

a&e

The best thing I've heard lately
 "The Rolling Stones' 1966 album *Between the Buttons*. In particular, the song *Ruby Tuesday*, which still moves me to this day. Mick Jagger and Keith Richards wrote it together"
 Singer Grace Knight, performing at The Palms at Crown on Thursday



arts&entertainment

Moore balance

David Moore's work is an antidote to fast-paced life, writes **Mischa Merz**

DAVID Moore's paintings carry the kind of balance, purity and calm that French modernist Henri Matisse aimed for in his own work.

Matisse famously said he wanted his work "freed from a subject matter that is disconcerting or too attention-seeking".

"In my paintings," he said, "I wish to create a spiritual remedy, similar to a comfortable armchair . . ."

And though Matisse's aspirations were later mocked by those who thought art's job was to shake people out of their comfort zone, you can't go past a bit of purity and balance as an antidote to modern life.

Moore, the son of Australian tonal realist painter and teacher Graham Moore, has been trying to attain that balance during more than 40 years of practice. And in his show at Chrysalis Gallery, he seems to have cracked it.

“ I prefer to paint everyday things

Moore has been through various phases and turned his hand to many styles, including 10 years as an abstract painter. But he returned to observing the natural world again in the 1990s.

The more than 50 still life, landscape and figure paintings, mostly small gems, shine quietly with a seductive palette and delicious, textural brushwork. They are simple, painterly statements that can look almost photographic from a distance and abstract at close range.

The landscapes transform the chaotic clutter of the Australian bush into a perfect balance of muted greys.

Others capture the areas of Melbourne's east — Yarra Glen, Eltham, Cottles Bridge — when the afternoon shadows are long and evocative.

And just like Matisse, Moore has chosen simple, everyday subjects for his



» first look

Balancing act: David Moore's father always told him to paint with restraint, the results obvious in (clockwise from above) *Spoon and Cup*; *Resting*, *Rachael*; and *Summer Field*, *Yarra Glen*.

still-life explorations because he wants to be able to express a feeling through the paint rather than through the object itself.

"I generally paint in short bursts," he says, "But there is a lot of time invested in the feeling that I want, so when it comes to painting objects and setting them up I prefer to paint everyday things."

Though Moore's father came from a conservative Melbourne group of painters who held to the teachings of Max Meldrum, the current show seems to owe more to Europeans like Giorgio Morandi, Nicolas de Stael and Ewan Uglow.

Moore, 61, says his father's work became safer as he got older, but early on he had a loose and relaxed style that broke away from the tight, 19th-century still-life tradition.

Though his father and his group were often dismissed as conservative, Moore says they admired artists who broke away

from traditions, such as Clarice Beckett with her foggy renditions of Melbourne and maverick British impressionist James Abbott McNeill Whistler.

MOORE began his art studies at Ealing Art School in London in 1966, when his father decided to try to make a career in Britain.

When the family returned he studied drawing at the National Gallery School, graduating from Swinburne in 1970. He was a recipient of the A.M.E. Bale Residential Scholarship and was taught by another much-derided conservative, Archibald Prize winner William Dargie.

Like his father, Moore also teaches. He says his father never commented on his work.

"He was a bit removed and aloof," he says. "But my mother thought everything I did was wonderful. I've just quietly



» David Moore

New Work
When: Until September 27, Monday-Friday 9.30am-5.30pm, Saturday 11am-5pm
Where: Chrysalis Gallery and Studio, 179 Gipps St, East Melbourne
Info: ph: 9415 1977, email prints@chrysalis.com.au
Website: www.chrysalis.com.au

made my own way and am very grateful for what my father gave me. He always told me to use restraint, to wait for the right light, to take time approaching the subject and to not seek notoriety."

» review

» circus

Circus Showcase 2008

Where: NICA National Circus Centre, finishes tomorrow

Reviewer: Stephanie Glickman

NICA (National Institute of Circus Arts) has never had a shortage of talented graduates, and this current crop is no exception.

Circus Showcase 2008 features each NICA graduate in a solo performance and punchy video footage introduces the talented-packed acts.

Transitions are tight, production values high and acts short and sharp.

There's trapeze, cloudswing and tightrope — the usual array of circus apparatuses — and several acts demonstrate more than one skill.

The standout acts go beyond mere technique or brute strength and delve into emotional territory or fluidly integrate the performer's unique physical presence with tricks.

Most notable is Thomas Worrell's breathtaking aerial hoop routine, in which he uses seamless choreography to slither and shimmy in and around the suspended hoop.

Worrell really works his curvaceous lines, hitting them strongly and stretching them to their extremes.

Shaun Plumtree marries contemporary dance with meteor juggling to create a contemplative self-reflection, and Lewis West's unique brand of breakdancing-infused acrobatics serves him well in a Chinese strap act.

Chiara Boardman manages to play violin while tangled in tissu, and handstand artist Issac Saleh finds a new use for magic mushrooms.

Other acts, such as Kaleb Hawkins' Superman trapeze and Brittany Mercer's German wheel number, have intriguing or humorous elements but have yet to find a complete synchronicity of form and context.

In recent years, NICA has increased its focus on providing the dramatic training required for students to become well-rounded artists and not just generic circus performers.

This commitment is apparent in *Circus Showcase 2008*, which leaves no doubt about the potential of these graduates to excel on circus stages around the world.



Breathtaking: Thomas Worrell.