

Thinking outside the box

Installation questions labels we give ourselves

TO whoever walked away with the brilliant little 1951 Cecil Skotnes oil and the darkly atypical Irma Stern monoprint at Sotheby's yesterday, well bid!



STANLEY HERMANS

CLEAR

inorganic and divisive process," Langeman says.

To understand what she means by that, you will have to check out this exhibition your-

self. It's great stuff. A pleasant and stimulating way to spend a lunch hour on a cloudy day.

Although all the boxes are covetable and each is quite fairly priced, it would be a great pity to fragment the installation.

But, having said that, I imagine that fragmenting it into its parts would be in keeping with the artist's objectives because doing so would, by implication, subvert an established market practice.

At the Brendon Bell Roberts Fine Arts Gallery, I made a beeline for Geoff Grundling's comprehensive and fascinating catalogue for the Cape Town Month of Photography.

In the crush of people at the gallery, I encountered Pieter Badenhorst, who has said of his pictures: "Over the years I have found myself returning to the same places to find escape.

"The animals are always part of that. Always present and always on the periphery - they are reassuring shadow entities that ask nothing of me."

The month of photography has been an unqualified success and has done much to stimulate the market for new images.

In the mix of guests I also

bumped into photographic agent Emma-Jane Taylor-Warne, who confirms that the market is cooking.

Move away from the madding crowd to Riebeeck Square and there, at the DC Gallery, you will find Diane Cousins, who has been quietly going about her business for the past six years or so.

She does a discreet but solid trade in art and crafts by artists in the townships and remoter parts of the country.

Cousins is deeply committed to promoting the artists on her books and plays an important but unsung role in their development.

She chooses work well to the left of the mainstream, but her chief emphasis is uncompromisingly on quality. Although it has taken time, she has developed a strong local and overseas market for work that would perhaps otherwise not have seen the light of day.

Exhibitions at the DC Gallery run for several weeks, so you have plenty of time to see them.

Hubie Thipe, from Saulspoort in North West, is showing charming small paintings and papier-mâché animals from the region.

His series of birds would be a source of delight in any nursery.

All of them would make ideal gifts for babies and they are reasonably priced.

Many of my peers are popping out the next and many will be work to hang in

What gems these works are.

I wonder how many monoprints there are among Stern's greatly varied works?

Back home, at the Association for Visual Arts in Church Street, visitors are being challenged to think outside the box.

On the floor of the main gallery, Fritha Langeman has set out a collection of boxes in an arrangement she describes as an "attempt to subvert the accepted relationship within systems of display, where objects are seen to represent cultural groupings".

The objects in each set are identical, but each box is labelled in one of the 11 official languages, with one language used for each series.

This, Langeman says, "alludes to the arbitrary and imprecise relationship between language, object and meaning".

The display is an epic statement and would look good as sculpture in the forecourt of a large corporate block or a public building.

It is a meticulously ordered, elegantly contained and compassionate expression of the artist's insights.

"The work is premised on the viewpoint that culture is mutable, whereas cultural classification is an

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