

## Review: "Rapt" in the elements



*Bernadette Boscacci is an impressive artist with a depth she's scratched and ground out for herself as she's brushed with the topography of northern Australia.*

From spells of living rough in communities on the Cape and Mornington Island this "born-here Townsville woman" - as Mornington Island Dance Company's Peter Cleary, referred to her when he introduced her solo exhibition, "Rapt horizon" last night at the inaugural opening of the new artist's space: "Studio 533" Flinders Street West - has a deft feel for translating the northern landscape experience into highly evocative sculptural forms and two-dimensional patterning. Boscacci is, it seems, in the elements - her elements. You can feel the wind blowing through the ragged tangle of steel she's tormented in suspension with "Rapt". The ferocious heat of the forge is ever present unless played over by willy-willies of orbital grinding or the stain of time passing: rust. In it she's drawn a coastal silhouette with a blowtorch and grinder perfectly suited at this scale to express the force and subtle nuances of an ancient land.



*Bernadette Boscacci*

While power tools and torches sing from her sculptures Boscacci's fingers are sensed touching her works on paper. It's the fingers of a weaver here we also discover in "Kunchen". Wet with thin slippery paint, those fingers spiral close but not obtrusively toward Aboriginal design though nonetheless revealing her own intuitive logic and direction. As Cleary observed, "Some people thought she was a witch - moving things around, arranging them in different ways - which is what she was doing (as an artist) to make sense of the place."



*Detail from "Submergence"*

Boscacci's most sophisticated expression is probably, "Submergence". Found resting across the floor, steel again features, but this time rivetted like a soft fabric to a curiously duct-like timber construction. Here the artist is very assured and unhurried - looking like she's salvaged an austere treasure from a post-industrial back lot and is just keen to show it off. It is, for all its steel and rivets a surprisingly relaxed form - I'm reminded of the way you might lie side-on to a campfire after dinner. Again Boscacci is happy to draw with a grinder onto the steel and has even collaborated with the oxidation process to guide threads of rust over the surface to create another exquisite gestural drawing.

Bernadette, a former Magnetic Island resident, along with a number of young local artists must be warmly congratulated for Studio 533. With terrific shared studio spaces out the back the gallery area makes for an idea solo or small group show space. Its high ceilings, width and depth make for good concentration on the art. It isn't a slot nor a barn and unlike the much-loved first Umbrella Gallery there isn't the distraction of the big streetside windows. Studio 533 seems much more like purpose built and with a quality of output already looks sure to attract serious attention.

George Hirst  
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*George Hirst is a graduate of Canberra School of Art (Printmaking) and has an extensive background as a curator and exhibitions officer for Perc Tucker Galley and previously as an information officer with the National Gallery of Australia.*