

## MEDIA RELEASE

For immediate release

# Fertile Soil

## 50 Years of the City of Fremantle Art Collection Fremantle Arts Centre 11 October – 23 November 2008

Fremantle's enduring role as home and favourite subject matter for artists is celebrated in an exhibition marking the 50 years of the City of Fremantle Collection.

The City's Collection, comprising more than 1200 works collected over the decades, reflects the port town's particular artistic heritage, making it one of the most significant municipal collections in the country.

Curator Andre Lipscombe says, "*Fertile Soil* focuses upon the core strengths of the collection, in particular the established generation of makers who call Fremantle their home today."

*Fertile Soil* also features **Kathleen O'Connor**, the significant Western Australian modernist painter who spent decades living in Europe before returning to Fremantle in 1948, whose work is considered the historical heartbeat of the Collection.

The exhibition also contains significant Australian prints since 1976, including a selection of first prize-winners from the 33 years of Fremantle Arts Centre's **Fremantle Print Award**, Australia's leading print award.

The exhibition *Fertile Soil* celebrates the unique and diverse history of Fremantle, told through the eyes of artists who have called the portside city home. *Fertile Soil* presents work from 50 artists, with 68 works in total.

The works range from a selection of painting, drawing, printmedia, assemblage, textiles and ceramics by established Fremantle practitioners.

Fremantle Arts Centre has been the spiritual home of the Collection for decades. Director, Jim Cathcart says, "In the early days, Fremantle Arts Centre influenced and supported many of the artists involved in *Fertile Soil*. These artists in turn were the backbone of the Arts Centre in the first decade of its existence."

Fremantle Arts Centre, where the Collection has a permanent gallery space to showcase works from its stores, devotes the entire gallery floor to *Fertile Soil*.

Fremantle Arts Centre celebrates *Fertile Soil* with a number of new initiatives. For the first time, audio guides to accompany the exhibition are available. These hand-held, easy to use electronic guides provide eighty minutes of audio from artists in *Fertile Soil*, offering a remarkable insight into their ideas and inspiration.

Artist-in-residence **Elvis Richardson** (Melbourne) will also create a new work in response to a piece showcased in *Fertile Soil*. Shocked and deeply affected by the 9/11 terrorist attacks in New York and Washington, Fremantle artist Christine Gosfield's work was created by walking the streets around her home and photographing local faces in the event's aftermath. Gosfield's piece, *9/11.....defining home* and Richardson's response, *NOW 7 YEARS LATER* will be shown together in Gallery 3.

A touring version of *Fertile Soil* will be shown in regional WA galleries; Geraldton, Mandurah, Albany, Bunbury, Katanning, and Esperance in 2009-10, supported by Art on the Move. The touring component highlights the work of twenty-one living Fremantle-based practitioners, who have made an important contribution to the visual arts culture in the city since 1973.



The eighty page book published by Fremantle Press, *Fertile Soil: 50 Years of the City of Fremantle Art Collection* celebrates this historic event in Fremantle's cultural history. This timely companion is available for \$39.95 from the Fremantle Arts Centre Shop.

***Fertile Soil: 50 Years of the City of Fremantle Art Collection***

Ray Arnold  
George Baldessin  
Marcus Beilby  
Merrick Belyea  
Sandra Black  
Pat Brassington  
Paul Brown  
Rupert Bunny  
Joan Campbell  
Susanna Castleden  
Jan Davis  
Elizabeth Durack  
Pippin Drysdale  
Cordula Ebatarinja  
Neil Emmerson  
Christine Gosfield  
Audrey Greenhalgh  
Peggy Griffiths  
Richard Gunning  
George Haynes  
Hans Heysen  
Bevan Honey  
Tony Jones  
Jeremy Kirwan-Ward  
Theo Koning

Bela Kotai  
Eveline Kotai  
Colin Lanceley  
Tim Leura Tjapaltjarri  
Akio Makigawa  
Jane Martin  
Brian McKay  
Mary Moore  
Sally Morgan  
Albert Namatjira  
Jánis Nedéla  
Kathleen O'Connor  
Shane Pickett  
Trevor Richards  
Stewart Scambler  
Arthur Streeton  
Brad Rimmer  
Megan Salmon  
Helen Smith  
Holly Story  
Paul Uhlmann  
Ken Wadrop  
Judy Watson  
Karl Wiebke  
Jurek Wybraniec

Fremantle Arts Centre: 1 Finnerty Street, Fremantle, WA.. Free admission, open 7 days.

**Ends - For more information, images or to arrange an interview:**

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