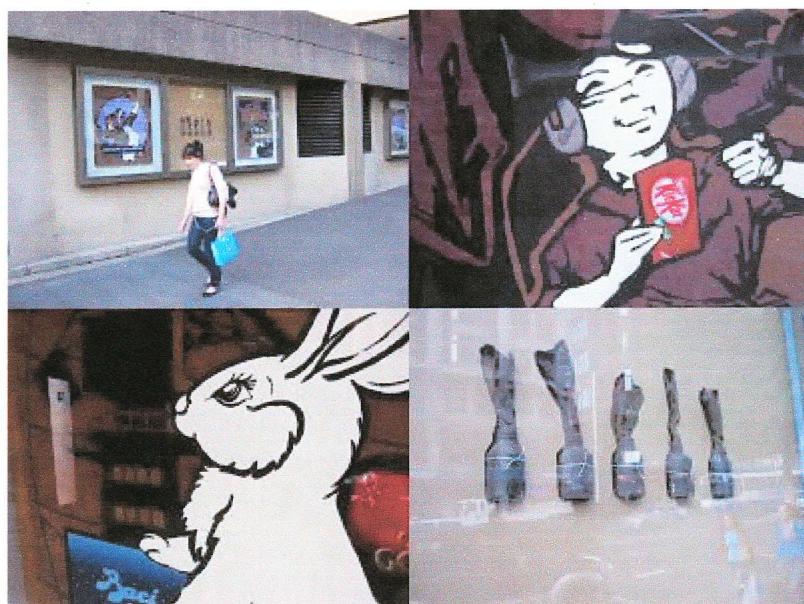


Of course we don't have to tell you that space is at a premium. Sky high rentals are driving artist run galleries out of town and even new commercial start ups need a shed load of cash before they can begin. It has been suggested to us by some smart people that what artists need to do is adapt to these changing circumstances, to find some niches in the cold commercial ecosystem where life can grab a hold. **Benedict Ernst** has an installation called *The Chocolate Revolution* down at Rawson Place in the window boxes of the McKell Building. It would seem that Ernst's project is the perfect example of making do.



Benedict Ernst, *The Chocolate Revolution*, installation view.
Pic: Team Art Life.

The Chocolate Revolution is a series of paintings that riff off old Chinese Communist street posters but include trademarks of international chocolate manufactures such as Nestlé, Lindt, Quality Street and others dropped in. Alternating with the paintings are objects made from chocolate that might be used in a revolution – Molotov cocktails, crow bars, bricks. The revolution will be chocotastic! The work – which will be seen in Melbourne at Platform 2 from October 20th – also comes with its own *Chocolate Manifesto*. In essence the manifesto suggests the world is a confection, a trade off between revolutionary wish fulfillment and consumerist reality while the images and the sculptures are parodic objects meant to illustrate the dilemma of the artist who has seen it all but is not yet 30.

Unfortunately for Ernst, experiencing his work is almost completely unbearable. The actual physical installation is in a brutally unsympathetic location for viewing art, even for work as broad and as flip as this. It may well have a conceptual connection to street posters and fly-posted manifestos of yesteryear, but the only people checking off these points on their art score cards are people like us, not the oblivious passersby on their way to catch a train or tottering past with their shopping. One feels sorry for artists forced into a situation where they have to cling like a pigeon to the vacant spaces of concrete boxes. If this is the pragmatic exploitation of available opportunities, bring on the real revolution.