

mx Citybeat

One of Jason Kimberley's artworks.



Surreal look at life

Before his fourth exhibition, artist Jason Kimberley packed up his life and headed bush. **KATE ROSE** discovers why.

After a corporate past at Just Jeans and time at an exclusive restaurant in Melbourne, Jason Kimberley did an about turn and disappeared into the outback to take photos. *Coolibah Tree* is his fourth exhibition, and pays tribute to two Australian icons carrying the name – the eucalypt and chateau cardboard. “Last May I rounded up five of my mates and a big trailer full of props, and I had a whole lot of storyboards and ideas for these shots, and went out to SA, in the claypans,” Kimberley said. “One of the

ideas was the cask, which was something I recalled from childhood barbecues.” So, loaded up with boxes of cask bladders – unused, not emptied – along with his mates, his mum’s camera, and plastic fish, Kimberley embarked on an exploration of the surreal. He also plays with the idea of strangers in a strange territory. “It’s the story of the Coolibah tree. It’s dropping its fruit, the

flagons, they’re the Coolibah fruit, and they’re drifting across the claypans, meeting up with the fish and the bags, which I suppose is a metaphor for the cityslicker in their four-wheel drives dependent on all that,” Kimberley said. “So it almost became a bit of a Dreamtime story, bringing them both together.” Despite his background as a suit-and-tie guy, Kimberley

believes he found his calling when he went bush – it just took a while for him to discover it. “I love being out in natural environments, so it’s a natural progression for me, but I can understand why people think it’s all bit strange,” he said. “What I’m doing now is probably the thing I love most of anything I’ve done. While the other things have always been fun and a great

challenge, I feel much more comfortable doing what I’m doing, and it’s just me.” The simplicity is a motif not only in his work, but how he does it. He is still working with his mother’s 1982 camera, which he has not yet returned, but swears he has replaced. And as for the fish? “No fish were harmed in the production of this series,” he said. ■ **The Coolibah Tree exhibition is at the Michael Carr Gallery, 124A Queens St, Woollahra, until October 15. Phone: 9327 3011 or visit www.michaelcarr.net**