

muswellbrook regional arts centre

Newsletter Vol 2 No 1 January 2006

Primavera 2005

Exhibition by Young Australian Artists

11 February - 26 March

Muswellbrook Regional Arts Centre is pleased to announce that it will be hosting the only regional visit of the *Primavera* 2005 exhibition of work by Australian artists aged 35 and under.

This year's exhibition offers a birds eye view of the "*lie of the land*". The exhibition navigates through current issues and concerns, both local and international, featuring art practice that attempts to map our place, as individuals, Australians and global citizens, in the world today. As such, the exhibition has a political focus and includes work from both Aboriginal and non-Indigenous cultural backgrounds.

Lie of the Land, invokes the practice of geographic surveying, in the Australian context recalling mappings and pictorial records produced by colonial settlers. Work by non-Indigenous artists in the exhibition echoes this tradition and is therefore primarily representational and two-dimensional. Much of the work in the exhibition focuses and extends on the practice of painting, employing this most traditional medium in one of its earliest roles – to document, record and reflect upon human existence and its relationship to the socio-political forces that mould the cultural landscapes of our time. Aboriginal painting is also based on stories of the land – the exhibition includes traditionally-inspired painting by artists belonging to a new generation of Aboriginal artists who map and respond to the world in new visual lexicons.

On a political level, the exhibition's title also refers to the "lie" of Terra Nullius – the concept that this continent was uninhabited when colonised by Europeans. By including both non-Indigenous and Aboriginal approaches to mapping the contemporary experience, the exhibition considers a retrospective view of the fundamental untruth – the "lie" of the land - on which this country was founded. Significantly, the exhibition also includes work by artists whose parents or who themselves came to Australia as migrants from the northern hemisphere and from Asia.

Primavera has been a feature of the MCA program since its inception in 1992. It was founded through the generous benefaction of Ted and Cynthia Jackson, and the Jackson family, in memory of their late daughter Belinda. *Primavera 2005* will be officially opened at 6pm on Friday 10 February. The exhibition will run until Sunday 26 March.



Monika Behrens *Invasion of Baghdad* 2005 oil on canvas
(Courtesy and © the artist. Photograph: Monika Behrens)

Local Art and Photographic Awards, Red Cross Christmas Trees and the Mayor's Thank You Function



Daniel Keating winner of the Viola Bromley Prize 2005



Tia Gabriella with her entry *Sunflowers*



Kelly Munce, winner of the Shire Photographic Prize with daughter Abbie



Emily Esteves with *Oogadabooga* 2nd prize winner in the Ester Bellis Youth Award



Members of the Muswellbrook Red Cross Committee at the opening of the Red Cross Christmas Tree Display in December



Craig Dunn winner of the Max Watters Prize



Shane Dennis with his entry *Untitled*

Members of the Muswellbrook Red Cross Committee at the opening of the Red Cross Christmas Tree Display in December



Janelle McGrady first prize winner in the Local Art Award with her work *Native Australian Animals*



Daisie Robb with her prize winning ceramic *Sea Green Dish*



Arts Officer Ruth Neave with judges Deborah Abrahams and Stephen Blanch



Max Watters with Mayor John Colvin and Father Nugent at the Mayor's Community Thank You Function in December



Daniel Hogan with his highly commended work *Bottom Flat*



Irene Esteves with her first prize winning work in the ceramic section

Artist Profile - Danny Grabham

Born in Singleton in 1981, Danny Grabham completed the HSC through the Design Pathways Program at Newcastle TAFE, enabling him to study the Design Fundamentals aspect of his elected subjects. This early commitment saw him being selected three years in a row for the touring *TAFE Art and Design* exhibitions which showcased the work of especially talented students. Danny was also featured in a number of graduating student exhibitions, initially at the TAFE and then at the Lovett Gallery in the Newcastle City Library and regularly was the Reserve Champion in the art section of various Local Agricultural Shows held in his hometown of Singleton. He has been profiled in the *Design Graphics* magazine. Since winning the acquisitive Shire Prize in the Muswellbrook Photographic Award in 2004, he has seen collectors becoming interested in acquiring his work. A prolific and creative worker, Danny has a wide range of interests and regularly draws on them for his inspiration.

"Creating something beautiful from a simple idea, and learning to be open to an unexpected result, drives my art making", he says, adding that he likes "interesting juxtapositions of pattern, scale or mood". A current project is making hanging mobiles. In terms of 'engineering' and construction he uses similar methods to those pioneered by Alexander Calder early last century. In place of flat colours though, he is experimenting with unusual applications of everyday materials, highlighting textures and pattern and arranging it all into a moving composition.

Photography has always been an outlet for this artist. It has become an enjoyable process of exploring city streets, bush paddocks or quiet corners at home. His subjects are not often meticulously arranged or prepared. Rather the hard work has been in refining his visual awareness to better catch, or even see, an opportunity.

As well as traditional methods, experimenting with stereoscopic (3D), panoramic and Polaroid



Danny Grabham *53 Brecht Street, Muswellbrook* 2004 digital print (Muswellbrook Shire Art Collection)



Singleton based artist and photographer Danny Grabham

techniques, he has created a pinhole lens for his digital camera.

Entering competitions has been good for the development of his work, giving him a chance to see his work exhibited, get ideas from other artists' work, and learn about selection and presentation, not to mention the encouragement gained through winning an award. The Shire Prize winning photograph, '*53 Brecht Street Muswellbrook*' is, in the artist's own words, 'a simple moment on a sunny afternoon of the view from my grandmother's yard to her brother's house. I liked the way the shadows flowed across the trees and street, and the splash of red tiled roof'.

Some artists who have inspired Danny include painter Felice Varini and photographer Rosemary Laing for realising, often in large scale, simple sparks of creative ideas; photographers Joel Meyerowitz, Simryn Gill, Aaron Siskind and Joel Sternfeld for 'seeing the extraordinary amongst the everyday or unremarkable'; and sculptor Alexander Calder for making art 'people can enjoy'. He is currently submitting to www.noise.net, an Arts Council organised, year-round art and design initiative showcasing under 25's artwork in the media.

Danny's other interests include interior design (especially wallpapers, by William Morris, Florence Broadhurst and Deborah Bowness, who creates great photographic trompe l'oeil); printmaking; painting and books - old non-fiction with lots of character, new art books and lots of novels.

Manager's Report

Welcome to our first newsletter for 2006. The coming year is shaping up well with the main elements of our program in place in our 2006 colour brochure (available from the Arts Centre, library branches and visitor information centres). We have tried to strike a balance in the variety of exhibitions on offer this year, which include contemporary art, sculpture, miniatures, local history and indigenous art along with our annual local art and ceramic award and works from the permanent collections. We hope that there will be something for everyone.

In addition to the exhibition program we hope to include a number of public program events during the year. These will include talks by artists and curators along with a couple of arts workshops. Information about these events will be advertised as it comes to hand.

2006 will see the Arts Centre consolidate work begun in 2005, including the completion of the new digital catalogue for the permanent collections and further upgrading of facilities.

The Arts Centre would like to congratulate the members of the Muswellbrook Red Cross Committee for their excellent Christmas Tree and Wreath Display in December. This event was enjoyed greatly by the community and we look forward to the next one in 2007.

Congratulations also to Max Watters on being inducted into the Muswellbrook Hall of Fame at the Mayor's Community Thank You Function in December. Max's recent paintings will be previewed at the Arts Centre in May before going to Watters Gallery in Sydney for exhibition in June.

Keep an eye out for the new Regional Galleries Guide (published by the Regional Galleries Association of NSW available in February). This booklet outlines all the public galleries and their collections in regional New South Wales. The Arts centre website located at (see below) also has information about our program, information sheets and this newsletter.

We wish you all the best for the New Year and look forward to seeing you at the Arts Centre.

Bruce Tindale
Arts Centre Manager

NEW ART VENUE

Artemis of Aberdeen

Art, food & coffee come to Aberdeen at 93 MacQueen Street on the New England Highway.

This exciting new gallery/café will open on Australia Day at 10.00am with an exhibition featuring local artists

Janelle McGrady,
Casey Wright & Lisa Cross.

Show your support for the arts and immerse yourself in the Upper Hunter's latest cultural endeavour.

For further info ph 02 6543 8023

SCONE ADFAS First lectures for 2006

14 March

Homes and Gardens in Pompeii
and Herculaneum

Mr Geoffrey Toms MA Cantab NADFAS

11 April

The Australian Art Market:
Collecting and movements of taste and art
fashion within the market over the last decade

Mr Michael Reid BA BL

6.30pm Arts & Craft Hall, Kingdon Street, Scone
Visitors are very welcome at \$20 (includes supper)

Membership details and information available
by contacting 02-6545 1156

EMAIL?

Would you prefer to receive the Arts Centre
newsletter and invitations as a pdf file
sent by email?

If so, please contact us on
02-6549 3880 and we will amend our records to
allow this to happen.

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Opening hours: 10am - 5pm Tuesday to Friday, 10am - 1pm Saturday, 2pm - 5pm Sunday
(closed Mondays and public holidays)

