

Thursday Arts

Outstanding work in a fine tradition

THE great artists of the Renaissance and the Baroque often gave attention to the design of doors and city squares.

Michelangelo himself designed the Porta Pia, which still stands in Rome.

Therefore, the artists who have contributed to the grand, Gold Door Exhibit at the Fisher Gallery in Park Ridge are working in a fine tradition.

The tradition is not only European. The outstanding work in a show which is full of fine pieces in the Gold by Para Matchett

which draws strongly on Maori traditions. Let it be said that the Matchett piece is a magnificent work of art by any standard. The two stone arched doors of the gate, cut with a larch, are held, point figures with their power reinforced by the use of steel teeth throughout the work.

The wood of the main structure is immensely solid, but the carving on it has a mass of rich detail. The stone size of the work shows an artist confidently working at the height of his maturity.

The Gold alone would make the trip to Park-

ridge worthwhile, but there is much more to the exhibition. Outside the gallery the two stone arched doors of Chris South are a splendid introduction to the approach to the subject.

Denonville is the major component in the show and foremost the work to be done for Albert Park.

To complete our list of equally impressive are the stone/ceramic by Braxey-Cersell that have the mystery of a tiny portal leading into a large mass.

The nature of the show which came about when the Fisher Gallery invited artists, sculptors and craftspeople to work

on the concepts of the gateway, doors and insets—means that there is an immense variety of use of materials and in the approach to the subject.

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by a Difference

by Barbara Ward. This artist is a veteran of the Stone Sculpture Society, and the major works in the show are stone carvings. They fall into three groups. The first group is carved from limestone like work. The other two have references to drug abuse. Liar Pugs shows arms with hands around them to raise the veins, skulls and a syringe. Fuzzball has a syringe and spoon, among the carved paraphernalia. A lot of the detail does not sit well in the context of stone carving.

The skulls carry over to the next group, called Excursions, which are also done in limestone.

These works, one of which is designed in a corner, are boxes still interesting in the stone that enfolded them. The chisel-bored in Excursions I are quite moving.

The final and most impressive group is carved from the stone and the works are all called Ground Under.

All these figure sculptures are meant to be looked down on. They kneel on the floor with

each figure intently draws into itself. The weight of their forms is emphasized by the stone sculpture. The works show the sculptor's sympathy with the downtrodden. As well as their sculptural weightiness there are some details that are viciously strong and exciting. The hand over the face in Ground Under I is one case in point, as is the open mouth in the third of the series.

This is strong, sympathetic work, which is sometimes more grotesque than pathetic. A piece of drawing made with a selection stamp that are the basis of a video clip shown in the gallery completes the exhibition.

Another strong exhibition that, at times, was an exceptional quality is the work of Camilla Highfield of This Gallery, Plymouth City.

This show, called Black Lull, is conceived around the 19th-century art of the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi. Basic to the works are hand forms which emphasize the strength of the earth mother. Across the land

forms are laid a white cross, related to the motifs of British colonialism.

The works have layers of meaning and layers of materials have been used to create them. Heat of the works are loosely finished canvases, recently hand cut, most successfully the work is mostly in shades of brown. Not a few very well painted and have outstanding forms on the horizon.

Other works, which have a lot of interest, are more contrived and have less atmosphere and spirit. They are predominantly black and white with splatters of gold and silver.

This is at its most effective in The Promised Land Flag, where solemn hills are marked with the cross, the treaty is at the top and the whole is marked by gold and silver slashes like electric moments of pain and struggle, though they also suggest the working of the elements.

Throughout the exhibition there are hints of Colin McCubbin and Ralph Hoter, but the final result is something very original. It is a face, thought-provoking and overpowered.

The effect of the persistence of presence from the past conferring spirit on the present.

at Star Art in Karsburg Rd. The landscapes are all in an unusual form. They all have a very strong narrative quality when the mist gives his colour right, because the colour is awkwardly placed, but these landscapes have outstanding forms in shades of brown. Not a few very well painted and have outstanding forms on the horizon.

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