

US bequest begets a **millennial million**



Christine Collins, *Dress*, 1999. Electronic transistors, 150x35 cm.
COURTESY: THE ARTIST & SAMSTAG PROGRAM

RUSSELL STORER WRITES THAT AUSTRALIA'S MOST LUCRATIVE ART SCHOLARSHIP JUST GOT RICHER...

Studying and/or working overseas, for so long expected of creative types, is getting harder and harder to manage as university fees and living costs rise and the Australian dollar plummets. However, it is still viewed as an important part of a well-rounded artistic career, affording opportunities to access major collections and institutions, engage with other creative communities, and broaden one's perspective on the world.

For visual artists, there are none better than the Samstags. Awarded annually through the University of South Australia, the scholarship provides a twelve month living allowance of US\$26,000 (approx. AUD\$50,000) to allow artists to study over-

The tax-exempt scholarship is the richest of its kind in the country, purpose-built for funding an international study program.

seas. This year, due to canny investing of the bequest, Samstag Program director **Ross Wolfe** has up to \$1,000,000 to distribute, meaning the 2001 recipients will also receive travel expenses and tuition fees in excess of US\$20,000 (at today's exchange rate, that's living pretty large).

American artist **Gordon Samstag** studied in New York and Paris, was a veteran of the New Deal artist programs of **Franklin Roosevelt**, and taught at the South Australian School of Art from 1961 to 1972. His in-perpetuity bequest was set up to offer Australian visual artists the chance to "study and develop their artistic capacities, skills and talents in New York City and its vicinity, or anywhere else outside of Australia." The tax-exempt scholarship is the richest of its kind in the country, and being set in US dollars (the estate is invested in the American stock market), it is purpose-built for funding an international study program.

2001 Anne & Gordon Samstag Visual Art Scholarships

- **Christine Collins:** constructs garments from small objects such as plastic soldiers or electronic resistors, playing on the tensions between the detail and the overall form and texture of the 'fabric'.
- **Shaun Gladwell:** paintings and videos that collapse contemporary street culture with art history, drawing unexpected parallels.
- **Glenys Hodgman:** obsessively crafted pieces study the nature of gift-giving and personal relationships, using traditional techniques and medical references.
- **Anne Kay:** transforms everyday materials such as plastic bags and plasticine into poetic comments on history and landscape.
- **Fasih Keiso:** uses digital technology to manipulate images of the body, creating strange, sexually suggestive patterns that reference western modernism, Islamic design and contemporary kitsch.
- **Linda Marrinon:** small terracotta sculptures and wry paintings and drawings reconstruct art history with an eye to its institutions, structures and categories.
- **Archie Moore:** pastel drawings investigate the use of language as a form of naming and an abusive weapon, often at the same time.
- **Rea:** uses computer-generated photographic techniques, popular kitsch and images of the body to critique the representation of Aboriginal people, particularly women.
- **John Spiteri:** cartoonish and highly urban paintings and videos which interact with the viewer in complex narratives.
- **Paul White:** takes consumer objects and fashions them into intricate and powerful installations.

- Russell Storer



Anne Kay, *Pocket mountains*, 1999. Sculpture III modelling clay, 6x30x100 cm.
COURTESY: THE ARTIST & SAMSTAG PROGRAM

Since the first round was announced in 1992, well-known contemporary names like Robyn Stacey, Kathy Temin, Matthys Gerber, Anne Wallace, Julie Gough, Stephen Bram, Nike Savvas, Angela Valamanesh, ADS Donaldson and Deborah Paauwe have received the scholarship, seventy-two artists in total.

The annual number of awards has doubled in the last three years, thanks to the booming US sharemarket where Gordon Samstag's estate is invested. This year's recipients are Christine Collins, Shaun Gladwell, Glenys Hodgman, Anne Kay, Fassih Keiso, Linda Marrinon, Archie Moore, Rea, John Spiteri and Paul White.

The selection panel of South Australian School of Art head Noel Frankham, and artists Olga Sankey and Derek Kreckler have decided on a diverse group of recipients who vary substantially in age and experience, and work in a wide range of media. But, as catalogue essayist Robyn McKenzie puts it, each artist's work is characterised by the use of "ideas, techniques and materials to make connections that cross over the logical or rational boundaries between categories of object or systems of thought." McKenzie also poses the question of how such an individualised approach to art-making sits within the institution, and how university research fits in to the development of an artist's practice. Too much to go into here, but there are 10 very lucky artists who are about to find out.

* In issue 14, Russell Storer's byline from his preview of the MCA's *Primavera* exhibition was unfortunately cut from the copy.

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John Brack (*Studio Nudes*), 1982, lithograph, 43x64cm, ed 25/50

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