



Arie Kuijers's *Hy(g)rak/skewebeeld*, 2006

The art of obsession

Ever since the chilling opening sequence of David Fincher's 1995 thriller, *Se7en*, assaulted our screens with its flickering scratched-film stock insights into the obsessive mind of the serial killer, contemporary culture has been throwing out TV shows, movies and media that testify to the criminality of single-mindedness. It's not surprising that repetitive behaviour has been so systematically demonised. We are, after all, living in the era where ADD has replaced depression as the mental disorder de rigueur, an age where late capitalism's need to perpetually feed new markets requires hyperactive, multi-tasking consumers.

It's against this backdrop that the Goodman stages **Monomania**. The show delivers a valiant challenge to the current zeitgeist by bringing together works by five artists — Siemon Allen, Ryan Arenson, Joanne Bloch, David Koloane and Arie Kuijers — who work intently with their chosen subject matter and/or materials. Taking a cue from art historian Marina van Zuylen, it aims to draw attention to the therapeutic attributes of the single-minded practices of artists.

Ironically, however, the most successful works on the show are those that capture

the sheer madness of their artist's compulsion. Koloane's large-scale mixed-media panoramas erupt with an almost psychotic energy that refuses the conventional frame, while the numerous scribbles and the low-key medium code the works as intimate despite their large scale. Allen's intricate film strip construction, *The Birds*, is awe-inspiring in its grandeur of scale and level of detail. At the same time, though, another kind of awe is invoked: imagined scenes of the mind-numbingly pathological process involved. The compound feeling is an odd, off-putting reverence, a skewed Sublime. But the real star of the show is long under-represented Bloemfontein artist Kuijers. His mixed-media installations might appear the spawn of an automaton suffering from some psychotic pornographic strain of obsessive-compulsive disorder, but his insanity is both solipsistic and generous — he understands all too well how odd thinking can be and assumes his viewer finds the world as rich, delicious and strange as he does. — *Miles Keylock*

At the Goodman Gallery Cape until September 6