



# Flesh and stone

galleries >> mandy wildeheart

**T**OWNSVILLE Art Society Gallery (TAS) has a slightly left of field exhibition on the main wall with things of flesh and stone by Michele Deveze deviating slightly from the gallery's usual fare.

Most viewers are more familiar with the small still lifes, flower studies, and landscapes that normally inhabit the gallery. So perhaps this series of eight collaged works, which resemble enlarged scrapbook pages, might take the average viewer aback a little.

As Michele reveals in her opening sentence of the catalogue statement: "These works are an autobiography of the last several years of my life."

Providing an insight into her life and mind might be a cathartic exercise for the artist but may be a little confusing or confronting for viewers.

While the catalogue and didactic panel clearly express the sentiments (even if heavily couched in "artspeak"), the collaged artworks themselves can be somewhat obscure in meaning, or at the other extreme, somewhat too explicit.

To record these autobiographical memories, Michele uses overlays of images and textures to create her



Above: *Hot Enough For You?* sm413101  
Top: *Days Like These* sm413097

works. A number of techniques can be seen in her works, such as drawing, various printing methods, and frottage (or rubbings) that are done in ink, paint and charcoal to name a few conventional media.

At times Michele shows her drawing strength with charcoal by seemingly revealing — with too much ease and talent — the images that must already be lurking on the brown paper.

Often her forms and figures fit so well with the apparently random application of background wash that it seems they were already there, just waiting to be enhanced.

This drawing strength can be seen in *Intersecting Parts*, where Michele builds on a sensitively drawn female form by adding a strip of paper that on second glance looks like a veil and turns her into a nude bride.

*Po'Munki* is much less free in execution and nearly comes off as a tad caricaturist or cartoonist.

Overall Michele has done well to present an integrated exhibition with thematic invitations and catalogues to support the exhibition. Other TAS exhibitors will do well to follow this lead.

Confusingly, as revealed in the catalogue, there seems to be a little conflict within Michele about the extent of viewer understanding she would like for her art.

She says: "I do not expect, and possibly, do not even want, the viewer to understand or become familiar with my private emotional landscape."

>> TAS Gallery in Cat & Fiddle Arcade has things of flesh and stone on show until April 29. Opening hours are from 10am to 3pm Monday to Friday and from 10am to 1pm on Sunday.