



above:
Over Abundance 2006
 bronze, silver, wire, gold paint
 20 (h) x 40 (w) x 26 (d) cm

cover:
Eternal Youth 2006
 cold painted bronze, silver, wire,
 glass, organic matter
 20 (h) x 44 (w) x 38 (d) cm

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 Saturday 11am–5pm
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THERESE HOWARD
THE SOLO

Opening
 Thursday 13 September 6–8pm
Exhibition
 14 September – 1 October 2006

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RSVP art@ssfa.com.au OR 02 9331 8344

Therese Howard – The Solo

What is it about Therese Howard's work that is so intriguing and perplexing? They trick at every opportunity, they lure and seduce, they are amusing and disturbing, they ask the big questions and provide no clear answers. They set up expectations and then pull out the rug. In other words they do what all significant art does, they impact on our lives in unexpected ways and challenge us to think, to see and to react differently.

There is a poetry of objects that underpins her practice, a careful selection of natural and fabricated items, found or relentlessly sought out, then brought together in a complex syntax to establish new meanings. Like the Dutch and Flemish masters of the Vanitas Still Life she re-orders these objects to create new relationships, re-configures them in bronze and re-presents them to us with her own twists and triggers.

We are lured into the works, like the *New Holland Honey-Eater* thinking the insects on her sculptures were food when Therese first brought them into the Gallery. Now the Honey Eater is transformed into a sculpture, high up on the wall, easily missed. Once lured in we too must be prepared for surprises. Engaging with Therese Howard's work is not straightforward, art is not where you might expect it to be, like life it can creep up on you and if you're not alert you can miss it all together.

The Sum of Us is easy enough to spot, a music box of sorts that takes Maurizio Cattelan's *Love Saves Life* and gives it an Australian twist; his donkey, dog, cat and rooster replaced with a horse, sheep, sheep dog, cockatoo and fly. When you wind it up, it plays 'Click goes the shears' and the fly turns round. It's funny, it's engaging and it stays with you because its subplot of Australia's history of mustering and its continuing impact on our construction of identity has a long fuse.

All her works have a long fuse; they engage immediately, and then linger, slowly burning away, until. In *Over Abundance* it's the dugite painted black that provides the spark to set a train of thought about life and death, temptation and desire ricocheting through the opulent lustrous fruit.

Themes and subplots abound, some are personal adding a commentary on the process of having a solo exhibition (*Hide and Peek*), or the need for support networks (*Crickets Chorus*), while others are more serious. Everywhere you look there is something to see, to ponder and to remember. And look out for the flies.

Ted Snell

Professor of Contemporary Art, Dean of Art, John Curtin Centre
Curtin University of Technology, Perth

The Sum of Us 2006
cold painted bronze, wire, jarrah box and
musical movement. Edition unique
36 (h) x 14 (w) x 22 (d) cm

