



Alasdair Macintyre is in town for his exhibition of miniatures 'Playtime'.

Photos: ALAN PLACE

Toying with politics, art and social justice

Rob Bates

MOST young boys grow out of playing with action figures at a fairly young age, but Alasdair Macintyre decided to make a career out of it instead.

Now, in his fourth exhibition, which is at Sullivan+Strumpf Fine Art in Paddington, titled "Playtime", Macintyre offers acute social commentary and satire through a medium that wouldn't look at all out of place in a high-end toyshop.

"I used to play with *Star Wars* figures when I was little and you make up your own scenarios. I'm essentially just doing the same thing now, just from a slightly broader adult's perspective," Macintyre said.

"Some of [the works] are socially minded. I'm quite an advocate of social justice myself, but you have to find a balance between preaching to people and making them laugh."

Usually evoking broad social and political themes without referencing specific individuals, Macintyre made a rare exception to illustrate his frustration over the Bill Henson controversy.

Last year, police raided the Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery at Paddington just before Henson's exhibition featuring photos of naked girls and boys was to open

"I didn't want to sully my work with the tawdry nature of contemporary politics but [Prime Minister Kevin] Rudd got us all off side when he said on television that the Henson picture was revolting," he said.

"That was the moment I decided to do a work of that nature. It was really like, 'Come on Kev, it's art, mate. Get a copy of *Art for Dummies*; it's nothing new'."

Despite the seriousness of some of his pieces and the fact that his creations pay the bills, Macintyre said he was still having a lot of fun



The Bill Henson/Kevin Rudd piece.

making his works.

"That moment when I'm almost finished and I'm placing the figures, that's what I live for. I really get a high that I haven't experienced in other ways. I don't do drugs but I imagine that's the same sort of rush that you get."

"Playtime" will run at Sullivan+Strumpf Fine Art in Gurner St, Paddington, until June 21. For more information visit www.ssfa.com.au.