

Reuven Israel's sculptures have an air of unreality. The first impression is often of surface. Each piece is sanded and painted repeatedly over a long period of time. As a result, the work has a smoothness, a depth of colour and a perfection that disrupts the viewer's eye. It is difficult to accept the physicality of Israel's objects when their sheen suggests they could be virtual. On closer inspection, many of the sculptures betray their origins, as in *B.R.O.F. (Burning Ring of Fire)* where the inner rim of the circle has been left unpainted, referring us back to the laborious process of its making.

The pieces themselves are curious hybrids, evocative of familiar objects such as a fireplace, a wardrobe or an animal. But each has morphed into strangeness, pushing their forms beyond that initial recognition into alien territory. They are mutations, created with a wry sense of humour that is revealed in their titles - *G.G. (Good God)*, *P.D.T. (Please Don't Touch)* or *Lazy Susie*. Increasingly, they have an anthropomorphic quality, spinning or gently rocking in the gallery, sprouting like odd prosthetic amplifications of human anatomical structures.

Each new body of work is accompanied by a series of drawings. In these, the three dimensional forms of the sculptures are explored in more detail, each made piece becoming the model for a series of speculative variations. These two dimensional forms are arranged in rows and columns, as if in a series of classifications. There is a scientific, or museological, process at work here sorting and displaying the protean sequence of mutations that spill from each basic shape.

Reuven Israel's sculptures radiate through intense chromatic bursts. They strike us in a pre-conceptual way, evoking a response to their colours and their evocative shapes. They work off our memories of known forms, seduce us with light and persuade us into a mongrel world of metamorphic states.