

Minister Hill's opening speech

Anne and Gordon Samstag Museum of Art

Opening of inaugural exhibition *Wonderful World* and launch of the Fiona Hall public artwork *Different forms of Intelligence*.

6pm, Thursday 10 October 2007

I acknowledge that we meet on the traditional lands of the Kurna people and that we respect their spiritual relationship with their country – Dr Duncan McFetridge MP, Professor Peter Høj, Vice Chancellor and President of the University of South Australia, Mr & Mrs Errol Silvestri and Mr & Mrs Dennis Brown- representatives of the Samstag Trustee, who have travelled from the US to be here, Erica Green, curator of the *Wonderful World* exhibition and Director of the Samstag Museum, artist Fiona Hall and all the artists exhibiting in *Wonderful World*.

Welcome everyone – and particularly our visitors from interstate and overseas.

Firstly I would like to add my own congratulations to the winners of the Samstag Scholarships who join a distinguished list of Samstag alumni. Tonight the arts community celebrates the beginning of a new era for contemporary art in Adelaide. The Anne and Gordon Samstag Museum of Art is a fitting complement to the cultural institutions along North Terrace and is a welcome addition to the West End precinct. This Museum is a tribute, not only to the Samstag legacy, but to the vision of the University of South Australia – its leadership in our State, its confidence in the future – and its love of the arts.

The Premier, Mike Rann and I are delighted that the State Government contributed \$3 million to the Hawke Building. This much anticipated contemporary gallery is the second public art gallery of scale in South Australia.

In a city renowned for its Colonial architecture, the Hawke Building – designed by John Wardle Architects in association with Hassell – makes a bold contemporary statement as an iconic architectural landmark. And from tomorrow onwards – visitors to the Museum will even be able to catch a tram here, which in itself brings new energy and colour to the stretch of North Terrace.

Ladies and gentlemen, I am exceptionally honoured to launch Fiona Hall's sculpture.

Fiona, as we all know, is an award-winning artist with very strong connections to South Australia. She is regarded as one of the country's most innovative contemporary artists – and it was a master-stroke to commission her to create a sculpture marking the entrance to this building.

In size and scale *Different Forms of Intelligence* – inspired by the concept of Platonic solids – is a departure from her other works, nonetheless, it reveals her breathtaking originality and enigmatic wit and appeal. Her exploration of the complexity of the brain, her celebration of diversity, creativity and innovation is the perfect metaphor, not only for the Hawke Building, but for the University of South Australia.

As you walk around this elegant gallery and enjoy the *Wonderful World* exhibition you will see works by some of the most dynamic contemporary Australian artists working today. Each artist has something to say about how they experienced their world, both real and imagined.

There is a particular focus on celebrating the wonders of natural world while acknowledging deeper environmental and human realities. The shadow of climate change hangs powerfully over this exhibition.

The exhibition and the museum are a living tribute to its remarkable benefactors – Anne and Gordon Samstag.

It is a pleasure to officially launch Fiona's remarkable work *Different forms of Intelligence* and the Museum's inaugural exhibition – *Wonderful World*.