

# A surreal look at life



**Jason Kimberley** is good at keeping himself busy.

From a corporate past at Just Jeans and starting St Kilda II-bar/restaurant Veludo, Kimberley did an about turn and disappeared into the outback to take photos.

*Coolibah Tree* is his fourth exhibition, and pays tribute to two symbols of Australiana – 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 South Australia, in the claypans. One of the ideas was the cask, which was something I recalled from childhood barbecues," Kimberley said.

Loaded up with boxes of cask bladders – unused, not emptied – his mates, his mum's camera, and a 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, how it drops 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 city slickers 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."

"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



Surrealism in the claypans of South Australia.



Metaphor and the outback, Kimberley's inspirations.

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 mum's camera, which he has not returned, but swears he has replaced. And as for the fish? "No fish were harmed in the production of this series."

■ *Coolibah Tree* will run from July 20 until August 7 at Metro 5 Gallery, High St, Armadale.

– KATE ROSE



*Coolibah Tree* pays tribute to two Australian icons – the eucalypt and cask wine.