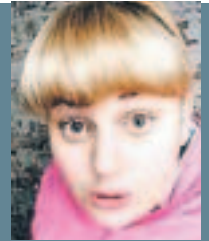


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The best thing I've seen lately
 "I'm really loving the new Series 5 of *Entourage* that's just come out in the States. I've learnt a lot of good pointers from the character Ari Gold (played by Jeremy Piven). When I go to LA next year for the pilot season, I'll be ready to 'hug it out' "

Rebel Wilson, *Bogan Pride*, tonight on SBS



the arts & entertainment you want

Frozen in time

Blink, but don't miss a view of an imagined Antarctica

ANTARCTICA is literally the tip of the iceberg when it comes to the future of the planet. As temperatures rise and the ice melts, the spectacular wilderness area, increasingly under threat, has become the focus of our anxiety.

Yet our relationship with the place remains fairly imaginary, according to New Zealand photographer Anne Noble, because most people never go there.

Instead, they get their ideas from an almost Disneyland construction of the place.

Noble says our sense of the Antarctica comes from the long tradition of "heroic" photography, of explorers and adventurers, from wilderness and tourism photography and museum displays that reinforce images we have already seen.

Bringing to our attention this idea of Antarctica is the subject of Noble's latest show *Ice Blink*, which will be part of the Melbourne International Arts Festival.

The photographic series documents all the artificial displays created in theme parks, research centres, aquariums and museums.

The 15 pictures in the exhibition were taken in New Zealand, Australia, Japan, Norway, Scotland, the US and Britain between 2003 and 2007.



>> first look

MISCHA MERZ
Arts writer

A sterile view:

New Zealand photographer Anne Noble documents artificial displays of Antarctica as a comment on society's unrealistic views of the frozen region.

The images are at times jarringly kitsch but also beautiful and evocative.

They also expose a tragic naivety about an important environmental area.

You get a sinking feeling that one day these theatrical set-ups might be all that we have left of Antarctica.

Noble discovered these fake locations as she prepared for a two-week trip to the real Antarctica, where she eventually photographed the shifting patterns of light for a series examining the disorienting effects of whiteout.

As she visited these staged environments, she developed ideas about

whenever I'm somewhere I check out the relationship to Antarctica and Antarctic landscape photography. And I've built up this body of work that looks at how we look at Antarctica — the grandeur, the colour, the light, the penguins, the adventurers and discoverers — all played out in this artificial environment.

"There is a sadness and a number of themes and a question about the desire and longing for that transcendental feeling of place and how it becomes a thing we consume.

"If they make people laugh and feel a little bit uncomfortable then it means

“ If they make people laugh and feel a little bit uncomfortable then it means they're working

how people have these simulated experiences.

So there are images of security guards standing casually in a white wilderness landscape, people taking pictures with their mobile phones and of course the artificial parade of penguins watched by rows of people in plastic chairs.

"What most people know of Antarctica comes from photography and much of it is formulaic," she says. "I was interested in the global imaginary and this notion of the place being a fiction.

"For the past five or six years,

they're working. It's really about the nature of the looking and the leanness and the paucity of these awful, corny landscapes."

Noble has work held in major collections including the National Gallery of Australia.

She will return to the Antarctic next month for six weeks as part of a US National Science Foundation delegation.

see > Ice Blink, Centre for Contemporary Photography, 404 George St, Fitzroy. 11am-6pm, Wed-Sat, until Oct 25. Ph: 9417 1549



Open mind: Yara El-Sherbini raises some big issues. Picture: CAMERON TANDY

Question of perspective

A performer quizzes her audience, writes **Harbant Gill**

WHEN Russell Crowe was reported as being the target of an al-Qaida kidnap plot, a London performer turned him into a quiz question.

Yara El-Sherbini, creator of the unique *Pub Quiz* which she has brought to Melbourne, asked: **WAS** he a target in a plot to destroy the western world? **WAS** his gladiatorial expertise needed in training camps?

WAS it because a celebrity was needed for propaganda video clips? One of these is the right answer and yes, the winning table does get a good prize, but that's not the point.

As quiz mistress, Yara El-Sherbini uses the format of the popular form of entertainment as an artwork to raise pertinent questions.

On her first trip to Australia she uses 36 questions to playfully interrogate ideas and assumptions.

"It explores issues of global politics, racial and religious tensions, social divides, gender, the hidden meanings of hidden agendas," she says.

"Basically I'm hosting a trivia night... the integral thing is about people working together and having fun. But I'm also gently probing people about ideas they have. It's about asking particular questions that frame how we see the world."

New questions created in the week leading to quiz night will be based on Yara's insights about Australia.

She is meeting local artists and academics, reading furiously and hosting a discussion on how Australians use humour in daily lives.

The Muslim performer, whose father is Egyptian and mother comes from Trinidad, grew up in the only brown family in West Yorkshire.

"It makes you much more aware of your racial identity," Yara says.

"Questions of integration and tension are always of interest to me, but I'm interested more in how we can bring communities together."

see > Pub Quiz, Arts House, North Melbourne Town Hall, 521 Queensberry St, Wed, 8pm. Bookings: 9639 0096 or www.artshouse.com.au. Entry is free.

