

In the frame Louise Martin-Chew



Artist has a brush with magic

THE dedication it takes to be an artist is obvious when you consider the work of Queensland realist painter Lisa Adams.

Detailed paintings created by using the smallest of brushes take months of painstaking work for them to appear highly realistic. Her imagery resembles the natural world but has a significant and highly individual, often autobiographical, twist.

In *Divining*, pictured, a female figure walks through an arid, rocky landscape, divining rod in front of her, eyes cast down, as though blindly searching for meaning in a harshly unresponsive world.

With *Secrets*, the female protagon-

ist whispers to a tree — to keep her secrets safe as the legend has it — but they are so explosive that the trunk is ablaze. What could she possibly be whispering about?

Adams lives and works in the Sunshine Coast hinterland.

She is highly disciplined, with her work habit seeing her in the studio six days a week.

Her imagery, described at times as "magic realism", is more unreal than real, although settings and landscapes are often recognisable.

Nightmarish elements emerge from the natural world and individuals may create volatile responses.

Adams' paintings examine the

courage required to advance, learn and grow, and tap into common anxieties in a period of change.

It is rare to see an exhibition of work by Adams. She takes so long to produce a show — this, her second solo commercial exhibition with Philip Bacon, comes five years after her first, and is only the third during her working life.

In the meantime Adams' work has been included in major exhibitions such as the Queensland Art Gallery's

summer exhibition, *Contemporary Australia: Optimism*, and she won the 2008 Tattersall's Club Landscape Art Prize.

Adams' mode of work comes at a significant personal cost.

"Most wouldn't be aware of the physical pain that comes with sitting, triple zero brush in hand, for years on end or the single-minded determination to endure such isolation, but I love it and don't wish to sound 'tortured'," she says.

Adams offers a potent artistic puzzle in instalments.

Lisa Adams, Philip Bacon Galleries,
2 Arthur St, Fortitude Valley,
until July 18.

