



HIGHLY DECORATIVE: Kati Thamo's *On the run* is an example of her fairytale world with animals that dance and speak and people who float effortlessly in the heavens.

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Weekend review

Escapism inhabits imagery

Although Kati Thamo was born in Perth, where she received most of her training and continues to live and practice her art, she is conscious of her Hungarian heritage and her imagery is permeated with a Chagall-like Eastern European dreamland fantasy.

This, her second exhibition at the Beaver Galleries, is a consistent show and contains mainly collagraphs, together with a few linocuts and miniature bronzes.

Highly decorative and illustrative, the imagery admits us into a fairytale world with animals that dance and speak and people who float effortlessly in the heavens.

There is the quality of Eastern European surrealism where the viewer is advised to abandon laws of rational thought and to surrender to joyful escapism.

However all is tinged with a slight

ART

Kati Thamo - Casting shadows

Beaver Galleries, 81 Denison Street, Deakin. Until March 10.

Reviewer: **Sasha Grishin**

nostalgia with a trace of melancholy, where in the words of a famous Hungarian proverb, "Even a white lily can cast a black shadow".

Thamo is a competent printmaker and there is an attractive frivolity in prints such as *The Cow and the Accordion* and *Decoy*, but I'm less convinced the work has a lasting presence once the initial visual pun has been understood and the pleasing

combination of colours appreciated. The collagraphs appear as somewhat formulaic, pleasing and competent, but hardly engaging.

The best print in the exhibition is *Shadow me Home*, where she has apparently left an impression of a cloth's texture as a background and printed over this a crisply cut linoblock.

The rhythmic composition with its whirling epicentre effectively holds one's attention.

The miniature bronzes are somewhat unconvincing, as maquettes for the figures which inhabit her prints, and do little to explore the properties of sculpture with the related questions of gravity, mass and surface textures.

Kati Thamo is now in her 50s and has an established presence in the Australian art scene.

Parallels may be drawn with the dream-like imagery of Christina Cordero's work, examples of which can be seen in the back room of the Beaver Galleries, however, Thamo lacks Cordero's sense of profundity and levels of meaning.

Alternatively one could seek a parallel with Barbie Kjar's work, but again Thamo lacks the intensity in Kjar's transcendental images which open up the more you engage with the work.

Thamo has a technical facility and a command of imagery which will inevitably have a popular appeal.

In her last exhibition at this gallery, she was experimenting with digital engravings and at the time they were the most effective images in that show.

An artist of ability, it would be good to see her challenge herself more, rather than breeding pleasing variations on a theme.