

An eye on Japanese way of life

LOUISE NUNN

LIVING in tight quarters on a Tokyo rooftop has the potential to make or break friendships. In the early 1990s, Adelaide artists Dianne Longley, Shaw Hendry, Catherine Truman and Sue Lorraine put their compatibility to the test.

Now an exhibition that tips its hat to their time in Japan - and their friendship - has opened at Adelaide Central Gallery.

"It was like a caravan on the roof of a building, but it had a roof garden, with plants growing in polystyrene boxes, which was lovely," Longley recalls of their accommodation.

"I think in those situations, when you're living in very close quarters, you either get on or you don't. Basically we've been friends ever since."

Longley is the curator of the exhibition, called *Spirited Away*.

As well as the aforementioned artists - all senior figures on the

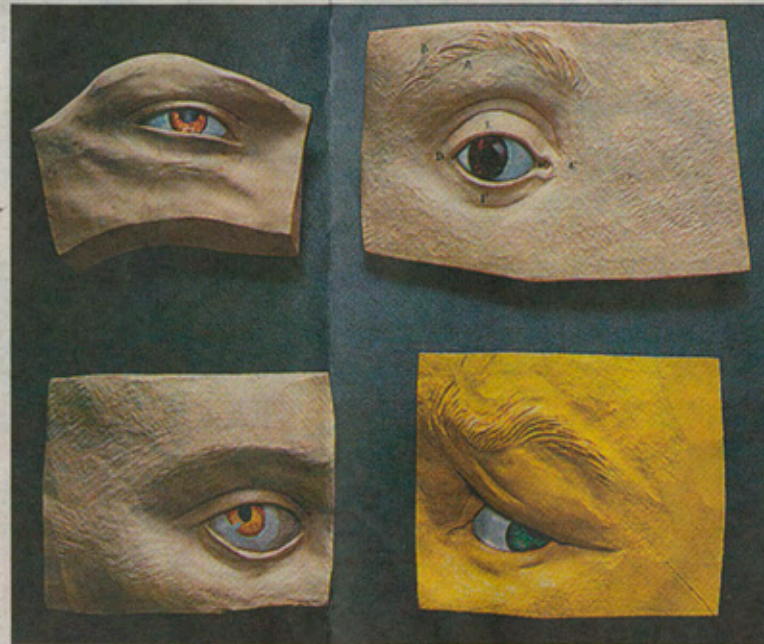
Adelaide visual arts scene - it has work by a younger practitioner, Sera Waters. She also has spent time in Japan and works alongside Longley at Hedgemaze Studio in Port Adelaide.

"When you have been exposed to a culture like Japan, which has an incredible history and tradition of craft and art that forms part of everyday life, it's bound to come through in your work," Longley says.

"If you look at the work in the show you wouldn't say it looks Japanese, but I think you can see the influence in terms of how we approach our work - all the pieces are beautifully crafted - and in the materials we use."

Truman's wood *Eye Carvings* are informed by her time in Japan on an Australia Japan Foundation Scholarship. Truman studied the traditional Japanese art form of netsuke, used to create the small carved boxes that hang from kimono cords.

Longley also visited Japan on



Eye, Eye: Catherine Truman's work is influenced by netsuke.

a scholarship, in her case from the Australia Council. Her works have also been crafted in wood and resemble intricate carved pictures.

A metalworker by trade, Lorraine has created a mixed-media wall installation of minimalist trees adorned with moths made from old slide transparencies of her previous art works.

Hendry has created carved works in plaster, while Waters has contributed two large paintings on linen embellished with embroidery.

□ *Spirited Away* is at Adelaide Central Gallery, Norwood, until October 6.



Work in Hand: Dianne Longley.

Candy man so sweet

Candy Man
Her Majesty's Theatre
Until Sunday

WHO can make a stage shine/Sprinkle it with glee/Mix it up with song-and-dance and a pratfall or three? The *Candy Man* - alias Wayne Scott Kermond - can.

The art of vaudeville isn't dead - in fact, it's never tasted sweeter than in this fourth-generation stage trouper's hands ... and feet.

Kermond knows and uses every old routine in the book, but delivers them with such aplomb it's as if he just invented them.

On a multi-coloured, multi-tiered stage that could have come straight from the set of *The Don Lane Show* - with action-packed choreography and glittering costumes to match - this is classic variety entertainment, given a stylish makeover.

Taking the life and songs of Sammy Davis Jr as a starting point, Kermond pays tribute to the art of the song-and-dance man in general, drawing parallels along the way to his own family history and career.

Those who delighted at Kermond's wall-climbing routine as Cosmo Brown in *Singin' in the Rain* will be equally impressed by his Gene Kelly-meets-Jerry Lewis comedy antics in the exhausting second number, *Make 'Em Laugh*.

It's the razor-sharp ensemble tap numbers, however - particularly one on revolving staircases - which really put the icing on this confection.

Patrick McDonald