

Tuesday, June 8, 2010 metro **life**

ART REVIEW

Atsushi Kaga: Rest With Us in Peace

★★★★☆

In Atsushi Kaga's last exhibition at Mother's Tankstation, the Tokyo-born artist introduced us to a loveable, though troubled creature named Bunny: a hapless, humanoid rabbit with a penchant for the ladies. Though Bunny and his friends – among them a depressed panda – made us chuckle, they had a serious side too; look carefully at Kaga's overtly cute creations with their echoes of kitsch Japanese cartoons and you find an extended metaphor for modern life. These are animals who suffer in love, endure stultifying office jobs and are every bit as wily as their human counterparts.

Rest With Us In Peace sees bunny return, along with a cast of otherworldly creatures. In papier mâché centre-piece The Brick Mountain – imagine a wigwam on acid and you're halfway there – Bunny figurines are dotted about a day-glo collage while on

a TV, built into the sculpture, a short animation piece is being played on a loop. It tells the tale of a coniferous tree who, after becoming pregnant following an adulterous affair, is banished by the forest elders.

Elsewhere, the bright and busy I Fell Asleep While I Was Thinking About A Galaxy Far From Here might look, at first glance, chaotic but it's almost perfectly symmetrical, its shimmering glitter and acrylic figures appearing suspended in space. You Are Doing Ok For Just Being Alive is a more sombre affair, with Bunny painted sitting atop a mound of rubble in some kind of post- apocalyptic landscape. But if this symbolises Bunny's capacity for despair he does occasionally find repose as in the smile-inducing Prudent Sleepers (pictured).

Darragh Reddin

Until Jul 10, Mother's Tankstation, 41-43 Watling Street, Usher's Island D8, Thu to Sat noon to 6pm, free. Tel: (01) 671 7654. www.motherstankstation.com

