

“TRANSITIONS” TOURING EXHIBITION

opens at Cowra Regional Gallery

The major touring exhibition *Transitions: Aspects of European Island and Regional Cultures* opened at Cowra Regional Gallery on Friday 18th December. At the formal launch, Gallery Director Brian Langer highlighted the exhibition “as one of the best that the Gallery has had the pleasure of hosting in recent years”, and particularly congratulated participating artists on the “exceptionally high quality of work” and “their power to evoke deep emotional responses from viewers”. The work of well-known Greek-Australian documentary photographer, Effy Alexakis, features strongly in the exhibition. Alexakis is one of eight artists in the show.

Curated by Macquarie University Art Gallery Senior Curator Rhonda Davis and Professor Philip Hayward of the University’s Department of Media, Music and Cultural Studies, the exhibition was initially launched at the Macquarie University Art Gallery early in 2008. Early in 2009 the show travelled to the La Trobe University Visual Arts Centre in Bendigo, Victoria, and later to the Flinders University City Gallery, located in the State Library of South Australia, Adelaide. *Transitions* will remain on display in Cowra until the 31st of January 2010.

The exhibition is sponsored by the Innovative Universities European Union Centre and aims to reflect on the

nature of European island and/or regional identities in the late 20th and early 21st centuries by intermingling representations of contemporary European identity with those of initial migrant experiences in Australia and later generational recollections or imaginings of their ancestral places.

Alexakis’ mural-size photographic components in the exhibition, titled “Personal Effects” Series, features the Greek islands of Kythera, Ithaca and Kastellorizo, together with the south-eastern Peloponnese. All four areas were prominent in early Greek migration to Australia.



For curator Professor Philip Hayward, Alexakis’ work “illustrates the richness and complexity of contemporary migrant experience in Australia...[and] spans a range of expressions, from memory, through nostalgia, to imagination and a sense of shock, as she documents the traces of the sudden abandonment of villages in



TOP: Effy Alexakis in front of her work - Cowra Regional Gallery
LEFT: The work of Effy Alexakis on display at Cowra Regional Gallery.

of identity and meaning created by second and third generation migrants ‘returning’ to Europe’s islands and regions to seek points of connection”.

The other artists in the exhibition are: Angela Cavalieri, Nathalie Hartog-Gautier, Axel Poignant, Fernando Resendes, Claudia Terstappen, Jeremy Welsh and Salvatore Zofrea.

The exhibition is accompanied by a stylish seventy-two page colour catalogue, featuring all of the art works and essays by the co-curators.

With the summer school holidays upon us, those who are travelling to central western NSW for a well-earned break should take the time to drop in to the Cowra Regional Gallery and view this important exhibition.

MINISTER RECOGNISES THE CONTRIBUTION OF CULTURALLY DIVERSE COMMUNITIES IN NSW

NSW Minister for Citizenship, John Hatzistergos, today praised the outstanding work of the Community Relations Commission over the past year in promoting the strength of diversity in the State’s culturally diverse communities.

At an end of year reception for community language media hosted by Premier Kristina Keneally, the Minister paid special tribute to the vital role that the Commission has played in promoting community harmony, over the last 30 years.

“The Community Relations Commission has done exceptional work this year, as they have done over the past three decades, in fostering greater understanding, social cohesion and interaction across all community groups,” Mr Hatzistergos said.

“I would like to extend my congratulations to the Commission and wish all the communities they work with a very safe and happy festive season.

“In the New Year, I look forward to working closely with the many culturally diverse communities of NSW in my new capacity as Minister for Cit-

izenship.”

The CRC’s achievements over the past 18 months include:

- Establishing a working party with representatives from the Indian community, Department of Foreign Affairs, and other State and Commonwealth agencies to address the information needs of students from the Indian sub-continent;
- Developing a new educational resource on consumer issues for migrants and English language teachers working with members of newly arrived communities in NSW;
- Hosting activities during World Youth Day 2008;
- Launching a sports sponsorship program for young people from African backgrounds to participate in sport at regional centres;
- Helping emerging communi-

ties from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds in Western Sydney with various housing issues;

- Co-chairing a National Working Party on trafficking and sexual servitude.

Mr Hatzistergos also congratulated representatives of the community language media in NSW for their commitment to informing and empowering people of all backgrounds to be engaged in current affairs.

“NSW has a robust and diverse ethnic media sector which is dedicated to bringing the news to all our citizens – in what is one of the most culturally diverse societies in the world,” the Minister said.

“The community language media shine a spotlight on emerging issues, keep our citizens well-informed and help new migrants settle into their new lives.”

