

NEWS ANNOUNCEMENT

EMBARGOED until 10am, 23 February 2007

En garde! Patron initiates and underwrites innovative project bringing together sport and art.

Friday 23rd February 2007, a major new initiative will be launched offering \$100,000 to a single outstanding work of art. The prize is significant and unusual. Not only for the sizeable commitment by a single donor and a prize that makes it one of Australia's richest, but also for its theme – sport.

The prize has been initiated and generously underwritten 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. Chief Executive and major shareholder of companies such as the Linter Group Ltd, the largest textiler in Australia; and Gestetner PLC, a UK listed company; Basil Sellers has also held major investments in Elders Ltd (now Fosters Brewery), broadcast media and mineral resources.

In sport, Basil's interests are extensive. As a participant, Basil played Senior Basketball, representing South Australia when the team won the Australian Championship in 1958. Basil's brother Rex was a Test Cricketer for Australia, touring England in 1964.

During the 1980s Basil was the owner of the Newcastle Basketball team and from 1984 – 87 he was a Director of the N.S.W. Cricket Association (now Cricket New South Wales). A strong supporter of the Sydney Swans whose Football Centre, used by the Club at the Sydney Cricket Ground, is named after him.

His donations to sporting initiatives and scholarships includes the Barassi Scholarship supporting new talent for the Sydney Swans and also initiatives that identify and support emerging talent in Cricket. Basil is one of the Founders of the Bradman Museum in Bowral, New South Wales and funded a respite centre in Moruya for elite athletes from the Australian Institute of Sport, Canberra.

Until now, Basil has been recognised as a low key art collector and patron. Collecting for over 35 years, his collection contains Post War Australian art and many of the European modernists, with a particularly interest in the Fauves (1906/7) and the Cubists. Basil has also funded the bi annual Moruya Art Prize of \$10,000 in the South East of New South Wales.

The Basil Sellers Art Prize is an initiative with the Ian Potter Museum of Art, University of Melbourne. Director of the Ian Potter Museum of Art, Dr Chris McAuliffe commented; '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. In this prize we are encouraging artists to ask pointed questions and to add another dimension to sporting culture.' Basil added, 'It is my hope that this prize will take lovers of sport and art into what may be unchartered, but ultimately rewarding territory, leading to an engagement that will enhance their enjoyment of each others loves.'

The 2008 Basil Sellers Art Prize is the first step in a long term project aiming at changing Australians' perception and enjoyment of art and sport.

Entries are invited from Australian contemporary artists, with a distinguished judging panel announcing a short list of artists in September 2007. These artists will be invited to submit work for the \$100,000 Basil Sellers Art Prize and exhibition, opening at the Ian Potter Museum of Art, University of Melbourne, in July 2008. The prize is acquisitive. Further information and entry forms can be obtained from the website.

FOR FURTHER MEDIA INFORMATION: Sharon Wells (03) 9417 4665 or 0419 508 619