



Claire HEALY & Sean CORDEIRO, *The Great War*, 2010, scorched timber, coasters, beer bottles, hammers, 120 x 140 x 80 cm, courtesy the artists and Gallery Barry Kelouilis, Sydney, photograph by Ian Hill

Media Release

From China to Chess!

As the Samstag Museum of Art says farewell to *White Rabbit – Contemporary Chinese Art Collection*, the most highly visited exhibition of the year, Samstag welcomes two new exhibitions to complete its exciting 2011 program:

Your Move: Australian artists play chess

Bill Henson: early work from the MGA Collection, with selected recent landscapes

14 October – 16 December

Your Move: Australian artists play chess has provided thirteen of Australia's leading contemporary artists with the opportunity to engage with an ancient game to create new and intriguing works of art.

'The game of chess is traditionally perceived as a subdued, cerebral and introspective activity', exhibition curator Tansy Curtin said. 'However, the creation of new artworks informed by the notion of the game of chess adds a new dimension to the game itself: chess acquires a new visual persona; beauty and drama alongside intrigue and threat become implicit aspects of the game'.

This playful and thought-provoking exhibition engages with multiple concepts – from climate change, environmental degradation and the impacts of colonisation, to explorations of Australian icons – and vividly illustrates that in the 21st century, chess has lost none of its inspirational power. For many artists the game of chess is an allegory for battles throughout history; such as in the work of 2006 Samstag Scholars Claire Healy & Sean Cordeiro, whose work combines beer bottles and coasters on a scorched picnic table as metaphor for the First World War. Battles of ecology and the effects of human-related pollution and climate change on the environment are examined by Caroline Rothwell, Kate Rhode and Ken Yonetani.

The artists included in *Your Move* are Benjamin Armstrong, Lionel Bawden, Sebastian Di Mauro, Michael Doolan, Emily Floyd, Claire Healy & Sean Cordeiro, Robert Jacks, Danie Mellor, Kate Rohde, Caroline Rothwell, Sally Smart, and Ken Yonetani.

The Samstag Museum is delighted to also present a very special exhibition from one of Australia's most distinguished artists. **Bill Henson: early work from the MGA Collection, with selected recent landscapes** offers South Australians a unique opportunity to experience the power and beauty of the work of Bill Henson, Australia's best-known contemporary photographer. This is the first exhibition dedicated to this major artist's work to be presented in Adelaide.

The exhibition features twenty-nine exquisite photographic images from many of Henson's major series from the 1970s through to the early 1990s, all drawn from Monash Gallery of Art's collection. A particular highlight is the wonderfully atmospheric *Paris Opera* series of 1990 where Henson was commissioned to produce a body of work responding to the world-renown Paris Opera. Henson chose to focus on the audience, photographing the faces of people, their features softly illuminated by the reflected glow of stage lighting. Their faces express the sublime sensuality of a musical experience.

Alongside the MGA Collection exhibition, the Samstag Museum is presenting a selection of recent landscape photographs by Bill Henson. An established genre of Henson's alongside his figurative images, these dark and melancholic landscapes of rocky outcrops, monoliths rising dramatically from the ocean and waterfalls captured in a blaze of light are works of compelling power.

In a highly anticipated event, **Bill Henson will be 'in conversation' with Paul Grabowsky**, Artistic Director of the 2012 Adelaide Festival on **Monday 21 November at 5.30pm**. Presented in association with the 2012 Adelaide Festival and Art Gallery of South Australia, this special **FREE event** will be held at the University of South Australia, City West campus on North Terrace and **bookings are essential**, unisa.edu.au/samstagsmuseum.

Both exhibitions will be launched at the Samstag Museum on **Saturday 15 October at 3pm**, followed by a floor talk by Bendigo Art Gallery curator Sandra Bruce about the exhibition *Your Move: Australian artists play chess*. At this event and also on **Sunday 6 November at 3pm**, there is an opportunity to watch members of the Adelaide Chess Club do battle and even challenge them to a game. All welcome. Bookings essential: telephone 08 8302 0870 or samstagsmuseum@unisa.edu.au.

Education resources have been developed for both exhibitions and are available at unisa.edu.au/samstagsmuseum.

Your Move: Australian artists play chess and *Bill Henson: early work from the MGA Collection, with selected recent landscapes* both open 14 October and continue until 16 December 2011. Opening hours are Tuesday to Friday 11–5pm, Saturday and Sunday 2–5pm. Free admission.

For further information contact Rachael Elliott, Coordinator Scholarships and Communication, Samstag Museum of Art, T 08 8302 0869, M 0438 872483 or visit unisa.edu.au/samstagsmuseum.



Your Move: Australian artists play chess is a Bendigo Art Gallery travelling exhibition and is supported by Visions of Australia, an Australian Government program supporting touring exhibitions by providing funding assistance to the development and touring of Australian cultural material across Australia.

Bill Henson: early work from the MGA Collection is a Monash Gallery of Art travelling exhibition and the development of this exhibition is assisted through Arts Victoria's Exhibition Development Fund (EDF), supported by the Victorian Government through Arts Victoria and the Community Support Fund.