



Culture Art & design

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Daniel Kitson

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DANIEL KITSON

Melbourne Town Hall, until April 14

The curmudgeon has returned and remains every bit as baffling as a Business Activity Statement. Although, Daniel Kitson is a mite more loveable than quarterly administration, his comic asset is more difficult to quantify than your average range of stationery.

However, an evening with him does involve just as much swearing and marginally more morbid terror.

Despite his stated distaste for stand-up, Kitson simulates a bloke enjoying himself silly. Plainly, the work of being a convoluted comic insurgent is more fun than a barrel of self-aware, post-ironic monkeys. Although the shaggy English mutineer insists he's in extreme abstract agony, he looks like he is having an absolute hoot.

It has almost become an embarrassment to praise the act of "deconstruction". Well, colour me clichéd: Kitson deconstructs with all the anarchic elegance of a drunk Jacques Derrida bizarrely forced to perform knock-knock jokes for an audience entirely made of doorbells. He doesn't tell jokes: he traces the shape of a joke and then proceeds to jam its mechanism. You find yourself at a bizarre conceptual impasse for a second - confused momentarily by his graceful disruption - and then you explode into deferred laughter.

"Isn't this an exhilarating glimpse beneath the magician's cloth?" he asks. Well, yes. In a popular culture finally alienated from the possibility of new critique, Kitson finds tiny mistakes to inhabit and enlarge. He remains really, really funny and really, really odd. All other stand-up acts seem a little clumsy and overdone by contrast.



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