Jennifer is in a jam after being down-sized from retail. Then, when her Excel breaks down, she is helped out by the blokes at Oakhurst Security and she talks herself into a job. Now, in her white shirt, black tie, dark windbreaker and with everything but a Colt revolver hanging from her belt, she works her patch at a shopping mall. There she meets Ranjit from the Officers’ Mess restaurant and a cheery, and surprisingly unthreatening, parade of shop owners, bag ladies, minor felons and lost kiddies.

When husband Hugh gets a job as a technician in the United Arab Emirates Jennifer is in a bind. Her father has dementia, her teenage daughter Karen doesn’t want to go - and she is not so sure herself. Somehow this is not like when she and Hugh went to Rabaul back in their twenties.

Noelle Janaczewska’s monologue, commissioned by Vitalstatistix National Women’s Theatre, is a modest cameo, a small, well-made piece rather like the porcelain that Jennifer collects and admires. The issues are clear enough - the divided duties of suburban women, the doubts, at forty, about roads not taken, the uncertainties of self, the duty to ageing parents and the belated glimpses of self esteem through work.

Director Catherine Fitzgerald has kept things understated. Apart from a rectangular black scrim backdrop, designer Gaelle Mellis has stacked piles of white crockery on the stage - indicators of Jennifer in transition, props for meal times, something to chuck when the chips are down - and the rest is supplied with deft lighting from Susan Grey-Gardner and, complete with Stevie Nicks samples, a nicely judged ambient soundtrack from Andrea Rieniets.
Kate Roberts, for whom the part was written, gives a generous performance as Jennifer. She works the voices - not too much, not too many - and she skilfully finds the shadings in a life lived in a minor key.

But there is something all-too familiar about Noelle Janaczewska’s portrait which is only gently comic, unlike the satiric broadsides of say Barry Humphries, and only slightly desperate, unlike the mousewheel obsession of Alan Bennett’s domestic prisoners. Her writing is also at times too consciously literary - OK in a short story, a little arch, perhaps, on stage. There is an audience for Jennifer’s insecurity and her triumphs - she is undoubtedly real to us. But, sometimes, less is less, and this production could use more edge in the text and more zip in the staging.