

Artist Peter Atkins sits in front of his latest abstractions (left to right) *Climbing* (2007), *Nobody Knows the Trouble I've Seen* (2007) and *Germany* (2007).



# ready made

Artist Peter Atkins finds a new niche for abstraction.

FOR THE LAST 10 years Peter Atkins's practice has concerned itself with the concept of 'ready-made abstraction'. "Abstract elements that exist in one form or another in the urban landscape," explains the artist, who is preparing for his first exhibition at Martin Browne Fine Art in Sydney. "Street signs, shopfronts, architectural elements, I see these collected forms as markers or mapping points of my physical interaction within the urban environment."

Currently narrowing his aesthetic focus on a cosmopolitan hot spot on the edge of Melbourne's CBD, Atkins knows that if he was dropped into any precinct in any part of the world (soon to be Los Angeles as a recipient of an '08 Australia Council residency), he'd start collecting its seemingly meaningless minutiae with a cartographer's intent. But for now it's the 'inglorious' graphics found around Brunswick's bustling Sydney Road – anything from a box of fungus treatment to a naff 1970s Andy Stewart album cover – which he strips of their consumer semantics before borrowing their expressive forms for painting onto old trucking tarpaulins.

Singling out *Nobody Knows the Trouble I've Seen*, a work whose dominant blue spiral was lifted off a Seekers album cover of the 1960s, Atkins recalls that his Melbourne dealer looked at the painting and suggested that he'd been looking at Matisse's snails. "I said no, but I'm sure the album designer had referenced Matisse. And now I'm referencing that person referencing Matisse and, who knows, it could keep on going through eternity until the original idea is lost and all you have left is this historical lineage of form." Atkins thrills to the post-modern irony that his work is also beginning to self-reference. "I'm now plagiarising myself and my own art history by reinvestigating forms used as reference for earlier paintings, it's a vocabulary of form where the focus is constantly evolving." ANNEMARIE KIELY  
Pre-formed at Martin Browne Fine Art, 6 February–2 March, 57–59 Macleay Street, Potts Point NSW, (02) 9331 7997.



The graphics found on a Sylvia Harvey book, **ABOVE**, were stripped down for *May '68* (2007), **BELOW**. Andy Stewart (2007), **FAR LEFT**, was inspired by the Scottish crooner's 1960s album cover, **BOTTOM LEFT**.

