Media Release

CONFLICT AND COMPASSION: Art from Peacekeeping & Active Operations

A Special 1 Day Event - 17 November 2012 - Fort Queenscliff, Queenscliff Victoria.

Conflict and Compassion brings together Artists and Soldiers alike; exploring through the medium of art, their experiences of war and peacemaking. This exhibition is held to coincide with the historic celebrations to commemorate the closing of Fort Queenscliff to active service personal after 152 years of duty.

The exhibition Conflict and Compassion explores the Australian Defence Force involvement in active and peacekeeping operations, at home and abroad.

The event will feature two exhibitions of works both held at Fort Queenscliff for one day only. The first showcases works by Artist and Film Maker George Gittoes and local Artist Michael Grant. This exhibition will feature Gittoes and Grant’s art works created ‘in the field’. These works document their personal experiences of war and are a direct response to their surroundings.

George Gittoes has been accompanying Australian Peacekeeping forces, as an artist, for many years, and his work powerfully conveys the experience of ‘being there’.

The Australian War Memorial has an extensive collection of his work from Somalia, Cambodia, Rwanda, Western Sahara, the Middle East, and Timor. The works selected for this exhibition come from his 1994 mission in the Western Sahara, when he accompanied Australian Peacemakers and UN MO’s, who were visiting the Polisario Refugee Camps in the Sinai Desert.

Michael Grant’s work explores the ongoing legacies left by the Second World War. Grant creates works in direct response to his experiences on the former battlefields of the Second World War. His travels to record these historic sites have taken him to Papua New Guinea, England and various locations around Australia.

‘The lingering legacy of the Second World War continues to affect current generations. I believe reflecting on such events, helps remind us of the heavy cost of war’. Michael Grant, 2012.

Grant’s work explores the intangible presence still felt on the battlefield seventy years after the Second World War took place. Combining portrait and landscape imagery, his drawings and paintings dig deep into the past, reconsidering the sacrifices made on often overlooked battlefields.

Throughout Australian military history there has been a time honoured tradition of soldiers depicting war through art. But what of the current generation of soldiers?

The second part of the exhibition to be held at Fort Queenscliff will showcase the talent of Australian Defence Force personal. This unique exhibition brings together a select group of artists that are active or retired soldiers, to reconsider Australia’s historic and ongoing role in conflicts and peacekeeping operations all around the globe.

The audience will be given a rare and insightful glimpse into what life is like for the current generation of soldiers and how they view and depict the wars they have been involved in. These
artists/soldiers are continuing the proud Australian tradition of creating art, to record their experiences of war and peacekeeping.

*Conflict and Compassion* is proudly supported by the Australian Army and Salt Contemporary Art Gallery.

For those who miss out on the Fort Queenscliff Open Day, the Gittoes and Grant exhibition will continue at Salt Contemporary Art, located within the township of Queenscliff, from the 18th to 30th November 2012.

** ALL works will be available for purchase.

**Fort Queenscliff, Queenscliff, VIC.**

Saturday 17 Nov 2012

Opening hours- 9am – 4pm

**Salt Contemporary Art, Queenscliff, VIC.**

Sunday 18 Nov - Friday 30 Nov 2012

Opening hours- 11am - 4 pm

**Enquiries:**

**MAJ Michael Thomas**

Email: michael.thomas@defence.gov.au

Tel: 03 525 80480

**Michael Grant**

Email: michaelgrant.artist@gmail.com

Tel: 0400661338