



Eddie Clemens, *Fibre optic broom #2*, 2009 (detail), beech wood, fibre optic bristles, RGB LEDs, customised circuit boards and programming, brass tubing. Courtesy of Hocken Collections



Heather Straka, *The Asian*, 2009, oil on canvas. Courtesy of Dunedin Public Art Gallery

DUNEDIN

Wellington-based sculptor Regan Gentry has been in Dunedin creating *Harbour Mouth Molars* for the city's Kitchener Street reserve. The six giant molars, poised on Otago Harbour's edge adjacent to Portsmouth Drive, are constructed from Oamaru stone with concrete 'roots' and an inbuilt irrigation system that is designed to wet and erode the base of the teeth over time. Lined up in a single row, the molars rest on an area of gum-coloured pebbles, emulating a wide-open mouth. The permanent sculpture, which reveals the irreverent humour for which Gentry is known, unleashed plenty of healthy debate ahead of its 11 April 'unveiling'.

Eddie Clemens' *Delusional Architecture* exhibition at the Hocken Gallery showed the artist's intensified interest in popular culture and commodity fetishism. The popular science fiction movie *Terminator 2* is the source of the exhibition's title and the inspiration behind one of the show's works. Fashioned from conduit piping and audio cable, this particular work resembles the mesh security fence that appears in the film. Cuts made in each of Clemens' six sections of 'fence' are surrounded by modulating amber-coloured LEDs, which emulate the moment in the movie when the shape-shifting T-1000 materialises from the future through a molten wire hoarding.

Clemens' use of electronic wizardry (the show also features a broom with fibre optic bristles that change colour) references the increasingly spectacular special effects used by the film industry to appease the audience's insatiable appetite for escapism and novelty. Employing readymade components sourced from hardware stores and electronic outlets alongside slick, replica tissue boxes, which have been created by specialist manufacturers, Clemens' recent work still retains the humble, do-it-yourself ethos of his earlier work.

An Expanding Subterra, a collection of photographic prints by Wayne Barrar at the Dunedin Public Art Gallery (until 27 June), represents a milestone in this photographer's investigations of land use practices, their resultant landscapes and environmental restoration. Spanning seven years (2002-2009) this group of images demonstrates his long-held interest in human interactions with the land and re-definitions of nature. His images document sites in Australia, New Zealand, France and the United States.

Over the course of the exhibition the impoverished interiors, with bare, roughly hewn walls and sparse furnishings, establish a generic subterranean aesthetic. Barrar's subjects include former salt and limestone mines in Kansas and Missouri, Queensland's copper mine at Mt Isa, the depleted Henty Gold Mine in Tasmania and the defunct opal mine at Coober Pedy. These once mineral-rich locations now have subsequent lives as storage facilities, underground film sets, industrial parks and a museum. The controlled environment of these underground sites, with their consistent light and climatic conditions, makes them ideal for these various new purposes.

Barrar started documenting below surface locations in 2002 with his study of the outback community of Coober Pedy. The resulting black and white photographs capture the suburban dwellings of the former mine, since used as a shooting location for the film industry. A series of 2009 photographs feature underground chambers, originally medieval chalk mines, below the small French town of Arras. The spaces, interconnected by the New Zealand Tunnelling Company during the First World War, became a refuge for allied soldiers in the German occupied town, prior to the Battle of Arras in 1917. The underground areas still bear the names of New Zealand cities, which the miners gave them. A portion of the area is now part of a military history museum, thus representing another means by which the subterranean landscape has been commodified.

Heather Straka's *The Asian* project, also at the Dunedin Public Art Gallery (until 20 June), explores ideas about the authentic, the original and the copy. Straka commissioned a selection of artisans from China's Shenzhen province to paint copies of one of her 'Asian Girl' portrait paintings, a series based on 'Shanghai Girl' advertising posters of the 1930s. The resulting installation of approximately 50 replicas is arranged to cover one of the gallery's walls in a grid-like formation. The monotony that such repetition would ordinarily incite is alleviated by slight variations in the palette of each copy and differing, inaccurate depictions of the tiki. Straka's painting is planted amongst the copies, a device that draws gallery visitors into a game of whodunit, which they are quickly driven to solve.

/Natalie Poland