

Lost in a gallery within the gallery

LOST IN SPACE

Dan Moynihan, Gertrude Contemporary, 200 Gertrude St, Fitzroy, until April 27

DEVELOPMENTS

Seventh Gallery, 155 Gertrude St, Fitzroy, until April 13

Dan Moynihan has created a curious and bewildering experience at Gertrude Contemporary. The front window is full of scaffolding, a disconcerting presence, as if presenting the rear of something else. Inside the gallery, you find the front of another building at half-scale.

If you're used to gallery-going, you'll instantly recognise the miniature facade as the two-storey 1970s brown-brick bunker that contains Neon Parc, a small commercial art gallery perched at the top of town. Ominously, the installation is called *Lost in space*.

The verisimilitude is enchanting but so is the doll's house spatiality: everything bland is rescued by cuteness and everything ugly becomes a marvel of realism. You can walk inside, poke around upstairs, and enjoy the atmosphere



Scene from a Khvay Samnang video.

of the diminutive gallery. It's like going into the attic, that hidden loft of high culture that returns the viewing of art to the garret that spawned it.

This wonderful installation of a gallery inside a gallery makes amusing reflections on the circularity of art and curatorial practice.

In many ways, we love shabby architecture, because it's the last trusty abode for art and the socially disadvantaged. Protection of slums creates an international agony that is picked up in a learned exhibition called *Developments* at Seventh Gallery.

Curated by Roger Nelson, the

show comprises work by two Cambodian and two Australian artists, all concerned with the changing human geography of cities. Judging by the work of Khvay Samnang the challenges around urban development in Cambodia are intense. His photographs of performances around the new towers of Phnom Penh are mysterious, with echoes of lost agrarian myths and muscular use of the body.

One might imagine that the new developments will be built on automotive principles and that the old street and market culture of trolleys and bikes – celebrated in the work of Lim Sokchanlina – will die.

There are parallel concerns among Australian artists, who scrutinise our fragile sense of community, where progress entails a similar expulsion of the poor. In Australia, development is more likely to threaten the insularity of the private garden, which Llawella Lewis possibly satirises by means of a broken Hills hoist built from architectural tracing paper, called *Decay is in the wind*.

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