

FOCUS

Young quartet at the Gowlett

FOUR artists are jointly presenting a youthful-looking show of work at the Gowlett Gallery.

Hardy Botha moves on — nourished by his own work-in-progress. In this show, graffiti assumes mystical overtones, with some works looking rather like the traditional magician's cloak — covered as they are with "magical" signs, shapes and symbols. There's a miscellany of references — some suggesting the movement of heavenly bodies, and some rather more suggestive of earthly delights!

Paradoxically, there's little feeling of objects floating in an illusionary space. Rather, there's a clear sense that these signs are "drawn" on a flat ground — man-made gestures, in fact — believing their allusions to metaphysical matters. More complex associations arise when these fragments are seen in relation to inner squares which suggest atomic explosions.

Louis Jansen van Vuuren has done some considerable loosening up since I last saw his work. In these large canvases there's a feeling of sensory, emotional and physical involvement, with paint freely applied in mood evocative colours. A "rain" of brush strokes in a variety of hues sparkles some of these surfaces, while providing a frontal plane behind which other colours take up relative positions in space.

Of particular interest in these works is the sense of varied rhythmic pace — each piece suggesting a different speed through

structure and brush-stroke direction. The content is rather obscure at present but may become more apparent in a larger show of work.

Jochen Berger continues his sensitive exploration of imaginary forms in illusionary space. Like a sculptor modelling clay, he seems to feel the crevasses, hills and contours of his "artificial" and "human" landscapes. His sight/touch is both sensual and sensuous, resulting in highly tactile surfaces which impress with

art

By

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the delicacy of their tonal modulations.

Social comment seems to have been abandoned in favour of a hedonistic pleasure in media exploration. I'm wondering though, if it isn't time Berger moved on from the foreplay to more penetrative statements.

Bridget Simons grows in confidence and stature with each showing. Hers is a dream world — evocative, mysterious and elusive. She distances her subjects with various devices. While thick heavy "real" frames intrude on our space, her figures behind glass windows self-consciously reveal themselves — but only partially. Mistily veiled and in ambiguous surroundings. We cannot identify them, or their time, or their place. It is most satisfying watching this young artist's development.