

Media Release

12 March 2010

**Basil Sellers Art Prize
6 August to 7 November 2010**

On your marks.

Race is on for prestigious \$100,000 Basil Sellers Art Prize

The Finalists are off and running, with just 5 months to go before the exhibition and announcement of the 2010 winner of the 2nd biennial \$100,000 Basil Sellers Art Prize.

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.

Director of the Ian Potter Museum of Art, Dr Chris McAuliffe, says, “the quality of submissions from across Australia in this and the previous Sellers Prize reflect the national prestige of the Basil Sellers Art Prize as one of Australia’s premier art awards.

“It’s an eclectic field of fascinating artists who will bring their own unique perspective to the interrelationship between sport and art.

“This award provides an incredible array of opportunities for artists. As well as the \$100,000 prize, participants are in the running for the 2011 Basil Sellers Creative Fellowship, an artist-in-residency program at the National Sports Museum, and a \$5,000 People’s Choice award, voted on by visitors to the exhibition.

“In the first exhibition in 2008 artists grappled with challenging issues in sport—violence, social exclusion and disability. No punches were pulled.

“Artists involved create works relating to a wide variety of sports, including cricket, surfing and cycling, as well as sporting themes such as stadia, trophies and fans.

“This year’s field has the form to further expand our views on the art of sport, and the sport of art, and everything in between”, said Dr McAuliffe.

They include emerging and mid-career artists from around Australia, working in diverse media including ceramics, painting, photography, sculpture and video. Styles range from documentary to fantasy, from the deliberately casual and carnivalesque to the highly stylised, from refined painterly techniques to the raw and the bold.

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.

Further information can be obtained from the website: www.sellersartprize.com.au.

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

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BACKGROUND INFORMATION

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 prize is acquisitive.

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)