

Exploring notions of culture and belonging

By TRACY SORENSEN

ARE Asians Aussies? Questions of race, culture and identity are explored in the current exhibition of work by Asian Australian artists at the Hazelhurst art gallery.

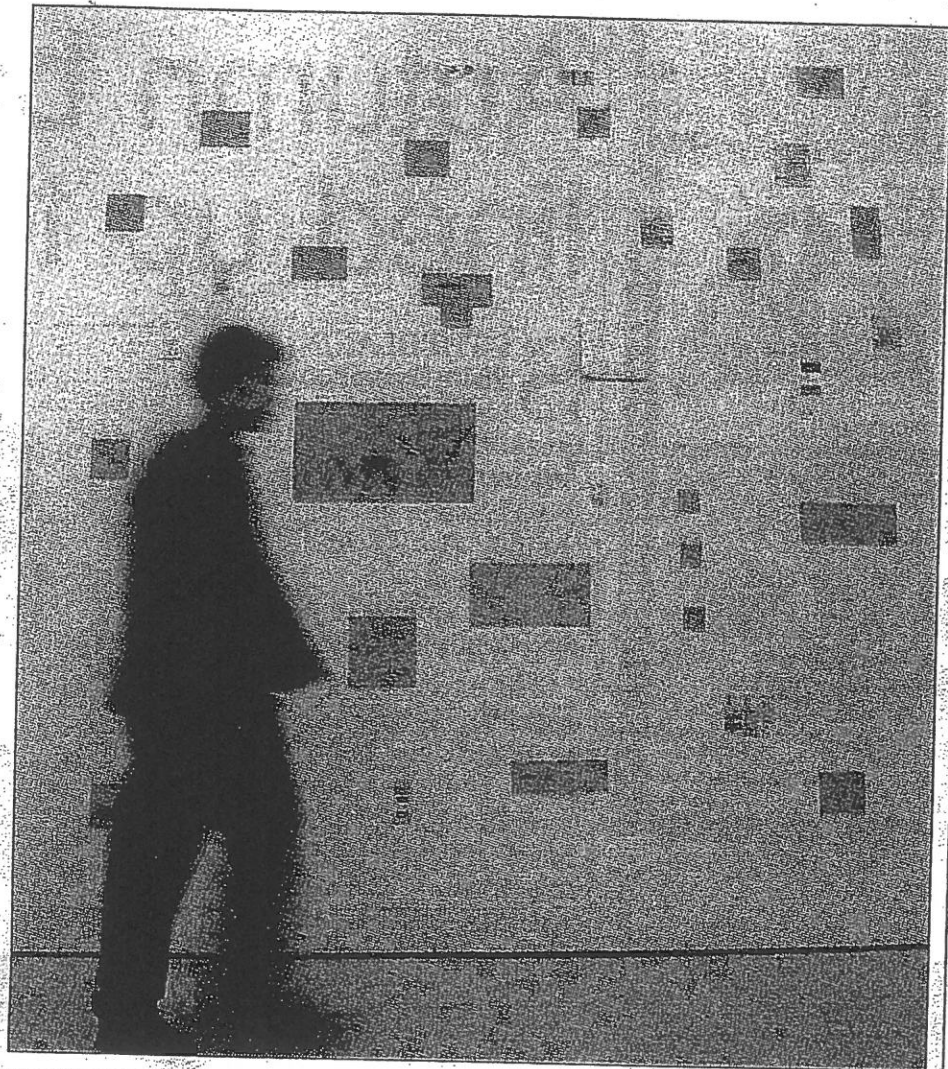
Tiffany Lee Shoy's installation, with its banana lollies in a willow pattern dinner set on the long train of a Chinese robe, is food for thought.

Instead of guests' names, the place cards proclaim, "You speak really good English" and "You sound like an Aussie".

On the wall nearby, there is Jiawei Shen's monumental piece of socialist realism, *Standing Guard for Our Great Motherland*, which he painted in China in 1974.

Leaping across the years and into a new sense of nationhood, Shen's 1992 painting, completed after he came to Australia as a refugee, is a quiet portrait of the Anglo Australian Dr John Clark wearing a black kimono.

For Shen, questions of history, identity and culture are very much alive and constantly being explored through his



■ CARINGBAH artist Aaron Seeto with his installation in the exhibition, *Guess Who's Coming To Dinner*, at the Hazelhurst art gallery.

artistic practice.

But for young Caringbah artist Aaron Seeto, whose various ancestors began to come from China in the middle of the nineteenth century, being "Asian" is little more than genetic.

His installation gathers together scraps of Chinese imagery from menus, business cards and chopstick wrappers. None of these refer particularly

to his own experience.

"I'm not really interested in myself as an Asian artist," he says. "It's a part of me but there are other parts of me."

"This work is more archaeology, found images that fit together. It's quite touristy in a way."

The exhibition, entitled *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner*, was curated by Laurens Tan. It continues until April 9.