

Self-truth all in the execution

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From raw, painful experiences to feminist issues and funny, cartoon-clad pop culture references, this year's Mine Own Executioner exhibition promises the full gamut of emotions.

The annual self-portrait exhibition — a high-profile fixture on the WA arts calendar — showcases 14 artists investigating the notion of human patina, the discolouring of people with reference to the way metal tarnishes.

Curator Peter Dailey hopes the exhibition raises the bar and that viewers will be visually and intellectually challenged.

"As long as they look at the work and actually want to question some things, they're not looking at it and going, 'Well, that would match my curtains', or, 'Oh, that looks pretty'," Dailey says.

Human patina is essential in providing the life experiences needed to inspire art, he says. "(It) is just those things that colour us as people, and the physical side is wrinkles and hair loss, but in terms of artwork it's an expression of all the things we've seen and done," he says.

"Some seem to be applying the word executioner and some seem to be working on the notion of patina, but very few have done an actual portrait representation of themselves."

One of those is Darlington sculptor Si Hummerston, who has created a 2m black-and-white light box stencilled with images of 50s toys, trolls, tin toys, cars and skateboards.

There are six viewing holes, one of which links to a painting of a car on an adjacent wall, revealing crazy kaleidoscope-style explosions of colour, mirrors and prisms.

Like a lot of his work, the box is light-hearted and Hummerston hopes to inspire a bit of a giggle from the viewer.

"I've got quite a few self-portraits but I don't know why I do them, I don't really like them in the end. Maybe you see how you see yourself for real, it's bizarre," he says.

"Whatever you make is always a self-portrait of you because there is always a bit of you in it."

Maylands photographer Eva Fernandez has taken a more serious approach, capturing herself in a pose that mimics a portrait of Picasso in his studio. The idea is to break down the idea of art as a male domain, providing a commentary on the



Mimic: Photographer Eva Fernandez in her Maylands studio.

mystique of the male artist and his studio in the 20th century.

"I hope that people first of all recognise the intention and the meaning behind it, particularly for other female artists, to have a similarity about the feeling of non-representation of female artists in their studio spaces and how it was very much a masculine domain during the 20th century," Fernandez says.

While attitudes have since changed slightly, many people still think of art as a male domain complete with fast cars, sex, drink and drugs, she says.

"For me it's more about a statement — it's placing yourself

within an image to talk about how you feel about certain situations."

Gingin farmer Geoff Overheu says his sculpture, Arcadian Narcissist (my vanity is greater than my misery), illustrates how Australians view the figure of an Akubra and Driza-Bone clad man.

"In terms of self-portrait it's the fact it's looking at itself and the viewer has to look in the mirror and will see themselves as well as the standing man," he says.

Mine Own Executioner is at Mundaring Arts Centre until November 16.