LAUREN BRINCAT: IT'S NOT THE END OF THE WORLD
The title of Sydney-based artist Lauren Brincat's new exhibition may evoke a consoling assurance, but this scattering of videos, sculptural interventions and objects breathes a tad more fire. Informed by her time working in Mexico City (the title refers to the misconstrued Mexican belief that the world was to end on December 21, 2012), the exhibition seems both a wistful expression and an exorcism of malaise. Video work Smashing captures Brincat methodically lifting plates from a pile almost her height, before smashing each to the ground. It is anger, guilt and relief all at once. There are cramped black and white tiles and the recurring motif of the brass triangle. One acts as a self-portrait, but also a communal chart - its top edge stands at the artist's exact height; viewers are invited to measure their own height against it. Indeed, Brincat's work isn't tall about the self. The stunning video work Walk in Traffic has her wandering amid barely moving vehicles on one of Mexico City's busiest roads, a bunch of shimmering helium balloons in hand. She is alone in her way, but must work with others to survive.

NEW13
Charlotte Day has put together an intriguing exhibition in her return as curator of ACCAs often contentious NEW series. Featuring Alex Martinis Roe, Scott Mitchell, Jess MacNeil, Benjamín Forster and others, NEW13 is marked by perceptual and formal fractures and saggipes. Sanre Mestrom has upscaled her compact negotiations of the vaguely Arabesque into a towering, stainless steel water feature, conjuring seemingly contrary historical and stylistic orientations to create a striking work that seems to belong to a kind of alien modernism. Other highlights include Linda Tegg's disorientating video performance work and Joshua Petherick's stunning video installation, in which he utilises the contemporary tools of reproduction (an iPhone camera and flattened scanner) to conjure a distinctly poetic cadence.

Austrian Centre for Contemporary Art, 111 Sturt Street, Southbank, 9997 9999, accaonline.org.au

COLLEEN AHERN: CORTEZ THE KILLER
Heaps of blokes. A few mock-moustached women pretending to be blokes. That's about the run of Colleen Aherne's Cortez the Killer. It's a fairly non-specific burrow into both art and bloke history. Sure, the title alludes to the Neil Young song of the same name – which in turn references Hernan Cortes – but these compact oil-on-board portraits, framed from the shoulders up, seem to bear a more formal and stylistic function. With a sly wink Cortez the Killer looks at how (especially those who lead others) have been represented throughout Western art history, then twists it. The odd bearded femine only furthers the point.
Wed-Sat noon-9pm (closed Easter weekend), until April 6, Noon Park, Level 1, 53 Bourke Street, city, 9683 9911, noonpark.com.au

JOACHIM KOESTER: TARANTULISM
The body has greater limits than we think. Celebrated Danish-born, New York-based artist Joachim Koester's 16 millimetre film Tarantulism (above) organises such an idea to briling, entrancing and disturbing effect. Broken into a rolling series of vignettes, the work captures a small group of dancers in the midst of what appears to be a convulsion. A re-enactment of the tarantella, a dance that purportedly emerged in the Middle Ages as a cure for victims of a tarantula bite, the work is mesmerising. Bodies are pushed to their extremes in these choreographed spasms; ungainly rhythms emerge under the cool, cinematic gaze of the camera, and we come to recognise each dancer's particularities as they shake and fall into frame. The line between consciousness and trance bruises and bleeds.

Tuesday 10am-5pm, Sat and Sun noon-5pm (closed Easter weekend), until June 2, Ian Potter Museum of Art, University of Melbourne, Swanston Street (between Faraday and Elizabeth streets), Parkville, 8344 5148, artmuseum.unimelb.edu.au

CONCERT
Hello, possums! Multi-talented Australian artist Barry Humphries teams up with cabaret star Meow Meow and the Australian Chamber Orchestra for a night of songs from the Weimar Republic. An unstable but highly creative period in German history, the time between wars gave rise to an active culture of performance in Berlin basements. Humphries selects and performs his favourites, including numbers by Weill, Krenek, Eisler and Brander.

May 5-6, Hamer Hall, Arts Centre Melbourne, 100 St Kilda Road, city, 945-1255, 1300 182 183, arsczentremelbourne.com.au

DAN RULE

MUSICAL
This killer black comedy takes a provocatively look at the dreams, distortions and delusions of nine infamous Americans. Assassins examines the loves, lives and lunacy of men and women - including John Wilkes Booth, Lee Harvey Oswald and Sarah Jane Moore - who attempted (successfully or not) to assassinate presidents of the United States. The score by Academy Award-winning composer Stephen Sondheim moves seamlessly from folk to ragtime to big Broadway ballads.

April 10-21, 7.30pm, fortyfivedownstairs, 45 Flinders Lane, city, 9682 9866, fortyfivedownstairs.com

1980s
The NGV presents a compilation of the greatest hits from a much-loved decade in Mix Tape 1980s: Appropriation, Subculture, Critical Style. The exhibition highlights the diversity of aesthetic choices occurring in the period, as well as the emergence of DIY in music, art and fashion. Examples of these often-vibrant styles accompany reflections on the postmodern and post-colonial ideas that simmered during the time.

April 11-September 1, The Ian Potter Centre, NGV Australia, Federation Square, Flinders Street, city, free, 8620 2222, ngv.vic.gov.au

BALLET
Mozart Ballett La Classique takes audiences on a journey back in time to a frost-covered, gas-lit world where young Clara awakes with her beloved Nusschaker doll and the magicial Drosselmeyer in this traditional tale for all age groups. The two-act feature brings new life to the Nusschaker's best-known scenes, the Dance of the Sugarplum Fairy and the Waltz of the Flowers.

April 26-27, Her Majesty's Theatre, 219 Exhibition Street, city, 565-959, 1300 795 012, ticketek.com.au