

## Contemporary art explosion

DOWN in the Domain Gardens, just outside the Royal Botanic Gardens, there has been an art explosion. In tranquil Dallas Brooks Drive, a quiet hangover from the 19th century, contemporary art has arrived.

A small nondescript Victorian cottage in Dallas Brooks Drive has been given over to become the Centre for Contemporary Art, funded by the State Ministry for the Arts, and the Federal Visual Arts Board. It does not open officially until August, by which time it will have been gutted within, and redesigned to become a home for touring and temporary exhibitions of the latest in contemporary Australian and international art.

But as a public introduction to the new centre, its director, John Buckley, decided to let three artists have one room each of the cottage before its gutting. Here's your room; bring your paint. You have a week to work. The walls, the ceiling, even the floor can be your canvas.

The artists chosen were Juan Davila, David Larwill and Howard Arkley. When we visited the centre a week ago, only Juan Davila and David Larwill were at work. Howard Arkley had been in Sydney for an exhibition opening but the other artists were confident he would be finished on time. "He uses an air-gun. He's very fast."

Juan Davila's characteristic work had filled three walls by the time we arrived. His work, 'The Studio, Dallas Brooks Drive, Painted by Penis', is part of an artists' dialogue, a refutation of a work hung in the Sydney Biennale, 'The Studio, No. 3 Wesley Road — painted by Mouth'.

Davila, whose shy, diffident manner is at such odds with his confrontational art, stumbled through an explanation of the work. Such artists should not be questioned. Just let them paint.

David Larwill had almost finished his room. It was an exuberant explosion of gestures and figuration, cheeky and exciting. Pretty well an extension of the artist himself.

The three rooms will be on view until tomorrow week, open every day between 2 and 5 pm. Then they will be torn down, as the centre gets ready for its opening in August. It is an intriguing taste of things to come.

Anthony Clarke

