still-life "talking hands" are



re-imagined with vivid blue eyes perched on the knuckle of each index finger; a human foot sports eyes, a mouth and elfin ears. The implication seems one of inherent human complexity. Horton offers the body not as an endpoint, but as a vessel for infinite layers, memories and histories. In the adjoining gallery, Ian Bunn's loud, pigmented ink-on-paper works recast pop art's whim for mass media imagery in the context of the contemporary proliferation of digital content. Bunn's works are vividly distractive, drawing on innumerable fractured images and points of reference. While his allusion to digital noise is nothing new, his comparison to pop gives something of a fresh take. Wed to Sat 11am-5pm, until February 27.

**WHAT** Locust Jones

**WHERE** Karen Woodbury Gallery, 4 Albert Street, Richmond, 9421 2500, kwgalleries.com

NEW Zealand-born artist Locust Jones' striking, lithe aesthetic recalls the mid-career work of American artists such as Phil Frost. Unlike much of the post-graffiti works of that era, however, his sprawling, meticulously detailed ink-on-paper compositions pulse with a political electricity that transcends mere sloganeering. The meld of faces, figuration, cityscape and text that comprise the vast works of his show at Karen Woodbury unfurl like a stream-of-consciousness newswire. Works such as *Michael Jackson's heart attack* and *The Tehran riots* writhe amid a sea of faces, placards, political leaders, text and bodies, while *Climate Change 2* sees a map of the world rupturing at the seams, spilling blood-like lava. Jones' works are dire, but no more so, perhaps, than the world we live in. Wed to Sat 11am-5pm, until February 27.