

Media release

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Record No: CR.MEL.2/MR15112955

Date Issued: 20 October, 2015

Authorised by: DENNIS WELLINGTON, MAYOR

Celebration of art by Bella Kelly – Can you help?

The art of Aboriginal artist Bella Kelly (1915 – 1994) will be the subject of a major retrospective exhibition at the Vancouver Arts Centre, Albany, from March – June 2016.

If you have a painting by Bella Kelly, the exhibition curator, Annette Davis, would love to hear from you.

“Bella Kelly was born in Mt Barker and lived in many places in the Great Southern and South West. She was passionate about painting landscapes, most often with the Stirling Ranges in the background,” said Ms Davis.

Bella Kelly exhibited in exhibitions and art competitions and was awarded the NAIDOC Aboriginal Artist of the Year in 1988.

In planning the exhibition, curator Annette Davis said the retrospective exhibition next year will unveil many cherished art pieces. “We have a rich history of art in the Great Southern. Wherever she lived, Bella Kelly sold and exchanged paintings for supplies, resulting in her paintings now hanging in homes throughout the South West,” said Ms Davis.

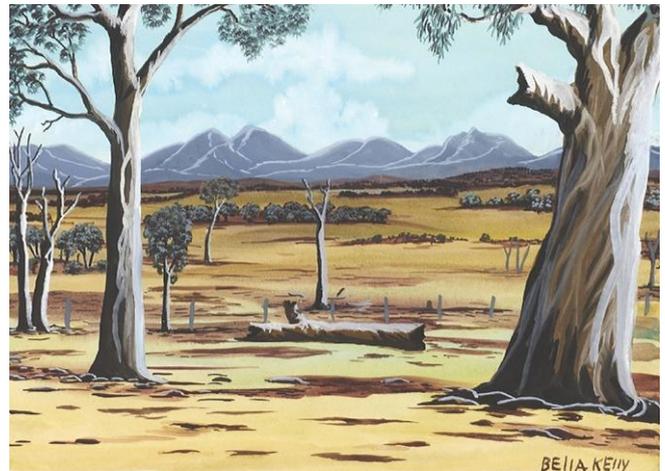
The public interest in Bella Kelly became apparent when, in mid 2014, the Vancouver Arts Centre presented the exhibition “Ripples in the Pond”. This exhibition included a number of paintings by Bella Kelly which had been borrowed from private collections as well as the City of Albany Collection.

The paintings attracted much attention and sparked many memories. The exhibition also generated discussion about the role of Bella Kelly in the birth of the well known Carrolup style of painting.

As a result of this public interest the Vancouver Arts Centre sought and was successful in securing part funding from the WA Department of Culture and the Arts through the *Connect Community Collections* program to present a retrospective exhibition of Bella Kelly and to develop a website as an ongoing resource. Additional project funds have been provided through the Regional Arts Legacy Grants program delivered by the State Government through the Department of Regional Development and the Department of Culture and the Arts.

As well as being shown in Albany, it is hoped that the exhibition will be shown in Narrogin, where Bella Kelly lived in the 1930s and in the 1950s/60s.

The exhibition curator, Annette Davis, is keen to hear from anyone who owns a painting by Bella Kelly. “An important part of my research is finding out where Bella Kelly paintings are located and hearing the story about how the painting was acquired – perhaps it was bought in the street from Bella Kelly, or was exchanged for goods,” says Annette Davis, who can be contacted on 0428 922



*Landscape (with mountains) Bella Kelly c1960s,
City of Albany Collection*

968 or 9842 8419, email adavis@westnet.com.au.

The Bella Kelly Retrospective will be held at the Vancouver Arts Centre from March 24 to June 4, 2016.

For all other enquiries please contact Vancouver Arts Centre on 9841 9260.

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Department of Culture and the Arts
Department of Regional Development



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This program is supported by the Departments of Culture and the Arts and Regional Development, Royalties for Regions and Country Arts WA.

Image: Landscape (with mountains) Bella Kelly c1960s, City of Albany Collection