



ODYSSEY:
Brett
a'Court's art
aims to go
beneath the
physical
world.

Spiritual anatomy laid bare

VISUAL ARTS: Brett a'Court's exploration of his beliefs has resulted in a series of giant, dark paintings. Kathryn Webster reports

A CHURCH is the logical place for Brett a'Court to show his art. For the past four years he has been painting his way through a spiritual journey, exploring beneath the surface of his beliefs.

The resulting paintings don't exactly sing hallelujah but they do address stuff often contemplated in cathedrals and temples.

"In my experience, meditation reveals a greater reality behind the physical world," says a'Court, who has been painting seriously for 12 years.

"What I have been doing with and in my art for the past few years is going deeper, to find something more powerful."

A'Court's canvases have a sense of revelation. They are full, busy and dramatic. Darkness is prevalent, but light shines through.

Shiny elements — sometimes collaged gold or silver leaf — sit alongside intricately worked anatomical drawings. Text torn from a *Bible* lies near a painted rose, a face bathed in golden light or a gesturing hand.

Patterns veil imagery hidden by dribbled colour. They are multi-layered, added-to

EXHIBITION

- **Who:** Brett a'Court
- **What:** *Lingua Sacra*
- **Where:** Jubilee Room, Parnell Community Centre, 545 Parnell Rd
- **When:** May 6-11

works and some are disconcertingly, overwhelmingly large.

The biggest canvas destined for his exhibition has a 5m drop.

A'Court's art initially revolved around the human figure before he peeled back the skin to take a peek at spiritual anatomy. How sexuality collides with the spiritual is also a recurring theme.

Lovers and their body parts glow in haloed spaces, their sparks flying.

But it would be fair to say his paintings are overwhelmingly dark.

"Well, humans feel pain," he says —

acknowledging that some viewers find the black despairing.

"And before resurrection there is death. But my art is also about contemplation, being in a subconscious place where light is so bright it cannot be perceived as light."

This refers to an interest in the ancient texts of Christian mystics, which talk of dazzling darkness, sparks in the soul and enlightenment. So it is fortunate and appropriate that a'Court's mass of paintings will, indeed, show in a church.

A new relationship with "experimental dealer" Art-Artz opened the doors to the Parnell Community Centre's Jubilee Room, which was originally a church. Art-Artz is a web-based dealership that doesn't operate from a single gallery.

Instead, a suitable venue is hired temporarily and the dealer's energy goes into promoting the artist.

"It's been really hard work and, of course, it has involved lots of self-doubt and anguish," says a'Court of the exhibition. "But now, I'm just flying — and I'm ready to show."