





## Kauage

REBECCA HOSSACK  
FITZROVIA

You have to walk through a show of mediocre paintings of people and dogs on a beach – Milton Avery without the quirks meets Keith Vaughan without the queerness – and go to the basement to find this engaging artist from Papua New Guinea. It takes a while to work out that Kauage isn't another sad case of a local artist making commercialised tourist kitsch; or upmarket curator's kitsch pounced on by white folks and flogged as meaningful shamanistic ex-

otica (to be looked at while listening to World Music plain chants featuring Jason Donovan on amplified didgeridoo).

Kauage – a self-taught draughtsman who was introduced to the joys of acrylic by a European anthropologist – is a storyteller. Mostly the images do little more than illustrate the stories, but he's great at painting helicopters, aeroplanes, pop stars in flares, disco dancers and drinking (leaf through the folio lying on the floor). The paintings are remarkable largely because of the legacy of colonialism which they chart and seek to come to terms with. Quite a lot of the work relates to Kauage's move to Germany, where he seems to have found an audience and collectors. As Terry Smith noted in the *Sydney Morning Herald*, his is an art that only *looks* naive.

*Adrian Searle*

