

Arts at The Show

From pumpkin scones to slipcast ceramics ... from photography to sugar art, the ever evolving Arts Competition at the Royal Easter Show is full of surprises ... and certainly not to be sniffed at.

by ANITA SULENTIC

THE ARTS COMPETITION AT THE SYDNEY Royal Easter Show has struggled with its traditional image of competitive country women battling it out for first prize for their fruitcakes – hardly that of a serious, quality art show. But with \$80,000 prize money on offer in over 350 categories and a panel of respected, big name judges, isn't it about time the competition at the Show started getting a bit more attention from the art world?

In 2006, the Royal Agricultural Society undertook a major transformation of the art and craft competition at the Show, introducing a new name, logo and a range of new categories. The aim was to benchmark the competition against other major art events, providing a significant forum for great art and providing exposure to emerging as well as established artists.

In 2007 the competition promises to push the boundaries even further. Under the chairmanship of Peter Watt, the Sydney Royal Arts Committee has stepped up the program and has its sights set on attracting more works from emerging artists in regional Australia.

All the traditional and revered elements of the competition will be maintained (of course!) but Show organisers are also keen to see fresh talent in all classes such as pottery, painting, photography, drawing, printmaking, sculpture, textiles, knitting, dressmaking, millinery, embroidery, beading, crochet, woodwork, leather work, quilting, papercrafts and recycled artworks, to name a few.



“The Sydney Royal Arts Competition is proud to showcase the best of Australian art which encompasses the traditional as well as the modern,” said Councillor Alison Renwick. “The established art forms are celebrated annually by millions, yet our Show is expanding at a rapid pace, keeping in line with current trends. We’re taking up the challenge of balancing tradition with innovation as we attract new, and more importantly young and upcoming artists through new media.”

The Arts Competition does not want to lose its long held connections with the Show fraternity and the traditional art world. The competition has historically

been an attractive alternative to major Sydney art events, offering entrants the simple joy and pleasure of exhibiting their work to a large, interested audience (of close to a million people!). The Arts Competition will always be a celebration of community and rural life, but it also aims to expand its relevance, recognizing talented artists – both emerging and established – in an ever-increasing list of art forms, with the assistance of a judging panel including the likes of Anthony Bond, Stella Downer and Rex Irwin.

Industry recognition for everything from crochet and eggshell work to fashion accessories, sculpture and ceramics is hard to find. The Sydney Royal Arts Competition caters to the whole gamut of techniques and media and aims to promote the viability and sustainability of regional art practice.

With added features including a division for Under 17s, and an exclusive Industry and Media Preview, it is no wonder that there is strong demand for artworks for sale at the Show and that most of them are sold by the end of the week. ■

The Sydney Royal Easter Show, 5–18 April 2007. Entries for the 2007 Arts Competition close 20 December. More information on the RAS website, with new application forms available from late October.

**CONTACT Ana von Alten Tel 02 9704 1111
Email arts@rasnsw.com.au
Website www.eastershow.com.au**

Pictured: Winner Class 31 Non-functional Ceramics 2006 by Linda Seiffert.

September

9 September

Blue Moon Ball School of Arts Hall,
NIMBIN Tel 02 6689 1577

9 September

Lismore Feast Celebrating food prepared by one of Australia's finest chefs.

LISMORE City Hall Gardens
Tel 02 6622 0300
Website www.norpa.org.au

9 September

Poet's Picnic Part of National Poetry Week. BYO lunch, wine/juice and poetry.

11:30am - 2:30pm. Buchanan Gallery,
BUCHANAN. Jan Dean Tel 02 4954 9895

9 September

Voices Only Fundraising concert featuring the Bathurst Panorama Chorus, Maquarie Male Singers and the Murrumbidgee Magic. **BATHURST** Memorial Entertainment Centre
Tel 02 6333 6166