



at the
archives

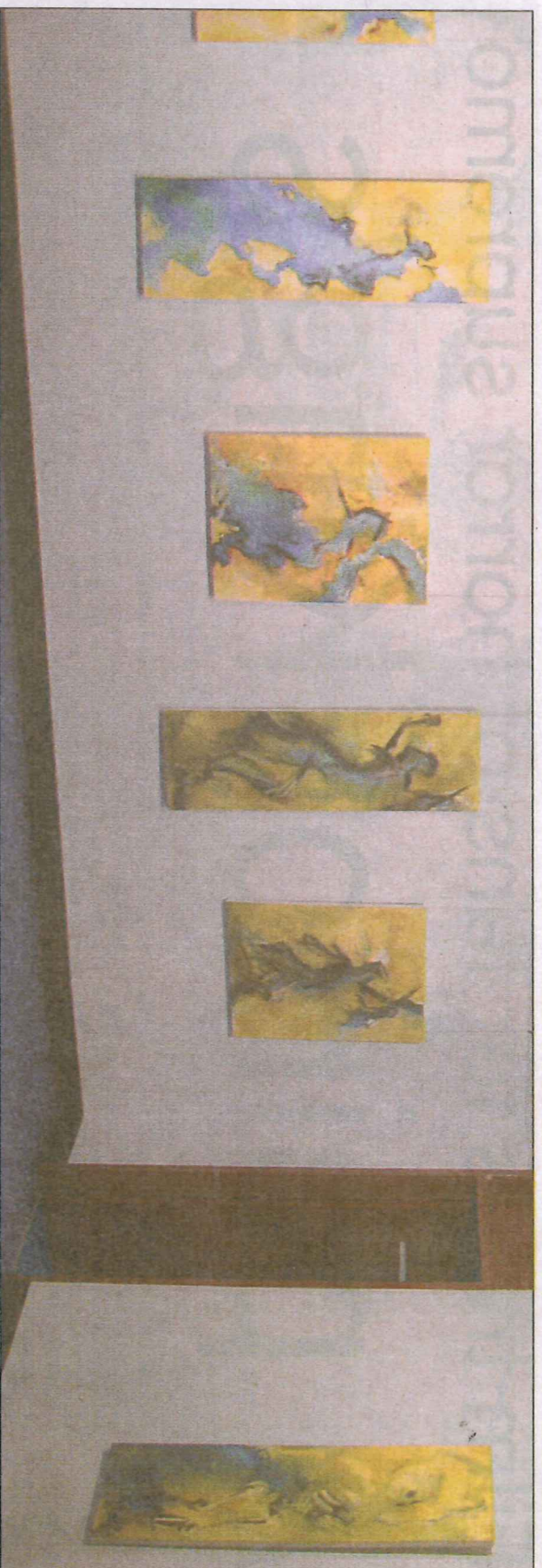
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What you should know

■ The CSU Regional Archives is open Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm. Located in the Blakemore Building at the South Campus of the university, access can be gained via College Avenue or Hely Avenue.

■ Members of the public are welcome to visit the search room, where professional archival staff can assist with enquiries. For those people unable to visit the archives in person, staff can provide a research service for straightforward enquiries for a fee of \$55 per hour, including copying and postage.

■ For further information, phone 6925 3666, email archive@csu.edu.au or visit the website at www.csu.edu.au/research/archives for a full listing of holdings and more detailed information.



Karen Cowled's *Rules of Engagement*, acrylic on canvas in seven panels, makes up part of the Emerging Figures in Painting and Print, which will hang in the foyer space at the Charles Sturt University Regional Archives over the holiday period

Emerging art

his week *At the Archives* focuses on the Charles Sturt University Art Collection, which is also housed with the regional archives in the Blakemore Building.

The mission of the Charles Sturt University Art Collection is to serve the university and its regional communities through the establishment of a quality collection of 20th century Australian art works. The collection is displayed on all of the campuses of the university.

Art curator for Charles Sturt University Thomas Middlemost wrote the following essay on the exhibition entitled *Emerging Figures in Painting and Print* which is currently on display in the foyer of the CSU Regional Archives. However, it should be noted the works in this exhibition are not part of the CSU Art Collection.

The exhibition is free of and open from Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm. For further information please contact Thomas Middlemost on 6925 3666.

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The exhibition *Emerging Figures in Painting and Print* will hang in the foyer space at the Charles Sturt University Regional Archives for the holiday period. The display showcases work from the early emerging career years of three magnificent artists and also tackles the topic of differing representations of the figure in divergent media. Lastly the exhibition throws a spotlight on implied meaning in visual art.

The figure is something we can all relate to. Measurement was first contemplated with the body; body size is still hardwired as a human measurement. The size of a person and their physical relationship to an artwork can be an important interplay between viewer and artist. At times an abstract work can look human, just because of size or proportion.

Two of the artists: Paul Nolte and Karen Cowled live locally and the artwork exhibited is recent. Rona Green in contrast is a well known Melbourne printmaker and curator. Green's student work is on display. Monotype printmaking and painting is showcased by two of the three artists. The juxtaposition of medium can give the viewer an insight into certain visual ideas in their embryonic form.

Paul Nolte produced his work within this exhibition last year. Nolte has been working on his art since the late 1970s, however he is an early career artist because he has only just started to pursue commercial sales. He has raised children, is a talented organic farmer, and when he gets the time his dreams take shape on paper and canvas.

His drawing skills are exemplary, and paint application thoughtful. Paul paints and draws colourful stylised, floating, mainly female figures. The figures scream out for a story, one which can be read personally or universally. The masked faces within Paul's paintings and monotypes mark the work as his ... starts the



Paul Nolte's, *Guardian Angel*, oil on canvas.

canvas with the eyes and their relationship to each other and within the canvas, moving from there through numerous sketches and a multiplicity of colour choices to expand on the overtly sexualised figures and their placements. Paul states that his concern is in the curves and concaves of space that entwine figures, colour, and balance within the canvas, the story of the work is for the viewer, or possibly therefore for the artist to keep. Paul studied at the Riverina College of Advanced Education, now the Charles Sturt University, under Arthur Wicks, Simon Close, Euan Heng, and Alber Shomay. Within the large painting, *Guardian Angel* a mother/angel sits on a heightened platform, which could be a kitchen table, bed or a more defined and less domestic position, her 'Valkyrie inspired' breast plates doubling as the fabric of a nightgown. She sits at either the gates of another world or between two chairs, or bed rails, hands poised as if ready to play star. The instrument laid at her groin is an infant or small male, whose mouth screams open at the viewer alluding to what is behind the head. The mother and child situated in a sea of red, a strong image of sanctity and sexuality, on the micro and macro scale. The willing, if fearsome sexual partner and the child of the masculine in society for its holistic wrong doing.

Karen Cowled is a talented sculptor and painter, and at a later stage in her life has decided to exhibit and concentrate on visual art.

The displayed series of seven acrylic on canvas paintings titled 'Terms of Engagement' look figurative even when abstract. The larger of the canvases is 137 cm in height and half a centimetre shy of half a metre wide. When hung they remind one of figures, or monolithic markers for individual resting places. Canvases one to three seem to show an ethereal sky, where central shapes form. Strangely these abstracts bear a resemblance to the early painting of Cowled's painting master Dr. Errol Fielder, none of which I believe she has seen. The central canvas darkens in colour and tone, abstraction forms into a striking figure, the figure then dons boots and a rifle, and is finally morphed into a skeleton in the last panel.

Is this a comment on war or something more personal? The title may be a hint. As a response to the warring of armies and nation states it is interested in the particular; one individual's journey from the natural through life's battles to annihilation.

The work could be read as a metaphor for the destruction of our planet, or the bodily impacts that are a consequence of our political actions. The work could be intended to be read as a political, humanistic, social commentary but for the artist the initial meaning is hidden to the viewer. I feel the explicit nature of much graphic political posturing, poster making or pernicious behaviour would grate against this artist's sensibility. The subtle point is there for the viewer to discover.

Rona Green is a very well respected and well known Melbourne printmaker, curator and soon to be painter. She accepted a commission from the CSU Art Collection in 1999 and produced 'Bluey' in linocut and screen print, a work of a tattooed kangaroo which is related to a Margaret Preston woodblock print of Sturt Desert Peas. Much of her work can be seen on her website.

The works in this exhibition come from her archives, and are owned by her. They are the student monotypes she produced in Canberra while studying at the Canberra School of Art which have not been exhibited since that time. From the early career monotypes one can see the stark lack of colour, minimal, free-line aesthetic and graphic paring away of detail that continues in her current work. These works show how the playful, free nature of the medium of monotype can free the mind to ideas and methods in painting and printmaking.

The narrative in some of the monotypes like the narrative, or story in Nolte's work or that in Cowled's drives the viewer to want to know more.

Are some of the figures her siblings, parents? Why is there a reference to a rude boy? What has happened to this artist in the past to make these possibly personal statements?

These are questions that do not ask for answers, and I feel the implied message works if it makes one think about ones own experiences. It is just as valid to answer the questions oneself by applying ones own personal baggage. The bodies in these works do not explicitly state a point. They elicit numerous meanings.