

# Leper/Messiah



Above: Alasdair McLuckie, *Untitled*, 2007, pen on paper, 29 x 21cm. Courtesy the artist.  
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Still a relatively young gallery, Neon Parc has built a reputation for revealing new talent, and its first show for 2009 doesn't disappoint. *Leper/Messiah* brings together the work of three young artists making waves in the Melbourne art underworld. All three were born in the 1980s, all are recent graduates and all are gaining prominence in Melbourne's alternative, artist-run spaces.

The title of the show — *Leper/Messiah* — comes from the title of a Metallica song, which in turn was appropriated from a line from the lyrics of David Bowie's *Ziggy Stardust*. In a statement from the gallery, *Leper/Messiah* incorporates "the androgynous archetypal astro-fusion of Bowie with the hair, meat, speed and gravitas of Californian speed metal gurus Metallica".

"Having finished primary school after postmodernism was declared dead and turning their backs on the cat-walk-cool and empty stares of relational aesthetics, the artists of *Leper/Messiah* are bare-knuckle building new icons for tomorrow's deities."

It's a high call indeed, but Alasdair McLuckie, Alexander Ouchtomsky and Alex Vivian pull it off. Their aesthetic is an anarchistic melange of street culture, skewed mysticism, comic book narrative and primitive futurism.

Alasdair McLuckie takes on common materials to create ritualistic structures and drawings with an emphasis on folk aesthetics and obsessive patterning. With a clear nod to shamanistic tradition, his minutely detailed drawings explore concepts of creation and destruction, continual patterning and apparitions, often drawing inspiration from primitive art and cultures, shamanism and prophecy. They resemble bark paintings from some far-off post-apocalyptic future.

With an almost David Cronenberg aesthetic, Alexander Ouchtomsky articulates a Darwinian approach to picture and object making, exploring the human face and the anthropomorphic structures of bugs and insects with deeply creepy results. His resulting creatures might be the result of reading the Brothers Grimm on acid.

Alex Vivian, aka Always, creates work that Aleister Crowley might have tackled if he'd grown up on a skateboard in the '90s. Sexuality, torture, notions of medieval quests and satanic magic infuse his works. A biblical plague of locusts descends on a *Dungeons & Dragons* game-board in an anarchic scenario part street art, part Marvel comics at their most esoteric.

The artists of *Leper/Messiah* are the mutant bastard offspring of postmodernism. The past and the future are blended in a hallucinogenic roller-coaster ride. Dub it bizarro.