

Media Release

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Basil Sellers Art Prize

6 August to 7 November 2010

Sport & Art Luminaries join Sellers Art Prize

Leaders from the worlds of sport and art have teamed up for this year's prestigious \$100,000 Basil Sellers Art Prize.

Popular sports media personality Samantha Lane has been appointed 2010 Ambassador to the second biennial Basil Sellers Art Prize and exhibition at the Ian Potter Museum of Art, University of Melbourne.

Award winning sports writer for The Age, and panelist on Channel 10's football show, "Before the Game", Sam completed a Bachelor of Arts majoring in Politics and French from the University of Melbourne before beginning her media career.

She has covered major sporting events for the Fairfax group including AFL Football, the 2008 Beijing Olympics, the 2006 Melbourne Commonwealth games, Australian Open Tennis grand slams and the Spring Racing Carnival.

"The Basil Sellers Art Prize captures many elements that are really meaningful to me; the lure of sport, the allure of art, the joy of competition and so much more. I'm looking forward to the various artists' interpretations", Ms Lane says.

One of Australia's most prestigious art awards, the Basil Sellers Art Prize 2010 has attracted an eclectic field of fascinating artists who will bring their unique perspectives to the interrelationship between sport and art.

For the first time, the Judging Panel will include an international judge, the former director of the J Paul Getty Museum in Los Angeles, Dr Michael Brand.

Born in Canberra, Michael previously served as the assistant director of the Queensland Art Gallery (1996-2000) and head of Asian art at the Australian National Gallery (1988-96)

An art historian specialising in Indian and Islamic art and architecture with a doctorate from Harvard, Michael left Australia in 2000 to take up the position of director at the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts.

He was appointed director of the J Paul Getty Museum in Los Angeles in 2005.

In Australia, Michael played Aussie Rules, cricket and tennis as a child and has recently given up running in favour of cycling (but refuses to wear any of that bizarre official bike gear). He is a life-long St Kilda fan who really was at the 1966 Grand Final.

Shortlisted artists for the 2010 prize and exhibition are: Vernon Ah Kee, Eric Bridgeman, Juan Ford, Phillip George, Tarryn Gill & Pilar Mata Dupont, Ponch Hawkes, Grant Hobson, David Jolly, Richard Lewer, Noel McKenna, Glenn Morgan, David Ray, Gareth Sansom and Tony Schwensen.

The Judging Panel comprises Amy Barrett-Lennard, Director, Perth Institute of Contemporary Arts; Julie Ewington, Curatorial Manager, Australian Art, Queensland Art Gallery; Layne Beachley, professional surfer and seven-times world champion; Dr Michael Brand, former Director J Paul Getty Museum; Dr Chris McAuliffe, Director, the Ian Potter Museum of Art; and Basil Sellers AM.

The exhibition will run from 6 August to 7 November 2010, with the \$100,000 prize announced at the exhibition opening on 5 August 2010. www.sellersartprize.com.au

TO PREVIEW THIS EXHIBITION AND PLAN MEDIA COVERAGE ON THE AWARD, PLEASE

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BACKGROUND:

As one of Australia's newest and richest art prizes, the Basil Sellers Art Prize breaks with tradition, developing a substantial prize that concentrates entirely on sport. Not the Archibald in a footy jumper, the prize is a fresh take on the theme, encouraging artists to boldly ask the questions, rattle our preconceptions and explore sporting culture—perhaps luring art and sports supporters from their strongly held positions on opposite sides of the ring.

Director of the Potter, Dr Chris McAuliffe, says, "Basil and I both share a passion for sport, but we are also aware that artists can bring a fresh and critical eye to contemporary life. So, whether 'sport' is interpreted as two-up or tiddlywinks, or references are made more obliquely to obsession, or 'winning at all costs', we are encouraging artists to ask pointed questions and to explore the murkier backwaters of sporting culture. With this in mind, I say "let the games begin"!"

The prize has been initiated and generously supported by Basil Sellers AM. Basil, a businessman and philanthropist, has made his career breathing life into ailing companies. He has fittingly been described as the turnaround king. A recognised art collector, Basil divides his time between Europe and Australia (or wherever the Sydney Swans are playing that weekend).

Basil says, 'My hope is that this prize will take lovers of sport and art into what may be uncharted, but ultimately rewarding, territory, leading to an engagement that will enhance their enjoyment of each other's loves'.

The Basil Sellers Art Prize is a long-term project, involving 5 biennial awards from 2008 to 2016 staged at The Ian Potter Museum of Art, University of Melbourne, aimed at changing Australians' perception and enjoyment of art and sport.

The Basil Sellers Art Prize 2010 awards \$100,000 for the winning art work and the Prize is acquisitive. Visitors to the exhibition will vote for the \$5,000 People's Choice Award. One of the shortlisted artists in the exhibition will be selected as the 2011 Basil Sellers Creative Fellowship, an artist-in-residency program at the National Sports Museum, MCG.

The Ian Potter Museum of Art The University of Melbourne, Swanston Street (between Elgin and Faraday streets), Parkville, 3010. **T:** 03 8344 5148 **W:** www.art-museum.unimelb.edu.au
Hours: Tuesday to Friday 10am - 5pm: Saturday and Sunday 12 - 5pm (Free admission)