

Hi, How Are You?

Nigel Sense

Penny Contemporary

187 Liverpool St, Hobart

Until April 1

Price range: \$850-\$2500

Who is the most iconic Australian singer you can think of? It could be John Farnham, Jimmy Barnes or even Nick Cave. But Nigel Sense's most iconic muso is Jeremy Oxley, the driving force behind great Sydney band The Sunnyboys, an act that embodies the cliché of a band that should have been a lot bigger than it was.

Cliches emerge from reality, but they can also be a lazy, overused shorthand. The observations that there's more to Sense's work than meets the eye, or even that appearances are deceiving, are clichés - but totally worth a run, because Sense is playing around with the very idea of clichéd iconography.

His painting *Hi, I'm Jeremy Oxley* is a vivid capturing of one of his heroes - Oxley, a superb musician and gifted songwriter, clearly means a lot to him. It's a personal iconography, drawn from Sense's life, and that's the point.

There's a cheeky irreverence at play: Sense's images of Tasmania re-imagine our island as a collection of typical products, such as beer and cheese, but he also suggests iconic buildings that may have been missed, such as the Queenstown Post Office or the lighthouse at Low Head. Sense enjoys what has been offered, but also looks again.

He attacks the canvas with bright colour and solid line, creating images that are recognisable symbols, but subverting the idea of what a recognisable icon might be.

He seems quite happy to suggest an entirely personal take might be the way to go.



CHEEKY: Above, Nigel Sense's *Aurora Australis*; and left, *Hi, I'm Jeremy Oxley*.