

ART

GARY CATALANO

A large part of the second item in Gary Catalano's Art review published yesterday was omitted; this is the complete item.

HOW much beauty can I stand?' (at the Australian Centre for Contemporary Art, Dallas Brookes Drive, until 20 April) strikes me as confused in its motives. Though it purports to deal with romanticism, it is unclear whether it is seeking to document one aspect of its current resurgence or (which seems more likely) to question the possibility of a genuinely romantic response to nature.

Yet whatever its precise intentions may be, surely commonsense would tell one that this ACCA exhibition of just 11 items (one of which was painted back in 1879 by Eugen von Guerard) does not provide the grounds on which to generalize about the future directions of contemporary art. Undeterred by such matters, Sue Cramer claims that the works on show challenge the empirical habits which have long sustained our landscape tradition.

Cramer is able to make this claim because three of the works here (by Susan Norrie, Geoff Lowe and Imants Tillers) take various images by von Guerard as their starting point or text. Clearly enough, such works owe little or nothing to the direct observation of nature.

We are made to understand that the same is true of the works of Volker Tannert and Therese Oulton, two young European artists who are also included in the show. Oulton's works are marked by a depth of feeling which makes them genuinely romantic works, and they look out of place alongside the other works here.