

Now for something a wee bit different

Elizabeth Fortescue, Daily Telegraph, 26 February 2015

AN artist banned from British galleries for urinating and jumping on the art will perform in one of Sydney's leading private galleries.

At 2pm on Sunday, Jian Jun Xi will climb inside *The Empire*, his sturdy wooden model of Washington's Capitol building at Judith Neilson's White Rabbit Gallery in Chippendale. It's not certain what he will do. He could lie down on the little bed or read a book from the shelf. He could do anything at all, really. So can visitors to White Rabbit, where *The Empire* is part of a larger exhibition called *State of Play*.

The Empire feels like a cubby house — except that it contains a surveillance camera which livestreams video of the occupant to patrons of the White Rabbit cafe.

Jian Jun Xi seems to like interacting with art. But it got him into trouble in Britain, where he is based. He and fellow artist Cai Yuan jumped up and down on Tracey Emin's notorious art work, *My Bed*, in London's prestigious Tate Britain art gallery in 1999.

In 2000 at Tate Modern, the two artists urinated on a display case containing Marcel Duchamp's artwork, *Fountain*, which is actually a urinal.

Not surprisingly, the artists were banned from all Tate franchises. But for Barbara Flynn, the White Rabbit guest curator of *State of Play*, Jian Jun Xi's penchant for hi-jinx was right on theme for her exhibition.

Judith Neilson, who established White Rabbit in 2009 and has built a huge collection of post-2000 contemporary Chinese art, asked Flynn to make an exhibition about all aspects of play.

Flynn and co-curator Bonnie Hudson chose works that show what Flynn calls the "playful, cunning and diabolical" nature of new Chinese art.

"It's been fun; we've been breaking all the rules," Flynn says.

The gallery's ground floor is like a preschool, with works including Shyu Ruey-Shiann's motorised buckets emulating hermit crabs scuttling along a beach.

Level one is the teenage bedroom with *The Empire* and other works evoking the chaos of adolescence.

Level two is about "the games that adults play", Flynn says.

Level three features Zhang Hai'er's shimmering photographs of Chinese transvestites.

The teenage area features a demented bed by Liang Tao. Care for a jump, Jian Jun Xi? *State of Play*, White Rabbit Gallery, 30 Balfour St, Chippendale; from tomorrow until August, free, whiterabbitcollection.org