

Morgan named on PM's award panel



ABORIGINAL author and artist Sally Morgan has been named one of six Australians who will form the judging panel for the 2008 inaugural Prime Minister's Literary Awards.

Australian author and academic Peter Pierce will chair the judging panel for the Prime Minister's Literary Award for Fiction, with popular author John Marsden and broadcaster Margaret Throsby also on the panel.

Academic and author Professor Hilary Charlesworth will chair the Non-Fiction panel, which also includes scriptwriter, documentary film maker and comedian John Doyle and Ms Morgan.

Environment, Heritage and the Arts Minister Peter Garrett said the new awards for Australian authors would be the nation's most prestigious and richest literary awards, recognising the central role of literature in Australian culture.

"The six panel members have each made a valuable contribution to Australian cultural life and I am delighted they will bring their experience and expertise to the judging process," the Minister said.

Sally Morgan's works are on display in many private and public collections in Australia and around the world. The story of her family's past is told in *My Place* (1987), which sold more than half a million copies in Australia. It has also been published in Europe, Asia and the United States.

Her second book, *Wanamurranganya*, published in 1989, is a biography of her great uncle, Jack McPhee.

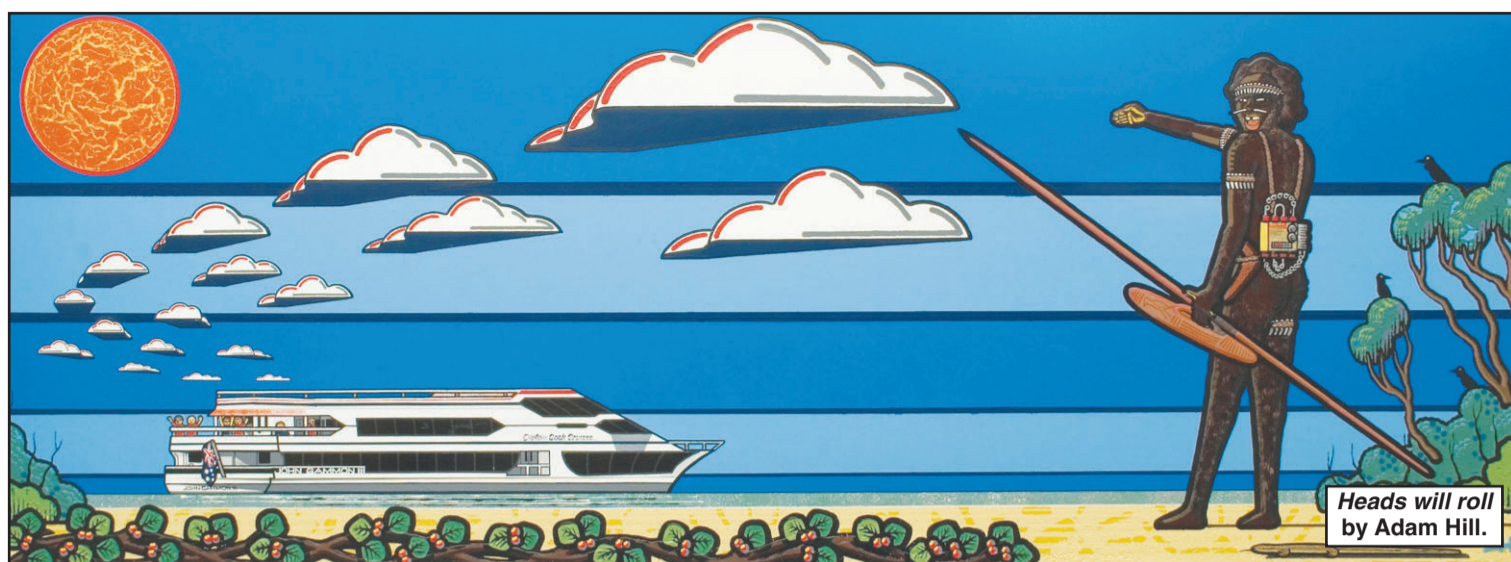
Ms Morgan has written many children's books. She is the Director at the Centre for Indigenous History and the Arts, in the School of Indigenous Studies at the University of Western Australia.

Ms Morgan has also received many awards: *My Place* won the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission humanitarian award in 1987, the WA Week literary award for non-fiction in 1988, and the 1990 Order of Australia Book Prize.

The PM's Literary Awards will showcase the strength, breadth and depth of Australia's literary talent and help celebrate the cultural value of books and writing in Australian society.

Entries for the awards closed on 28 March, with more than 170 entries received.

The awards provide prizes of \$100,000 to the winners of the Fiction and Non-Fiction categories, with a final decision on a short list and award winners made by the Prime Minister, after considering the recommendations made by the panel.



Heads will roll by Adam Hill.

Adam Hill: Art is his weapon

THEY say art is a weapon. If that's true, Aboriginal artist Adam Hill has wielded it confidently to carve out a name for himself. The Sydney-based Worimi man is currently preparing for his next solo show at Melbourne's Arc1 Gallery in November.

Hill, who has invoked such descriptions as 'an exemplar of the urban black*', likes to push boundaries with his often-political work.

He says he hopes, by the time his work hits the secondary market, to become a major contributor in establishing resale royalties to the benefit of Australian artists and their families.

"I will have pushed the boundaries of sedition, offended the offensive, defamed the defamatory and exposed the ex-officios," said the graphic design graduate, cartoonist and didgeridoo performer

Recently, Hill was interviewed for *The Aboriginal Art Directory*...



Adam Hill at work.

Briefly describe yourself. When and how did you first become interested in art? How long have you been a practising artist?

I am a complex man striving for simple answers. I became interested in art when I first distinguished which end of the pencil was for drawing and which was for chewing. I've been a professional artist for 10 years now.

What is important to you in your art? What are you aspiring for with the art that you create?

It is important for me to effectively communicate my message of visual activism. I aspire to educate a society that is rapidly disconnecting itself from the harsh reality of continued injustice, intolerance, ignorance and social decay.

How do people respond when understanding your messages of visual activism?

Generally, my work can carry 'love/hate' reactions. Some have said it's 'too confrontational' ('I'd hardly hang 'that' on my lounge room wall'). My response to that is... 'you need to relocate suburbs, somewhere a little closer to reality'. (Then your neighbours will flock to your living room!) Others say 'right on the button!'

What do you think causes this disconnection in our community?

Ignorance, intolerance, fear, jealousy, greed, self-indulgence, vanity, unconscious (inherent) racism...

What do you find to be the most exciting

and challenging parts about being an artist?

The most exciting thing for me personally, is dealing with the fickle and ultra conservative art society of this city, that very reality check. (No offence to the dominant egos).

How does the ultra conservative art society respond to your art? What is the 'reality check' you provide – can you explain this a little more?

I've deduced that, 'ultra conservatives' / 'traditionalists' tend to be a tad complacent when it comes to expanding the palette. Horses for courses (of course), it's just that I possess issues when it comes to 'flock mentality'. Simply put... there's way more to (art) life than within the confines of the members' lounge in a major arts institution. Here's a quote of mine... 'High End cannot exist without Bottom End'.

What are the growth or evolutionary opportunities for Aboriginal art in the society you live in?

The growth for 'modern' Indigenous art within this society are insurmountable! The evolutionary opportunities... elephantine! (If only we cease to chastise the youth with the spray can).

How can we, as a society or as an individual, help grow this appreciation? Can you give some examples?

Open minds to the most alternate of aesthetics. How's this for starters... open a space within the major institutions for a public

'work in progress' that is ongoing! Hand over a space for a major Graffiti retrospective, give a 'streetie' an opportunity to exhibit within a 'respected' space, live! Bridge that gap between the 'Art Society' and the people of the gutter. Pop corks together! (Then no-one will feel the hypocrisy nor the shame of whom consumes too much alcohol in a given sitting!) Bottom line... Don't listen to those who so boldly state whether an artwork is 'collectable' or not? Investors take note... (Here's a quote for you) – 'Invest with conscience... not credit'. AH, 2008.

In your opinion, what role does a contemporary Aboriginal artist have in the society you live in?

The role here (Redfern, Sydney) is to mentor the immense wealth of Indigenous talent emerging from these areas. For me personally, to attempt to access as many public spaces (walls), to convey historic information pertinent to the traditional owners of the country upon which we continue to 'disguise'.

Who have been your greatest heroes in helping you take this creative path? How did they influence you?

My spiritual ancestors, and my blood connection to my homeland. They walk with me, talk with me, sleep beside me and constantly advise me and drive me.

When do you feel most creative?

At first light, at first cup.

What do you want people to take away with them when they see your art?

My bank account details... gammon! (Kidding). The three 'r's'... Realisation, Reflection and Refreshment.

Tell us about the last artwork you created and what was the story behind it?

A piece for the upcoming group show at Hazelhurst Gallery, Sutherland (Sydney), curated by Ace Burke which features Pemulwuy on the shore of Botany Bay. The 'Captain Cook Cruise' ship, seen on Sydney Harbour any given day of the week, floats in the shallows, and Pemulwuy gestures the passengers ashore with a friendly smile. However ... strapped to his back is a bomb. He always was viewed as a hindrance / terrorist. The title of the piece is *Heads will roll*.

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* Vicki Grieves writing in the Australian Humanities Review