

Rumbling, dripping and slipping away

Time is measured in flour, pot scourers and green icing, writes **Robert Nelson.**

DEEP in the basement of a Victorian building, a dark suite of chambers reverberates with low rumbling, interspersed with drippy squeaks. As if the subterranean hold for arcane Masonic rituals, various rooms are set up with suspended beds of flour at head height. Spotlights shine upon the dusty white underside and also the floor beneath, where the flour has filtered through and formed a mound.

This installation by Sarah Duyshart turns the old building into a kind of hourglass that measures time as the loss of food. Meanwhile, the spooky sounds are extrapolated from recordings of the building itself, as if the heavy stony edifice — whose weight you experience oppressively in the basement — is a kind of ear, with lots of aural chambers and timpani, alas filled with sound-absorbing flour.

The absorption of sound and the passing of time are also evoked in Dani Marti's work at Arc One Gallery, *Time is the Fire in*



Which We Burn. The impressive title is drawn from a 1937 poem by Delmore Schwartz, popularised through *Star Trek*.

Marti is well known for his large weavings of rope, impressive examples of which are in the current show. Tapestry is normally a slow art; Marti is able to speed it up by making his yarn exceedingly thick cable and keeping the patterns regular. These constructions also deaden the sound in the room.

The masterpiece (above), however, is a huge mural made from silver and brass-coloured steel pot scourers. These are batched in effusive clutches, as if growing organically like florid moss or lichen, with one layer overtaking the last. Their glistening efflorescence produces every shade, from sparkling highlights to deep shadow, and these tonal variations enhance the changes in hue, from cold steely grey to hot copper.

Individually, the pot scourers are prosaic, almost abject. Designed for wounding an already damaged surface by grinding away the charred deposits of a burnt meal, they themselves wear out and become depressed and filthy. But in Marti's spongy vertical garden, they remain forever elastic, escaping their former destiny.

Both soft and harsh, they seem to make a music that would deaden every other, as if you

INSTALLATION THE LURE OF ECHO

Sarah Duyshart, Melbourne Fringe Festival, Donkey Wheel, 673 Bourke Street, until October 11

MIXED MEDIA TIME IS THE FIRE IN WHICH WE BURN

Dani Marti, Arc One Gallery, 45 Flinders Lane, until October 17

INSTALLATION INNOVATORS 2

Linden Centre for Contemporary Arts, 26 Acland Street, St Kilda, until October 25

LEFT: Dani Marti's *Time is the Fire in Which We Burn Take 2.*

could play Wagner in the next room and not hear a tuba blast through the absorptive abundance of netted filament.

Time ticks away with sound installations in three other shows at Linden. In Cyrus Tang's *Beauty of Decay*, unfulfilled childhood dreams and loss are conveyed through hard materials decomposing, expressively marked in sound by a drip striking a hot plate with regular hiss impact.

In Jessie Angwin's installation, *You Should be Treated like a Princess*, a beautiful table is stretched out with fine cloth, carefully bunched in regular rhythms and supporting a festive multi-storey cake with green icing. To this fussy perfection, a subtext is added by sound recordings, video and a petit point portrait, expressing the plight of Owada Masako.

Better known as Crown Princess Masako of Japan (1963-), this talented econometrician has relinquished the vibrancy of international affairs to endure 15 years of isolation in the imperial palace. Having produced a daughter but no male heir, she has not fulfilled the ideal of patriarchy. Beneath Angwin's prissy order, Masako's psychological decline is felt as female intellectual martyrdom, where an independent mind has been sacrificed to reveal the poverty of artificial privilege.

Time and the regular sounds that mark its progress are explored more light-heartedly by Ben Millar. Six guitars are presented, each with one string; and in a performance video six band members of the Mass Graves Orchestra share the melody by plucking these chordless instruments in series.

It all sounds like visual art to me.

robert.nelson@artdes.monash.edu.au