

## Inequality generates art full of power

Not every woman is a victim of incest in our society, but it is an experience that all women can relate to, according to DeeJ Fabyc.

Because incest is about relationships between people of unequal power, it stands as a cultural metaphor for the lack of power enjoyed by women in general. As a result, they are subject to the same ongoing fear and anger that incest victims suffer.

Fabyc explores the secrecy and anxiety that accompany this powerlessness in an exhibition titled "Considering How Dangerous Everything Is, Nothing is Really Very Frightening" at the Legge Gallery in Redfern.

The exhibition, an installation of photos, photocopies, computer-enhanced screen prints, wooden furniture and other media, has been mounted as part of Dissonance, a four-month umbrella program covering more than 70 separate projects around the country on "Aspects of Feminism and Art".

Fabyc's work ranges from explicit images — a large canvas with a muted depiction of involuntary oral sex, and a panel of four fist gestures — to more ambiguous statements: a

Artist DeeJ Fabyc takes a harsh look at relationships that lack equality, writes

**MICHAEL VISONTAY.**

red, screen-printed circle with two hole-shaped patches, mounted on a steel sheet, suggesting anything from an orifice to an organ.

A more foreboding suggestion comes from a computer-enhanced self-portrait which lies on another steel sheet behind a very tall wooden chair.

The chair's shadow falls onto the shiny surface in a hint of a gallows or some other undefined threat.

In a triangular reference to dark childhood secrets, Fabyc has also built a section of wooden stairs, weathered like those at a wharf, with a grimy old music box on the second top stair. The second part of the triangle shows a

small photo of a girl in a dungeon, mounted on a piece of plastic in the shape of a mirror. The third is an abstract image of *Twin Peaks*' Laura Palmer, who was sexually molested by her father.

Fabyc readily admits that her work is informed by an incident six years ago when she was held up at knifepoint.

Although her work is not "art as therapy", she says it has been part of the process of coming to terms with the trauma.

But the broader focus of her work is the tolerance of incest by society, through jokes, the media (Laura Palmer) and, most of all, through its frequency in real life. It is a cultural reality, she argues, not just a personal one.

The installation expresses the incoherence of trauma; the catalogue for the exhibition adds a more clinical postscript: a copy of a lawyer's submission for compensation for the attack, detailing the extent of its impact on the victim.

*Considering How Dangerous Everything Is, Nothing is Really Very Frightening*: until July 27 at the Legge Gallery, 183 Regent Street, Redfern. Tues-Sat 11 am-6 pm.