

Art & About 2009

# Multicultural Art Competition – capturing Australia’s Identity?

The City of Sydney is encouraging local artists and illustrators to explore what contemporary Australia means to them in this year’s Multicultural Art Competition, now open for entries. The competition, now in its second year, is a City initiative showcasing artworks that acknowledge and promote Sydney’s diverse cultural background. “The City of Sydney’s vision is to build and support an inclusive community of residents and visitors from all walks of life,” said Lord Mayor Clover Moore MP.



Sydney’s biggest public arts festival. Ten competition finalists will be selected by a distinguished judging panel of arts industry professionals, community services professionals and representa-

tives from the Inner and Eastern Sydney Migrant Interagency. The finalists will be announced at the exhibition launch at Customs House on 17 October 2009, with more than \$4000 in cash

prizes up for grabs, including \$2000 for first prize. The artworks will be exhibited at Customs House Library from 17 – 30 October 2009 and at Pine Street Creative Arts Centre, a unique arts centre in the heart of Sydney, from 4 – 22 November 2009.

The judges will be looking for artworks that explore the diversity of Australian identity in an original way, are stylistically strong and adaptable to various formats.

Entries close at 5pm on Monday 24 August 2009.

For more details about the competition, including artwork specifications, judging criteria and submission forms, please visit [www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/grants](http://www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/grants) or call 02 9265 9296.

Art & About runs from October 1–25 and is produced by the City of Sydney.

*Art & About is proudly sponsored by Strategic Partner Events NSW, Major Sponsor AMP Capital Investors, and Media Partner Fairfax Media.*

“This competition asks local emerging and established artists to draw inspiration from our cultural diversity by exploring their own ideas and experiences of what it means to be Australian.”

This year’s Multicultural Art Competition will form part of Art & About,

## MUSIC TEACHING A NECESSITY FOR STUDENTS

School children who do not have music are being discriminated against, according to leading conductor, Richard Gill.

“By not giving children music, you disadvantage them. Music is important because of what it does for them physically, intellectually, emotionally and spiritually,” adds the Artistic Director of the Sydney Symphony’s Education Program.

Gill was commenting on calls from sections of the Australian music industry for a major boost in teacher music training programs and opportunities for greatly increased student tuition.

“Children should have music because it is good. It’s the only art that functions in the abstract, and what it does for the heart and the mind and the souls of children is immeasurable and priceless,” he comments.

“People forget that children go to school to learn how to learn, and to learn how to think. And music, mathematics, geography are accesses to the brain and thinking in different ways.

“Music provides brain development and habits of listening, and intensity in the habit. The evidence is in that the brain responds phenomenally to music, more so than any other activity. “It raises the level of listening

so they develop powers of aural discrimination...being able to hear the differences in sounds, the combinations of sounds, when sounds function in different ways like a bass line works in a particular way, and a treble line works another way.

“They’re very complex activities for the brain to do, and I don’t mean children who are played Mozart in the class while they are doing their arithmetic, or children who sing pop songs, I don’t mean that.

“I’m talking about serious education, genuine learning. Those children are advantaged in every way.”

Gill believes generalist classroom teachers 100 years ago had to be a lot better equipped than many specialist music teachers today.

“In 1902, Joseph Bradley was

one of the superintendents of music in New South Wales, and a kindergarten teacher could not graduate to get into a kindergarten, unless she could play a hymn, a march and a song, at sight, and sing in solfège, all the major and minor key signatures using a tuning fork,” he says.

“I’d be hard-pressed to find a high school music teacher that could pick up a tuning fork and, say, sing me C-sharp minor descending melodic scale from the tuning fork. I reckon there’d be a lot who couldn’t do that.

“And kindergarten teachers had to do it before their graduation. So something was going really well in 1902 and we’ve slipped into the abyss since, and I don’t know why.”

While Gill, who heads-up the Sydney Symphony’s education

“By not giving children music, you disadvantage them. It is a form of education discrimination.”

program, believes breadth, depth and rigour in the school music curriculum are extremely important, he says classical music is only part of the answer, not the whole answer.

On the growing international response to the success of the music development program introduced in Venezuela called “El Sistema,” Gill believes a similar program here would show that through music the nation could have both an education revolution and a social inclusion agenda.

“The El Sistema concept is that music can create communities, music can socially include, music can bring people together. What Venezuela has demonstrated is that by making a commitment you can turn the country around. We could do the same thing here.

“I am pleased to say that the education program run by the Sydney Symphony is without parallel in Australia at every level, catering for orchestral

training, composition, music appreciation and conductor development.”

Media inquiries to Yvonne Zammit, Sydney Symphony, 02 8215 4612, or Graham Cassidy, Cato Counsel, 0419 202317

The Sydney Symphony’s education program is now in its 25th year.

The Program includes a high school composition competition, the Sinfonietta Project, which provides a unique opportunity for high school students across Australia to have their original compositions workshopped and performed by the Sydney Symphony’s elite chamber ensemble, the Sydney Sinfonia.

The Sydney Symphony also offers training in professional performance under the mentorship of Sydney Symphony musicians to selected talented full-time tertiary students. Successful applicants have the opportunity to:

- > Play as part of a professional orchestra;
- > Build skills in sight reading and ensemble playing;
- > Learn orchestral techniques and philosophies through the guidance of specially designated mentors; and
- > Experience a range of repertoire and breadth styles

