

# John Furse

THE MEDIUM IS CLAY - The message think again. These separate installations involving three different states of mind, with three different effects.

Paul Astbury offers unfired wet clay objects, often mass-produced ornaments or domestic crockery, sealed within airtight vitrines. The objects sweat, building up condensation inside the enclosed space, partially misting our view. In soft bodies set in a darkened corridor, a sense of claustrophobia and mystery ensues as we question what it is that lies beyond the blurred picture-plane and what exactly it is that we are invited to look at.

Anya Gallaccio has fashioned Apple tree, a life-size bronze cast, bearing forty red porcelain apples. Itself a singularly beautiful object, the tree carries many implied references both biblical and otherwise. It stands isolated, lonely and forlorn and for all its opulent beauty one is reminded of feet of clay.

Of the three participants, Keiko Sato makes the most lasting impact with her 'work in progress'. Seemingly intended as an ongoing preoccupation with no known conceivable end, it is a scattering of familiar domestic objects that splatter and shatter themselves across the smooth surface of the gallery as though of their own accord. Dishes, plants, rice, spaghetti, tea, coffee, flour, soil, clay, the detritus of daily life - urban reminders of the passing of time; a collage of both the sordid and sublime.

For all the spontaneity and apparent offhandedness of Sato's piece, her art and method appear as one.

All three artists succeeded with clay in their different ways, yet it is Sato who challenges more about the message than the medium.