

The Ian Potter Museum of Art The University of Melbourne **MEDIA RELEASE - confidential**

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Engarde!

Finalists announced for \$100,000 sport and art tussle



Once again we can wince at the sight of chaffed thighs and recoil at the smell of Dencorub and burning rubber as the line-up for the second \$100,000 Basil Sellers Art Prize is announced.

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, commented, 'This will be a different exhibition from the inaugural Basil Sellers Art Prize, and not just because there are new judges and new finalists. It may be a little more raucous (we're likely to encounter some crazed fans and over-the-top trophies); it may be a little more provocative, it could even turn ugly (not all sports fans are polite, and not all athletes are perfect physical specimens).'

'Visitors to the first exhibition made it clear that they don't want artists to pull their punches. Visitors grappled with challenging issues in sport—violence, social exclusion and disability. And they explored the impact of television, commercialisation and technology. Next year's exhibition will offer its own challenges and new pleasures.'

On paper, the list of finalists looks diverse, even eclectic. The field includes emerging and mid-career artists from around Australia and artwork 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 raw 'folk art'.

Sport and art both cover big territories, and we can expect some challenging and stimulating works from the line-up. From the personal to the political, and all points in-between, artworks range from the cool and sceptical, to the passionate and idiosyncratic. Humorous works explore the bizarre costumes and behaviour of fans, the elaborate design of trophies, and the obsessions of the cricket tragic.

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

Shortlisted artists will have eight months to complete their work for the \$100,000 Basil Sellers Art Prize and exhibition, which opens at the Ian Potter Museum of Art, the University of Melbourne, in August 2010. The prize is acquisitive.

The Basil Sellers Art Prize is a long-term project aimed at changing Australians' perception and enjoyment of art and sport.

The exhibition will run from August to November 2010, with the \$100,000 prize announced at the exhibition opening.

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

FOR FURTHER MEDIA INFORMATION, INTERVIEWS and IMAGES

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Image caption:

Tarryn Gill & Pilar Mata Dupont

'A gladiator class, envied by all the men, adored by all the women' from the series 'Heart of Gold Project 5, the all Australian surf lifesaver' 2008

giclee print

76 x 51 cm

© Courtesy the artists