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Two local figurative artists take cathartic art to another level – of social commentary and pathos

Our world through the eyes of an artist

After a hiatus of 14 years, local artist, musician, music teacher and man of passion, Stan Korytnyj endeavours to exorcise his anguish concerning racial intolerance through the medium of paint as he presents his latest exhibition at Bowral District Art Society (BDAS).

Inspired by cultural conflict and never averse to controversy, Korytnyj uses his art as a vehicle for social commentary.

His provocatively entitled "Is Racial Hatred Alive And Well?" comprises a body of 50 powerful works in charcoal, mixed media and oils which he has completed over the past seven years in response to recent world events.

Spurred on by "the tragic conflict of Christendom and Islam, the horror of 9/11 and the subsequent occupation of Afghanistan and Iraq by coalition forces," he said he "felt compelled to paint about cultural conflict and the treatment of women in religion".

Korytnyj initially enjoyed painting to this theme, but as the situation in the Middle East escalated, he increasingly found it depressing. "I was horrified by the political agendas. I was dreaming about it 24/7. I just had to get it out of my system.

"My paintings are not pretty", he said. "They are my reaction to body bags, children overboard, land mines, detention centres and race riots.

"But the world is conflicted and we have to live with it. When I was growing up, the Italians and Greeks were frowned upon. You can accept the changing world, we have to," he said.

Korytnyj himself is no stranger to cultural and religious conflict. "I grew up in cultural conflict," he said wryly. "I was born in 1946 in post-war Germany to Russian parents. My mum was very religious. She was Russian Orthodox, a religion of rituals and blessings, while Dad was a scientist and an atheist all of his life!"

Despite her lack of formal education his mother taught her four children to paint and read poetry and play chess, while their father imbued them with a social conscience and philosophical thought.

"My father lectured in Mathematics at Moscow University and worked as an Agronomist under Stalin. He visited farms to advise farmers on agricultural practices but ended up in trouble with the police because he doctored the books to say their crops had failed to protect the peasants who had hidden their crops to feed their families.

"That was how he met my mother. She was a peasant girl on one of the farms he visited. When the German troops advanced into Russia in 1944 they escaped to Germany together, became prisoners of war and worked in a munitions factory in Germany. They had a hard time."

After the war ended, his parents wanted to get as far away from Europe as they could. So the family came to Australia and settled in Adelaide, where his father, along with a host of other displaced professionals found work on the assembly line at General Motors Holden.

Art and music have always been part of Korytnyj's life. He played in rock 'n' roll bands from age 16, attended the South Australian School of Art and then taught art for several years before opting for the life of a professional musician as he shared the stage with countless rock stars. His friendship with Jane and Jimmy Barnes and a contract with Mushroom Records found him eventually settling in the Highlands with his family in 1993.

Along the way he practised his art to develop a "potpourri of styles". He describes his art as "figurative with modern pointillism", and cites his primary influences as Jackson Pollock, Picasso, Brett Whiteley and Francis Bacon.

Major events compel Korytnyj to paint, taking him to places where other artists may never go. His previous solo exhibitions include the controversial 1995 "Belanglo Forest" series at Soho Gallery, Woolloomooloo, which attracted world-wide media coverage and weighty legal attention, while his dramatic 1996 "Sydney Bushfires" series depicted the ominous force of nature that we live with every summer.

Compelling work.

"Culture at War" artwork by Stan Korytnyj @ BDAS, Short Street, Bowral from 9 to 14 July. Official opening 10 July @ 5.30pm



Clockwise from the top: 'Belly Dancer', 'Cronulla Riots', 'Lebanese Man Attacked' and Burqa Clad Women'

HotArt

Poignant Preece



Preece's 'The Ballad of Lucy Jordan'

Long-time Highlands resident and bankable painter Glen Preece returns to the Milk Factory Gallery in early August with his latest body of work. Known also as a figurative painter of Modigliani-type figures, his harmonious paintings inspired by the seasons and colours of his natural environment can hang on any wall.

Preece's upcoming exhibition reflects the ongoing evolution of the artist to include two extraordinary parallel pieces which depict women who are grappling with adversity and disappointment. Entitled "The Ballad of Lucy Jordan" and "The Farmer's Wife", each deals with loneliness and isolation in different environments.

Inspired by one of his favourite songs, Marianne Faithful's poignant "The Ballad of Lucy Jordan" represents the disintegration of a woman as she sees life passing her by, while his "Farmer's Wife" is a haunting representation of a woman who wishes life could spirit her elsewhere as she deals with the hopelessness of a never-ending drought.

Glen Preece "Compositions in Grey" @ The Milk Factory Gallery and Exhibition Space, Station Street, Bowral from 1 to 31 August. To be opened on 1 August by actress, writer and director Rachel Ward. Time to be confirmed

FutureArts upcoming arts for the diary

- **Drawings & Sculpture** by Brian Kirkby and A Celebration of Form, ceramics by the late Gillian Broinowski @ Sturt Gallery, Range Road, Mittagong until 26 July
- **Rent the Musical** presented by Magic Box Productions @ Mittagong Playhouse between 3 and 18 July
- **Southern Highlands Ceramics** in conjunction with Ceramics Triennale, Sydney, presents works of six esteemed and long-term Highlands ceramic artists, Sandy Lockwood, Martin Halstead, Elizabeth Charles, Steve Harrison, Tania Rolland and Don Court @ Sturt Gallery, Range Road, Mittagong 4 July to 5 August
- **Brendon Darby - Recent Works** @ The Milk Factory Gallery and Exhibition Space, Station Street, Bowral, 4 to 30 July
- **Latest Works from our Stable of Collectable Artists** @ Bell Gallery, Jellore Street, Berrima
- **Down to Earth** art created and inspired by Earth, Wood, Water & Stone by S Webster, R Esposito, P Levett, E Nollet @ BDAS, Short Street, Bowral, 23 to 28 July
- **Pathos and Poetry Trio Concert** @ Oxley College, Railway Parade, Burradoo 18 July, 5pm
- **An Afternoon with Monsieur Hulot** Tony Williams introduces the hilarious films of Jacques Tati @ CTC Robertson, 26 July. Ph 4885 2665. All proceeds go towards running costs of CTC.
- **Sydney Mandolin Orchestra** @ the Robertson School of Arts, 2pm, 2 August. For further information email info@robertsonctc.org.au
- **Diversity - All that glitters ...** Annual exhibition of SH Textile and Fibre Network @ BDAS, Short Street, Bowral from 6-16 August. Featuring a Fashion Parade Saturday 8 August at 1pm
- **The Baker's Wife** presented by The Highlands Theatre Group @ Mittagong Playhouse 7 to 22 August