

New exhibitions burst out for spring

ORANGE Regional gallery is opening two new exhibitions bursting with the colour and energy of spring.

Upstairs, in our red gallery, we are appropriately showing an exhibition with a strong Russian connection.

Melbourne artists Mila Grigoriev and Peter Garnick are showing an unusual exhibition entitled *Action/Reflection*. The show is an homage to the Russian constructivist art movement of the early 20th century, and employs a similar geometric formal language to represent the mechanisation and "technologisation" of contemporary 21st century society.

Mila Grigoriev is a painter, whilst Peter Garnick can be described as an "industrial photographer" with a remarkable ability to see beauty in the commonplace working world.

I think this may be the first time that we have shown an exhibition of paintings and photography that are so closely meshed. The paintings are all twinned with a photograph, the latter being taken first in most cases, with the painter then responding to the photographs, which are highly aesthetic works revealing the textures and formal beauty of red and blue electrical wiring hanging against a raw concrete wall or the rusted steel reinforcement awaiting a concrete pour.

The bare bones of a building are here revealed to be things of beauty, and the structures remind us of the formal patterns that inspired the constructivists in Russia.

Mila Grigoriev responds to the colour photographs with a pared



**Art
Gallery**

Alan Sisley

down geometric style which gains tension by her use of a quite heavy textural finish. This swirling applied impasto contrasts with the strict geometric forms, at the same time softening them and adding a decorative note. The paintings and photographs are not as rigorous as the original constructivists, who condescended very little to the ordinary sense of beauty, so the artists describe themselves as neo-constructivists.

Orange Blossoms

Yes it is finally here, spring has hit us with a burst of floral colours and weather that is worryingly hot, but water worries do tend to recede in the face of the glorious floral displays about town.

Orange is known as a city of good gardens and gardeners, and to celebrate this much loved activity, Orange Regional Gallery is hosting a multi media exhibition exploring the evolution of gardens in the Orange district from the pioneering era to the present day.

The large gallery one space is, as I write, slowly filling with garden implements and memorabilia, from photographs of the old Bloomfield gardens to paintings of local gardens by famous artists like Colin Lanceley, from antique rakes to community projects like the floral theatre curtain for Orange Civic



SIDE BY SIDE: At left a photograph by Peter Garnick, with the painterly response by Mila Grigoriev from *Action/Reflection*.

Theatre. Just about every important event and art work to do with gardening from pre-European times to the present has been shown, documented or intimated in this exhibition.

Of course we do not have the space to fully explore this huge subject, but visitors will surely be most impressed with what has been found and displayed.

The exhibition is a true community project with loans from gardening clubs, friends of the Botanical Gardens and many other groups, all coordinated by Council's heritage section working with council's museums consultant Kylie Winkworth. The exhibition is designed by Diana Fisher, and brought together by Alison Russell, with a huge amount of help

from volunteers, particularly the landscape architects Michael Lehany and Jerry D'Cruz. It is being hung by the gallery team according to the designer's instructions, and will look terrific when opened on Saturday at 2pm.

It is difficult however, to establish a large exhibition like this one in an art gallery space, and it makes us realise that despite superficial resemblances, a museum and a gallery are very different things with different lighting and display requirements.

The back of house preparation areas also need to be different, as do the loading docks. For instance, in a gallery exhibition the works usually come in just one single truck load, which is a dedicated pantechicon, but in a museum

exhibition they come in various smaller vehicles in dribs and drabs, for this show, there have been scores of individual deliveries. It has really driven home the need, in any future facility, for discrete loading and preparation areas for the gallery and the museum space.

Also museum exhibition designers see a need to paint and produce the display in much greater detail than is best practice for art galleries, in this case painted various shades of green to suit the spring theme and decorated with banners and very heavy display items. Of course this looks terrific but will necessarily delay the opening of the following exhibition. Frantic and long hours lie ahead to hang the exhibition, but it will look terrific on Saturday.