

## Djalkiri: We are standing on their names

*Latrobe Regional Gallery, Morwell, Victoria (03 5128 5700) until 23 January*

There are many things to like about this touring exhibition, says Trent Walker in Australian Art Review. Organised by Nomad Art Productions, the show originated from a 2009 cross-cultural printmaking project. Much of the work was made on trips to Yilpara, Blue Mud Bay, in north-east Arnhem Land that included not only the artists but a printmaker, an ethno-biologist, an anthropologist and a photographer. The stylistic gap between the artists is bridged by the medium itself.

Eminent printmaker Jörg Schmeisser “combines etched lines and delicate tonal shading” in *Mangroves and Notes* (2010), while John Wolsley uses a similar palette in his meditation on a beach landscape *Tide after Tide – Baniyala* (2010). Mulkun Wirrpanda’s *Yalata* (2010) portrays sacred ancestral times from Yolngu culture with vibrant cross-hatched patterns that shimmer on the picture surface, Fiona Hall’s *Pandanus – Gungu* (2010) teems with life, and Marrnyula Mununggur’s *Bawu* (2010) references the flags of Macassan ships and the ceremony of sea and sky.

## 2112: Imagining the Future

*RMIT Gallery, Melbourne (03 9925 1717) until 28 January*

When curator Linda Williams sought out works for this show, what she found was not “the stuff that dreams were made of”, says Megan Backhouse in Art Guide. Apart from the promise of new life in Lyndal Osborne’s flouro seed bank installation, Williams’s scouring yielded “dystopian visions” of a world ravaged by environmental degradation, waste and extreme weather. French artists Yves Marchand and Romain Meffre



*Imagining the Future: Adams Theatre, Detroit by Marchand and Meffre*

give us a “grim glimpse” of a possible future with their photo essay on the progressive decay of a motor factory and a Baptist church in Detroit. Hisaharu Motada takes buildings such as the Sydney Opera House and transforms them into the “tatty relics that might be left come the end of the world”. But is this pessimism universal? Williams suspects artists are “more critically engaged with contemporary issues” than the general public. The 23 artists in this show are railing against these bleak possibilities, says Williams. The real message is this: “how we shape the world is up to us”.

## Beneath the Winds: Masterpieces of Southeast Asian Art

*Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide (08 8207 7000) until 29 January*

The quiet and intense ambience of this show is a world away from the “Saatchi commercial octopus” that had previously occupied the space, says Christopher Allen in The Australian. It begins with the animistic cultures that preceded the arrival of civilisation in Southeast Asia and moves towards the religious expression that followed. One of the oldest pieces in the show is a simple stone pillar, “roughly hewn into the form of an ancestor totem”, with an erect phallus to represent the fertility of the tribe. Another item, “one of the most beautiful” in the show, is a small golden statue of Shiva, the Hindu god of transformation, destruction and renewal. A pair of 100-year-old carved wooden figures wear the Muslim courtly dress of the time – which is surprising since figurative art is theoretically forbidden in Islam. Animist beliefs persist, however, particularly in relation to death and its rituals, and fertility – both of people and of the earth.

## Where to buy...

*The Week visits an exhibition in a private gallery*

### Elisabeth Cummings: Monotypes

*at King Street Gallery, Sydney*

### Luminous

*at S. H. Ervin Gallery, Sydney*

Unless you are an art critic, an artist or an astute collector, you may not have heard of Elisabeth Cummings, says Steve Meacham in The Sydney Morning Herald. And that’s the way she prefers it. Cummings has sold more works since she turned 50 than ever before, “without changing her essential perspective one iota”. Her retrospective at the S.H. Ervin Gallery features more than 40 major paintings, gouaches and prints. These works were inspired by the landscape around Wedderburn on Sydney’s rural outskirts and from camping trips to the Pilbara, Lake Mungo and the Flinders Ranges. More recent works, on sale at the King Street Gallery, are 22 equally vivid interiors on paper. Cummings has



*Window Through Red (50cm x 50cm, \$9,900)*

won a number of prestigious art prizes, including the Portia Geach portraiture prize in 1972 and the Fleurier for landscape in 2000.

*King Street Gallery (02 9360 9727) until 5 February; S.H. Ervin Gallery (02 9258 0173) until 12 February.*

## Too much elbow grease?

“Leonardo’s *Virgin and Child with Saint Anne* does not enjoy the same status as his *Mona Lisa*,” says Elaine Sciolino in The New York Times. But, for the Louvre, “it is an equally treasured masterpiece”, so accusations that the 500-year-old canvas (right) has been too aggressively cleaned have caused a huge row. Many experts say the brighter hues uncovered by the cleaning are untrue to the original, while museum insiders defend the cleaning as “absolutely necessary”. The disagreement is unusual because it comes from within the Louvre’s 20-member advisory body. The museum abandoned an earlier attempt to clean the work because of fears it would damage the delicate “sfumato” blending technique used by the artist. This time, what was meant to be a “minimalist approach” seems to have become something more ambitious. Critics say that a process to properly carry out such work has yet to be discovered.

