

supercolour superhero

A journal which he carries with him wherever he goes is the basis for much of the creativity of a young South Australian artist now showing on the Coast



Too Many Heroes by Don Wilby

There is far more to the contemporary artworld than art galleries these people realize. The work of Adelaide artist Don Wilby, for example,

combines a personal iconography and strong elements of social comment, presented through his distinctive 'super colour' (as it's known in classic illustrative techniques).

These are very visible in his current show - his eighth solo - at TR Kavanagh, Marmadock Beach.

The collection is a re-creation of a personal journey in way of finding knowledge, healing, wisdom and enlightenment for Wilby, who works predominantly with acrylics and spray paint on timber board.

Through this he makes cheerful, yet often profound, comment on the familiar day-to-day world but also via a more spiritual development, which he possibly takes from his ongoing interest in Native American culture.

Clearly Wilby's works suggest that different cultures can express their views differently while the basic shared idea remains the same. His personal motivation is one of lightening up and making the most of life. "Some of the themes in my work are not all that serious. I believe in

the bad good, the good-to-the other rather than the other way around.

"It is important to take it easy sometimes but in a busy way, but in a way of making time for friends and family, to not always be stressed, pinning yourself into the ground.

"My work therefore has a bit of chaos. It has, for example, all these super bright colours. One of my aims is to make people happy through my art, to cheer them after a hard day.

He finds this easy to do, returning to the pleasure of doing what he loves and having the energy and impetus to do a lot of it. Artwork seems to pour out of him. On the day of this interview he was working on a mural and thinking up ideas for a new show.

"I am ridiculously positive," he says, adding he could easily put on a new show every couple of weeks.

There is always more colour than to his credit. "I'd show the title *AMM* if I show, because although it fits here in a sort of parallel, there is a dark side. There is still stress, still homelessness..."

He does, however, find this a mostly healthy society. "Australia is great. Having come from England, where there is so much social tension, I find that people mainly get on here.



Red Dots by Don Wilby

"Multiculturalism seems to work here. There are disagreements, of course, but people usually manage to get on with each other."

His style, strongly influenced by commercial and folk-art, developed through simple shapes are based on careful construction and composition, with busy drawn elements.

As yet he has already begun to establish himself in the art world, gaining recognition from fellow professionals. Melbourne pop artist

Denise Roper bought 17 works Wilby's will-out show in March last year and several more recently. Another Wilby Melbourne solo is planned for later this year.

Born in Birmingham, Wilby emigrated from the UK in 2002 to his family and completed a BA in visual communication at the University of South Australia, before winning first prize in the Design Institute of Australia's 2004 of the Year awards in the Graphic Design category.

The *AMM* of 2004 exhibition, contains what he feels are some of his best works to date.

Wilby likes to let down his ideas and inspirations in a form which goes everywhere with it to which he records experiences. Ideas, mostly in drawn form.

Westcliffe is a vital Native American influence, particularly in the way of a weaving. Wilby believes their traditional way of representing something important through one continuous line has been replaced with flat, pattern and grid.

Don Wilby: AMM & More at TR Kavanagh, Marmadock Beach, until 6