

# Food, Arts and Entertainment

## Peace and spontaniety in sculptures

by Stephen McMahon

Art gives the world its soul, says Castlemaine sculptor Shona Nunan.

Shona's slender, vulnerable figures are created in a lengthy process of plaster moulds, silicon casing, and hot wax treatment to prepare the mould for the bronze. Different colours are achieved by working chemicals into the forms with a blow torch to open the pores. Shona works spontaneously, creating work that has a spiritual depth and strength.

The biggest private gallery in the southern hemisphere, the Holdsworth Gallery in Sydney, has asked Shona to put on a solo exhibition starting July 11.

Most of Shona's inspiration has come from travelling. She lived in Carrara, Italy, with her family in 1984. While her husband, Michael worked in a marble studio, and her oldest son was welcomed into a free nido or creche, she experimented with plaster in the village, leading up to her first solo exhibition held at the Holdsworth Gallery in 1987.

She has addressed adult education groups in Sweden on Indian art and worked as a social worker in Amsterdam's red light district.

Before completing a Fine Arts Degree at R.M.I.T. in 1981, Shona travelled in South Australia collecting drawings and objects, and visiting Melbourne's dockyards and high-rise housing commission flats for material.

Aboriginal artifacts and rock paintings have also been a source of inspiration for Shona's work.

Shona said, "Travelling has built up my philosophy. This comes out in the work and contributes to how I see things.

"Collecting material is not as important as meeting the people themselves and living in their cultures.

"Travelling brings an awareness that there are no real differences between us as people", Shona said.

A painting over the kitchen table is a frenzied rush of energy. Three figures are arguing around a table, their faces grotesque and angry. This is one of Shona's earlier works.

"When I was young, I was angry and could only look at issues negatively.

"I don't work with anger now. I have a different sense of what the world's about.

"My work is now more peaceful, concerned with love, beauty and oneness.

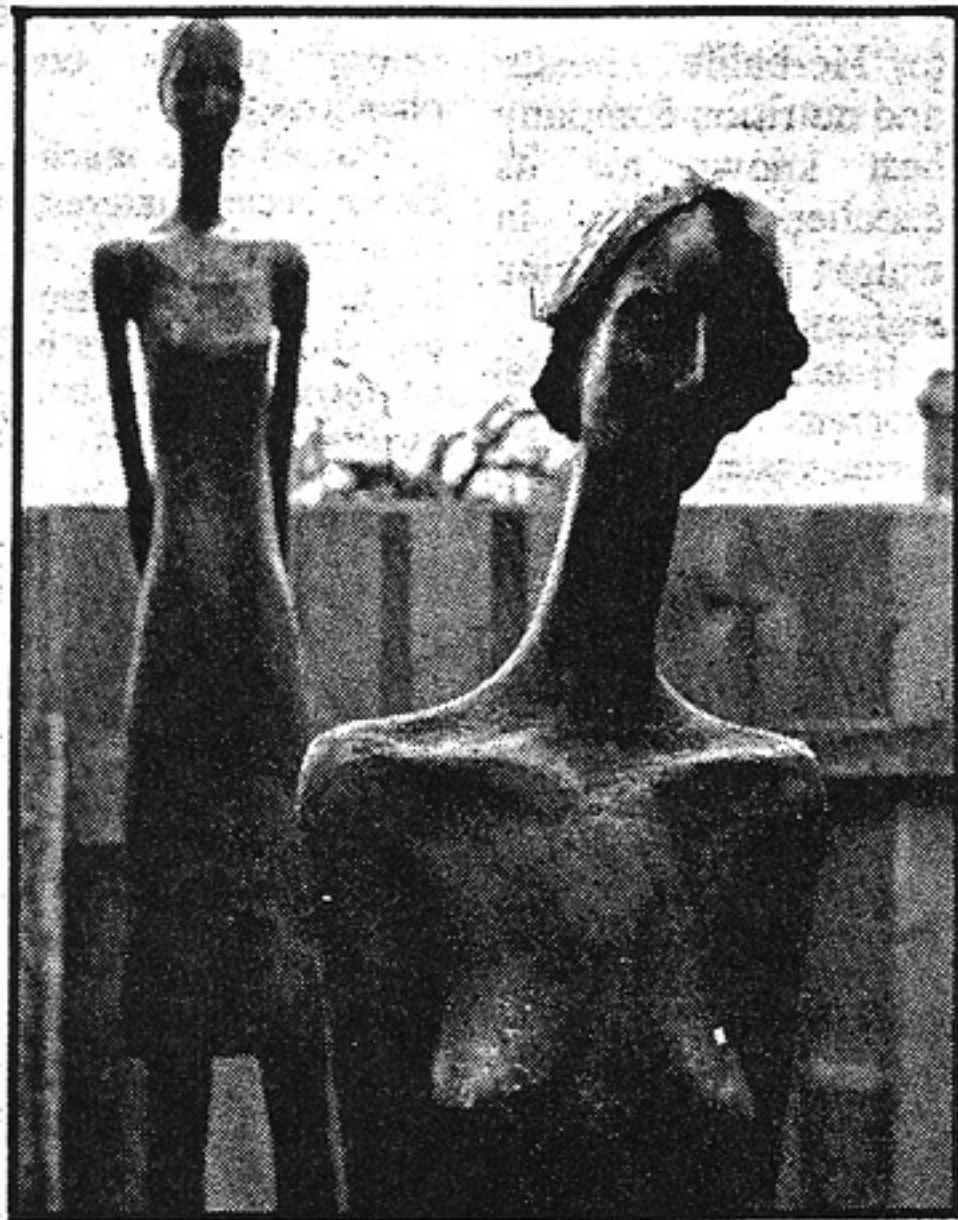
"It is all totally instinctual and I just go with the flow. There is no premeditation.

"Artists are here to represent the philosophy of the people, the state of the community. It gives an indication of our direction, either positive or negative", Shona said.

Marble carver and sculptor husband, Michael helps Shona successfully combine the life of artist and parent. 1989 has been a busy time for them, with a new baby and a shift from Yandroit to Castlemaine.

They used Castlemaine as a base when they lived in Yandroit, and have joined Castlemaine's Artists Incorporated. Castlemaine has the highest per capita artist's population of any city in Victoria, and Michael is in a sub-committee to try and raise community awareness of the talent in Castlemaine.

Three pieces of Shona's bronze work are on display at the Wallace Brothers Gallery in Hargraves Street. The complete Holdsworth exhibition will be on show at the Wallace Gallery from October 7.



Two of Shona's displays wait out the back to be set on marble and moved to Sydney for her exhibition.