



Ioia Goes North, one of Dani Marti's woven objects with highly textured surfaces. Just as you settle in to a contemplative, minimalist experience, all is subverted as you start to read the titles.

Depth in surreal paradise lust

25-2-04

By Sasha Grishin

Art

Dani Marti: Variations in a serious black dress. Canberra Contemporary Art Space, Gorman House Arts Centre, Braddon. Closes March 20, Tuesday to Friday, 11am-5pm; Saturdays 10am-4pm.

PRAISE be to obsessions and fetishes! Dani Marti's *Variations in a serious black dress* is a most exceptional exhibition. It is strange, quirky and multi-tiered in its many levels of possible meaning.

When you enter the exhibition, there is a feeling that you are entering some sort of sacred space — a shrine. On the walls there are 13 two-metre-square all-black panels, while in the centre are three horizontally placed lightly coloured, slightly smaller square panels placed on thrusting vertical plinths.

On closer inspection, you realise that the black panels are not painted abstracts in the tradition of Malevich, Rodchenko, Moholy-Nagy or Ad Reinhardt, but instead they are woven objects with highly textured surfaces.

When you start to peer into each of these panels there is the realisation that each one has been woven out of thick industrial rope, most out of polyester and polypropylene, although one of them out of rubber rope and another with nylon. The knotting

and the weaving is different in each piece inviting a contemplative and meditative experience.

This weaving with industrial rope does not border on obsession, but it is obsession personified. Just as you settle in to partake of this contemplative, minimalist experience, all is subverted as you start to read the titles for the pieces.

At first sight they all appear to be innocently called *Variations in serious black dress* followed by a number, all in accordance with the conventions of high modernism. But then, when looking at one particularly immaculate piece, you notice the subtitle, "Asiatic angel — greeted by a young nipple".

Many of the other subtexts hint at a latent eroticism. "Filled with engaging body S and she smiled", "Agnes cupping her breast", "Neo-Gothic Barble lost in nodded fantasies".

By the time you reach the panel woven entirely out of rubber rope with its subtitle "Strictly porn", the minimalist shrine has become converted into a quirky boudoir with a stampede of fetishes.

It becomes like a surrealist paradise of Freudian associations. This is a very visually engaging and provocative exhibition with a refined minimalist aesthetic.

It is certainly work of a very high order