

SANDRA

THE SANDRA BARDAS STUDIO GRANT

UNFOLDING ART – STORIES AND IDEAS FROM THE PAST AND PRESENT

Fresh from his travels around the United States, 29-year-old Rehgan De Mather has been announced as the 2011 winner and recipient of the Sandra Bardas Studio Grant.

On 1 January 2011, Rehgan will commence his 12-month residency at the Sandra Bardas studio, within Appleton Street Studios where the late artist and philanthropist spent many a pleasant day pursuing her artistic endeavours. The Grant was established to encourage and support new and emerging artists fostering their talent in a professional studio environment.

It is Rehgan's unconventional approach to art however, that will unleash a new level of creativity at Appleton Street Studios next year. Referring to his work as "contemporary leftovers", Rehgan's work is likened to a patchwork fabric or musical medley, bringing together disjointed ideas and themes, resulting in a distinctively individual creation.

Rehgan recreates and recycles previous work and canvases, cutting them up and casting them amongst new landscapes. This allows the artist to make connections between previous work and new ideas; and in effect, preserve the past while creating an ever-evolving collage of personal stories.

"I feel a mixture of excitement and relief when completing the work. I'm constantly trying to develop the work, so process and problem solving are important considerations. However you can't think too much about process, otherwise the work loses its spontaneity," he shares. Rehgan is looking forward to his residency at Appleton Street Studios, having mostly worked independently in recent years.

"I'm really excited about being around other artists again. It's always a good experience to discuss ideas and get feedback, and give each other encouragement in what we do.

The residency is an important part of Rehgan's career as an artist, as it will provide him with a fresh perspective on what has become his passion.

"Being in a professional studio environment away from my home will also be good for me. In a way, it's like a new chapter for me.

"When I was 13, I wanted to be an architect. Later I became more interested in graphic design. But when I was 15 I picked up a paintbrush and never really looked back," he says.

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And what a long way he has come since then. Since completing his Bachelor of Visual Arts from Monash University in Gippsland in 2001, Rehgan has had several group and solo exhibitions in Melbourne, Sydney and Perth.

“I’m fortunate in the sense that I’ve been able to pursue my art. My goals and dreams may change over the years, but I’m always striving to construct something different,” he says. The Bardas family is delighted with Rehgan’s win citing the originality of his work as a key differentiator.

“We are keen to see his work flourish extracting the essence of past work overlaid with new ideas. The Grant encourages emerging talent, and for the second year running, continues the theme of reusing and recycling art in an outstanding way,” says David Bardas.

The residency also includes a \$5000 supplement for relevant art materials.