

Reflections on motherhood



Green Nude 1m x 1m Acrylic on Canvas by Sally West

BY PAM WALKER

Artist Sally West has been very creative for the past few years, immersing herself in motherhood. But it's time now to pay some attention to her first creative outlet – painting.

"I've just had two kids and I'm back," she said. "All this work is exploding out of me. I feel like I've been percolating in the last three years."

Her latest exhibition, *Reflections*, will be on show at the Art Moment Gallery on Curlewis Street, Bondi Beach from November 23 to December 8. The work reflects on the life-changing experience of motherhood.

"I am now a mother and it's changed the way I look at the world," West said.

"This has filtered through to my art. Raising kids is a challenge both physically and emotionally, so I feel like I'm challenging myself more and more with the paintbrush, pushing boundaries and trying

different things."

Some of the techniques she has been exploring include using gladwrap or plastic bags to paint, instead of brushes.

"I wrap the paint in the plastic, then pierce it with a nail and paint with that. It gives me a unique texture and feel and lets me become more loose, even though it's more unforgiving. It comes out like string on the canvas and you can't change it. What comes out is what it is."

West feels this exhibition is more diverse than her previous shows.

"I have come to a point in my life where I feel tougher and I'm not so afraid of criticism. Some of the paintings are abstract works, which I've only been doing since my second pregnancy," she said.

"I never felt confident enough to show my abstract work before. Because I've allowed myself to do that, I think my abstract work, and my art in general, is becoming more exciting."

West grew up on a 10,000 acre sheep and wheat farm in central New South Wales but always dreamt of living near the water. One day she left it all behind and moved to Bondi where she could fall asleep to the sound of the ocean.

Later she travelled through Europe, Asia, India and Nepal, a journey that has left a major impression on her evocative artwork. But she always returned to Bondi.

West's exhibition *The Journey* (1998), held at Bondi Beach Pavilion Gallery, resonated with the spirit of travellers flocking to the world-famous beach. It featured her characteristic aqua colours, showcasing striking works in oil, pastel and charcoal. The show was a success, kick starting her career. She has exhibited regularly ever since, mainly in Bondi, Paddington, Berry and Melbourne. Only a year after *The Journey* exhibition at Bondi Pavilion, her new body of work *Underwater* (1999) held at Bondi's Wadi Gallery expressed her fascination with

the feel and texture of water and what lies beneath it.

Since 1998 West had a series of solo exhibitions at Love In A Cup, Bondi, intriguing the café society with her bold and exciting use of colour and form.

Her latest mixed media exhibition, *Reflections* opens at Art Moment Gallery, in the heart of Bondi Beach's art hub at 99 Curlewis street on Thursday Nov 23, from 6 to 9 pm. It will exhibit until

December 8. Special guest Di Kershaw, art consultant and advisor to people working in the arts, will officially open the exhibition at 7pm.

West's work is currently also showing at Gould Street Gallery in Bondi and the Flying Pig Precinct Gallery in Berry on the South Coast. Her work has been published as prints by the international publishing house Artwork Publishing (Frangipani Diptych) and her paintings are treasured in private collections all over the world and have been exhibited at international art events.