

WHAT DO 30,600 PHOTOGRAPHS, AN INTERNATIONAL INSTALLATION artist, a small regional art gallery and over seventy ordinary members of the community have in common? They were part of a unique installation that became the talk of the Central West.

In August and September this year, international artist Nakahashi Katsushige, with the help of art students, art teachers and members of the central west community and beyond created two extraordinary photographic installations at the Cowra Art Gallery. The project, collectively called 'On The Day,' involved the assemblage of 30,600 individual photographs. To understand the significance of the first part of the project, 'August 5th,' we have to rewind 48 years to 1944, when 231 Japanese soldiers lost their lives during the infamous breakout at the Cowra POW Camp.

One of the Japanese prisoners to die on the day was Hajime Toyoshima, a Zero One fighter pilot who performed an emergency landing near Darwin and was to become the very first

During a 12 hour period, on August 5, the anniversary of the Breakout, Katsushige took 5,600 photographs of the grid from dusk until dawn, an intense and physically demanding process in itself. The 5,600 photographs were processed and assembled into a huge montage in the Cowra Art Gallery. From dark till dark, through sunlight and fog, morning dew and harsh midday sunlight, the photographs came together to form a massive artwork embroidered by the changing textures, light and colour that occurred naturally 'on the day'.

The second part of the project, 'Zero,' involved assembling 25,000 photographs transported from Japan by Katsushige, into a life size Zero fighter type 52 plane which was assembled and installed in the Cowra Art Gallery. After a month long exhibition Katsushige and about 150 interested people from Canberra, Sydney, Cowra and the central west carried the plane from the gallery, through the streets of Cowra, to the ruins of the POW site where a ritual burning of the plane took place.

International artist creates history in Cowra

On The Day

by MARGARET HOGAN



The life size Zero fighter type 52 plane
in the Cowra Art Gallery
Photo by Greg Daly



Japanese Prisoner of War interned at Cowra. He was one of many to take his own life following the failed breakout attempt. In the midst of what was the Japanese compound, where it is believed Hajime died, Katsushige marked out a 4.5 x 8 metre grid on the ground. Within this space he placed gum leaves, each bearing the registration numbers of the prisoners who died on the day.

January – February

To 2 February

👁️ *Satisfaction*, a marriage of ceramics, photography and food in an exhibition of tableware by 11 ceramic artists with photographs by Simone de Peak.

NEW ENGLAND Regional Art Museum
Tel 02 6772 5255

To 23 February

👁️ *Life in the Emperor's Tomb*: Ceramics from ancient China, from the NGA exhibition, revealing the beauty, wealth and mystery of classical Chinese tombs. Plus selections from the Howard Hinton & Chandler Coventry Collections **NEW ENGLAND** Regional Art Museum Tel 02 6772 5255

1 February

👁️ Central Orana Region Grant Writing Workshops for community organisations, Narromine Services Club, 58 Dandaloo Street, **NARROMINE**. Contact Michele Elliot, Funding and Research Officer, Tel 02 9247 8577
Email michele@regionalartsnsw.com.au

1 - 4 February

👁️ *Precarious*, a performance by Circus Monoxide. **KIAMA** Tel 0419 478 194

"Katsushige uses the ritual burning to demonstrate the futility of war...to show that war destroys life, destroys art, destroys everything," said Cowra Art Gallery Management Committee Chair and Project Coordinator, Greg Daly. At the burning Katsushige paid tribute to the community who had helped him achieve his vision.

"After having many exhibitions, this was my first exhibition to experience such a logical amalgamation of the piece, people the history and the place. At the exhibition in Darwin two years ago, the Zero was constructed with a couple of Japanese students whom I brought along from Japan. Therefore I could not feel as connected with the local people so strongly as I am feeling now with you," he said. *"I very much would like to remember my experience with this Cowra project and use this to enhance my future projects."*

The project was a brave, new venture for the regionally based Cowra Art Gallery. It was made possible by a grant, the gallery's first, from the NSW Ministry for the Arts. The exhibition attracted a wide and diverse audience. Art, cross cultural, historical, national, ex-services, school groups and international divides came together for this significant project.

Katsushige's contribution to the Cowra community will live on with his donation of the photographic montage to the permanent collection of the Cowra Art Gallery. ■