



Star artists combine for Grampians exhibition



Steve Morvell

By Emma Brown

WITH literally hundreds of prizes and awards distributed between the participating artists, it is unlikely that an exhibition of this quality has ever before been assembled in regional Victoria.

Internationally-recognised artists Chris McClelland, Stephen

Powell, Janet Flinn and Steve Morvell are among a star-studded line-up exhibiting at the inaugural *Grampians Wildlife Arts Exhibition* in Halls Gap.

Hosted by the Grampians Wildlife Arts Society, the exhibition will feature rare works by Ken Woodcock whose books still guide wildflower and bird lovers through the area and the late Sue McInnes who illustrated the Gould books.

Gould books could be found on the bookshelves of every Australian household in the 60s and 70s.

Victorian and Australian photographer of the year on multiple occasions, David Simmonds' African images will hang alongside botanical artist, Ena Graham's native floral watercolours and Michelle Caitin's oil paintings.

THE DETAILS:

Who: Superstar artists

What: Grampians Wildlife Arts Exhibition

Where: Halls Gap

When: Opens September 3 at 7pm and can be viewed on September 4 and 5 from 10am to 4pm

Contact: 5358 3746 or 5356 4668



LINE-UP: *Swat*, by former Ballarat Grammar student Penny Byrne, is one of the Art Gallery of Ballarat's recent acquisitions on display.

Look what we've bought

TWENTY-TWO painted Russian matryoshka dolls make-up one of the latest artworks purchased by the Art Gallery of Ballarat.

Swat, created by one time Ballarat Grammar student, Penny Byrne, makes a powerful and very topical comment.

While the work is entertaining and the figures fun and easy on the eye, the issues it addresses are important and political.

Byrne said the story of the

THE DETAILS:

Who: The Art Gallery of Ballarat

What: Recent acquisitions exhibition

When: Until September 19

Where: Art Gallery Ballarat, Lydiard Street

Contact: 5320 5858

dolls is about Sharia law, the law of Islam.

It was inspired by a story Byrne read in a newspaper about the Taliban who had

moved into the Northern Pakistan valley called Swat.

The Taliban declared Sharia law in the Swat valley where women had always had the choice to wear the burqa or not.

The laws meant women had to cover up completely, only go out into the streets with a man, give up their careers and and not drive a car alone.

"On the day the law was declared women disappeared completely off the streets," Byrne said.

"This work is me

imagining women disappearing."

Using three sets of the matryoshka dolls allowed Byrne to run them from tallest to smallest. She used graduating colour from black down to the light blue of the burqa worn in that part of the world.

"As you go down the dolls' faces get smaller and smaller until they disappear completely.

"This is my comment on Sharia law and how I think it treats women," Byrne said.

Byrne is delighted the Art Gallery of Ballarat is the new owner of this piece which she hopes will encourage people to think about more about serious issues.

"I think it is great the Art Gallery of Ballarat, as a public gallery, bought the work as it makes a strong comment on a highly charged issue," she said.

The recent acquisitions exhibition features *Swat* and around 30 other pieces bought by the Art Gallery of Ballarat.

National Gallery showcasing work of John Davis

THE DETAILS:

Who: John Davis

What: *John Davis: Presence*

Where: National Gallery of Victoria

When: Until October 24

Times: Exhibition open 10am to 5pm and is closed Mondays

Entry: Free

BORN at Ballarat in 1936, John Davis went on to make his mark in the Australian art world.

The National Gallery of Victoria is celebrating the work of this influential Australian artist in *John Davis: Presence* which runs until October.

Davis, who died in 1999, studied at the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology.

In 1972 he travelled to



Europe and America before returning to Australia the following year to take up a position at Prahran College of Advanced Education.

The exhibition draws together more than 40 works

by the artist including sculpture, photography and installations.

The NGV's curator of Australian art, David Hurlston, said this important survey charted Davis'

development as an artist, from his early works, produced during the 1960s, through to his critically acclaimed sculptures and installation works leading into the 90s.

Particularly evident in his late works was an awareness of ecology and a sensitivity to the elemental forces of nature and the effect of human actions.

Now, at a time when issues relating to the environment seem more pertinent than ever, Davis' sculptures have even greater resonance.

A highlight of the exhibition is a series of works featuring fish which, from the mid-80s, he used in his work as a symbol for human movement and relationships with each other and the environment.

"This important exhibition has a particular focus on the artist's interest in found and fragile organic materials, and the powerful evocation of the landscape," Hurlston said.

ARTS DIARY

Art Gallery of Ballarat

● *Jeffrey Bren: The Dark Mirror* runs until September 28.

● Recent acquisitions from August 21.

● *Paul Mason: Still happenings* runs until September 19. Contact 5320 5858.

Gallery on Sturt

● *Leni: An Indigenous Introspective* will run until October 13.

Gallery times are Monday to Friday from 9am to 5.30pm and Saturday 10am to 4pm and Sunday by appointment. www.galleryonsturt.com.au 5331 7011.

Space 22

● *Closer to Home* Emma Blee's exhibition runs from September 2 until 19. Opening drinks on Saturday September 4, between 3pm and 5pm.

Arts Foundation

● Ballarat Arts Foundation provides grants for emerging visual and performing artists who have lived, worked or studied in Ballarat. Second 2010 grant round closes on September 30. Enquiries 0409 352 268 or visit website www.ballaratartsfoundation.org.au

Ballarat Gold Museum

● *Ballarat the Beautiful: The Early days of Tourism* until October 17.

Royal South Street

● Various locations until October 31. Contact 5332 1054.

Craig's Royal Hotel

● *Heroes and High Drama* 150th Melbourne Cup exhibition series until September 5. Contact 9690 9911.

Arthur Gallery

● *Paintbox and Friends* until August 31. Open Thursday, Friday and Saturday between 10am and 3pm.

● *Truth and Illusion* artworks by Debbie Lloyd until August 29. Gallery Hours Thursday to Sunday from 12noon to 5 pm.

Arts Academy

● *Much Ado About Nothing* runs September 8 to 19 at the Helen Macpherson Smith Theatre. Produced by University of Ballarat, Arts Academy.

● *Thoroughly Modern Millie* runs from September 9 to 18 at the Helen Macpherson Smith Theatre.

● To have your entertainment event included in this arts diary, call 5320 1231 or email emma.brown@thecourier.com.au by 5pm Thursday.