

COMMON GOODS: CULTURES MEET THROUGH CRAFT

CRAFTVICTORIA
craft



Images: (L to R) **Te Atiwaē Riwanui**, *Kete Whakairo (detail)* poutama plant fibre 20x 30 cm, 2005. **Niki Hastings-McFall** *Parataiso II (detail)* perspex and artificial lei flowers 350m x 280cm 2004. Image courtesy of Bartley-Nees, Wellington. **Lucy Irvine**, *Eucalypt Flower (detail)* plastic piping, cable ties, dried palm flower, acrylic 57x57x70 cm 2005. **Lorraine Connelly-Northey** *Narrbong (string bag)* Fencing wire 80 x 29 x 16 cm 2005. Image courtesy of the artist and Gallery Gabrielle Pizzi

With Nelson Mandela as one of the invited guests to the Commonwealth Games, it is timely to consider how we can share the spirit of reconciliation. The South African concept of 'Ubuntu', or humanness, is the inspiration for an exhibition that celebrates craft as a language that bridges cultural difference.

Throughout Victoria, craftspersons from Commonwealth countries will be working with communities to create unique works to commemorate this meeting of cultures. Projects include darning a replica of the Eureka flag, inserting a southern cross into Maltese lace, weaving from cable ties, and making a Samoan lei for Robbie Burns.

Common Goods: Cultures Meet through Craft is a Craft Victoria residency program, exhibition and publication. Makers from eight Commonwealth countries have been selected as representatives of a craft particular to their culture. They arrive in Melbourne and meet a local 'welcome' artist who introduces them to current practice. Works from visiting and local artists go on display at the Melbourne Museum from 6 February. Then visitors spend the month of February in residence producing a work of art especially for the Games. These works then join the initial pieces for an opening at Melbourne Museum on 28 February. Through *Common Goods*, many different cultures coming to Victoria will find a way to work together.

The publication, *Common Goods*, explores concepts of humanness from participating countries. Writers include Samoa's first contemporary woman novelist, **Sia Figiel**; **Dr Lou Dofenik** exploring Maltese women migration; Melbourne based poet and writer **Tony Birch**; Maldivian **Mamduh Waheed**; South African UNESCO World Prize Winner for Literacy **Lindsey Collen**, leading Sri Lankan civil activist **Sunil Wijesiriwardhane**; Norfolk Islander and historian **Jodie Williams**; New Zealander Academic **Tai Black**; renowned Australia poet and historian **Eric Rolls**; Indian philosopher and Mahatma Gandhi's grandson **Ramchandra Gandhi** and South African intellectual **Mbulelo Mzamane**.

***Common Goods* is part of the Festival Melbourne2006 and the 2006 Commonwealth Games.**

ARTISTS RESIDENCIES

ARTPLAY– MALDIVES AND NEW ZEALAND

International Maori weaver **Te Atiwei Ririnui** is beginning a traditional mat with Maori children, which will be continued with local children in creative workshops for children via the City of Melbourne ArtPlay initiative.

Coming from the Indian Ocean, **Ahmed Nimad** is a stone carver from the Maldives. A distinctive feature of these islands is the tombstone carved for bodies washed up on their shores. These were particularly important following the Boxing Day Tsunami.

BALLARAT FINE ART GALLERY – INDIA

Zakir Hussain and **Intekhab Ahmed** are specialist darners (Rafoogars) from Najibabad in Northern Indian, home of the renowned pashmini shawl. While in Ballarat, these revered craftsmen will be darning a replica of the Eureka flag.

LATROBE UNIVERSITY VISUAL ARTS CENTRE, BENDIGO – SAMOA

Bendigo is paired with Scotland for the Commonwealth Games, and **Niki Hastings-McFall** brings her mixed Samoan and Scottish background to her residency. As an artist who weaves leis out of found materials, Hastings-McFall will be searching for ways of making a Bendigo lei.

CRAFT VICTORIA – NORFOLK ISLAND

As a mixed Tahitian-English culture, Norfolk Island is a repository not only of legend but also craft. **Audrey Boyle** is a New Zealand artist who weaves from Norfolk Island pine needles. She will be making her work at Craft Victoria 2 February – 4 March. She will then exhibit the results alongside Norfolk Island artist **Margarita Sampson**, who weaves from the pages of old books. Their exhibition will be 9 March – 8 April 2006.

GEELONG GALLERY – SOUTH AFRICA

Telephone wire weaving is an adaptation of traditional craft to modern materials. It is now the major craft export in South Africa. South African telephone-wire weaver **Hlengiwe Dube** will be exploring materials available here for weaving new objects.

MOONEE VALLEY – MAURITIUS

Mauritian **Lewis Dick** is a wood carver who heads the École de Sculpture, a school for Creole children. His sculptures replicate the human form in found wood. Dick will be resident at the Moonee Valley Incinerator Complex. What subject will he take while in Moonee Ponds—the Dame?

LATROBE REGIONAL GALLERY, MORWELL – MALTA

Australian born Maltese artist **Mary Farrugia** has adapted traditional lace-making to different colour and forms. She will be coordinating lace-making workshops at La Trobe Regional Gallery in Morwell, employing the skills of local lace-makers to produce a distinctive design—Maltese cross with a fifth star?

CAULFIELD PARK COMMUNITY SCHOOL - SRI LANKA

Chandraguptha Thenuwara is a Sri Lankan artist and educator who has developed a practice known as 'Barrelism'. As Colombo becomes more militarised, it is increasingly cluttered with barrels, painted in camouflage. Barrelism appropriates these barrels as art by turning them into aesthetic objects. What might Thenuwara make of the security conscious city that Melbourne has become?

Common Goods sits under the umbrella of the South Project, building a cultural highway across the south. For more information please see www.craftvic.asn.au/commongoods

PARTICIPATING ARTISTS

Local: Kerri Ann Abbott, Jennifer Bartholomew, Lorraine Connelly-Northey, Lucy Irvine, Wendy Lugg,, Mark McDean, David Ray, Julie Tipene-O'Toole

Visiting Audrey Boyle, Lewis Dick, Hlengiwe Dube, Mary Farrugia, Niki Hastings-McFall, Ahmed Nimad, Rafoogars (Zakir Hussain and Intekhab Ahmed), Te Atiwei Ririnui, Margarita Sampson, Chandraguptha Thenuwara

KEY DATES *Common Goods Exhibitions*

Melbourne Museum

Media Launch 6 February 2006, 6pm
Opening 28 February 2006, 6pm
Exhibition Dates 29 February 2006 — 7 May 2006
Opening Hours 10 am – 5pm daily

Craft Victoria

Opening 8 March 2006, 6pm
Exhibition Dates 9 March — 1 April 2006
Opening Hours 11am - 5:30pm Tue - Sat
Address 31 Flinders Lane, Melbourne, Victoria

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GEELONG GALLERY