

Eat your own words at Rust-en-Vrede exhibition

By **VERONICA WILKINSON**

Wonderfully Wicked at Rust-en-Vrede

The intriguing relationship between words, language and art has been explored and recorded throughout history, but if the current exhibition *Artwords* at the Rust-en-Vrede Cultural Centre in Durbanville doesn't make you want to eat yours, it won't leave you unprovoked.

Running until December 15, when the Cultural Centre closes until January 7, four exhibitions are stimulating viewing, with Salon C displaying Michele d'Argent's witty and colourful *Love Hotels* and Vasek Matousek's suspended "spinners" that combine the interplay between natural and three-dimensional elements.

Situated at 10 Wellington Road, Rust-en-Vrede is housed in a building that bears traces of Cape Dutch, Georgian and Victorian architecture and was proclaimed a National Monument in 1984. This is the base for the Durbanville Cultural Society, the Clay Museum (which has just held a retrospective of respected ceramic artist Clementina van der Walt's work) and a gallery cafe, and is also the venue for numerous activities in the visual, performing and applied arts fields.

My visit started in Salon B where Ilené Jacob's haunting theme of separation and loss manifests itself in enamel paint and fibreglass. There are also outlined figures of her family accompanied by the poem *Figure and Ground*, a work by Gus Ferguson which captures the essence of the artwork in its opening words.

Poet Willem Jansen pulls no punches with his poems *I, Il Hamlet* provocatively juxtaposed with Wendy Gaybba's small and intimate oil on canvas which hints at harm, with its flesh tones almost bruised in comparison with her almost lasciviously applied *impasto* female nude inspired by Jansen's *Kopskoot (Shot to the head)* in Salon A.

A dark and brooding caped figure painted by Michael Taylor in gouache and the subtle dark reflections of a sea surface at night prodded poet Deborah Steinmar's *Lamentation* with its final words, "white money and the black sea claimed Byron Apollis". Artist Vernon Swart stylistically explores erotic French postcards of 1890 to 1900 which results in a mixed media

image of a kissing couple seated on a piano stimulated by Charl-Pierre Naude's poem, *Die musiek van die sterre (The Music of the Stars)*.

Carin Scrimgeour's *trompe l'oeil* (a type of illusionist painting that tricks the eye with its realistic appearance) finely detailed oil on canvas with its delightful reflection of the artist's eye in the blade of a bone-handled fish knife contrasts rich Chinoiserie with Lucille Greff's Afrikaans moving poem about

loneliness entitled *Aandete (Supper)*.

In Salon A the poem *Brandsiek (Suicidal)* by Danie Marais has inspired an existential and moody oil on

canvas by Lynie Olivier of a solitary young male figure with his back to the viewer. The colours are muted and the style hints at Cubism, the first abstract style of the 20th century.

An unashamed and all-too-familiar epitaph for a resented, deceased aunt named Freda will comfort any victim of self-imposed, unfulfilled expectations with its insight. The poem inspired a colourful, stylised

gouache on board by Michael Taylor.

Salon C features Michele d'Argent's colourful cabinets in the exhibition *Love Hotels*, a collection of painted and decorated wooden boxes.

They contain ceramic figures inspired by her travels in Mexico and Ecuador, where she was introduced to the Santero boxes or portable shrines that were brought from Europe by the Spanish Conquistadors.

The larger cabinets feature raku glazed ceramic figures like *Man's Ruin* where a stylised male figure with his head to a female breast has a satyr-like devil perched on his head.

Polish artist VasekMatousek's *Red Lamp* lights up at the press of a switch to illuminate the aquiline features an archetypal European harlequin bust in costume to complement his resin and ceramic mobiles.

● The nature of the current combination of exhibitions is every reason to visit Rust-en-Vrede. Gallery hours are from 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday and 8.30am to 1pm on Saturdays. Telephone 021 976 4691 or visit their new website at www.rust-en-vrede.com for more details.

Artwords is an exhibition that explores words, language and art



WORDS OF ART: Marie Stander's exquisite *Angel with Feather*