



skin-fully clever

Some of Glenn's works are confronting. He borrowed a wheelchair from a hospital and coated it with 12 litres of paint. The result is a deformed wheelchair which sprawls on the ground.

Resene First Light

Resene Miso

Artist Glenn Burrell layers paint skins to create weirdly familiar objects.

Picture this. A young man, who has never skied before, is teetering on the top of a snow-covered slope. On his feet are ski boots and skis made entirely of paint.

With a little thrust he pushes off and starts to slide down the mountain, the paint ski poles clutched in his hands wriggling behind him in the breeze. Two rainbow trails of paint are left behind in his wake.

Meet Glenn Burrell, a young artist who has discovered a unique purpose for many litres of Resene recycled paint.

Glenn began making 'paint skin' eight years ago when studying art at the Western Institute of Technology in New Plymouth. Tired of painting static images, he wanted to do something different. His creations are quirky, disturbing or laugh-out-loud funny.

The method is painstaking and takes many months. With acrylic semi-gloss, Glenn paints an object, coating it repeatedly until it is swathed in a thick coating of paint 'skin'.

Once dry, he peels off the skin and recreates the object to form a life-size replica. The result is a collapsed, structurally distorted mock-up of the original. "I like the concept of transforming liquid into a 3D entity," says Glenn.

A paint skin office space is a sardonic snapshot of the modern workplace, complete with a mutant computer, a coffee cup and a

Artist Glenn Burrell skiing on skis made from paint.

 Resene
Fuel Yellow



warped and woeful picture frame. "The office space undermines the nine-to-five job. As an artist you are trying to negate the workforce."

In another work, a skeleton is prone and 'crawling' across the floor. It is twisted and deflated, exuding a disturbing desperation. "I like the idea of putting life into an object. There is a void within the skeleton; this has been a living object. It heightens the idea of absence and presence," says Glenn.

Glenn is now working on semi-functional kinetic pieces, work that can be used for the original object's intended purpose – albeit for a limited time. This phase Glenn has entitled Painting Expeditions and the sampling of the works is captured on film. The paint skis and boots are examples of this. "The point of that idea was to use them until they broke apart, and I did get some glorious mileage out them," Glenn says happily.

Glenn has also transformed himself into art: "I had this tantalising thought – what's it like to be in a painting?" Glenn found out by making a suit out of paint, which he wore to an exhibition of his work. "At first it was stiff, but as the heat of my body warmed it, the skin softened to the contours of my body."

Painting Expeditions will be at the Sarjeant Gallery in Wanganui in March 2012. [H](#)

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