



1995 Press Release

## Once Upon a Time There was a Man

By Helen Norton

At New Collectables Gallery, Fremantle

A totemic almost cartoon like version of the Pinnacles, or something like them, appears in Helen Norton's highly amusing exhibition, *Once Upon A Time There Was A Man*, at New Collectables Gallery which is in its last weekend.

Norton's *Totemic Adoration*, 1995 turns comic versions of the first indigenous sculptures of the European invaders, complete with top hat into mock Totem poles for all the world like a setting for Disney's *Pecos Bill*. Norton's sense of humor about Australianness is as acute as ever.

Another painting represents a grotesquely dynamic football player being prepared as a leader of a great religious cult. The football he has just launched high into the dark blue sky wears a sardonic grin and raised eyebrows.

Low-key humour seeps out of almost every painting as if it were an unavoidable part of the human condition. One shows "Mrs God" making teddy bears while her befuddled bewhiskered husband looks as if he's about ready to go out for a shower. More amusing still is *Newsman*, an acutely intuitive portrait of Peter Holland facing the dawn stretched out in his pyjamas while an amiable hound looks in at him through barred windows.