



Weekend fit for a **KING**

Queen's Birthday Weekend

Saturday 6
Sunday 7 June



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EXHIBITION

Passion for drawing comes to life again

It's the freedom of this style of art that appeals to Alison Percy, whose first solo exhibition is now on display, writes **JANET HOWIE.**

AS a visual arts student in the 1980s, Alison Percy wondered how she could get out of her life drawing classes.

But with attendance essential to passing the subject, she decided "to just see how it goes".

"After the first few weeks I began to not notice the naked body and quickly became comfortable viewing the body as form, a landscape to be captured," Percy says.

Course completed, life intervened and Percy's career as a graphic designer as well as family commitments meant 27 years went by before she could return to life drawing.

The two years since have been productive, however, resulting in the Albury artist's first solo exhibition, *FROM LIFE: the figure*, now open at GIGS Art Gallery.

A Meet The Artist session between 10am and noon today will allow members of the public to talk with Percy about the 40 or so pieces that make up the display.

"I still see the human figure as a landscape and working with inks and watercolour represent this image well," she says.

Educated at Albury High School, Percy then combined her artistic studies with a graphic design job at *The Border Mail*, saying the latter provided a great grounding in many areas.

This led to freelance design work, interior design consulting, account management and tutoring at Wodonga TAFE in a resume spanning more than three decades.

During this period, she continued her artwork as she could through commissions and exhibits in local galleries and businesses.

Only in the past two years, with her two children now adults and husband John supportive, has Percy felt able to give her art more attention.

"It's my time now to be able to, I don't know, let it happen," she says.

Her body of work grew rapidly and an unexpected but welcome gap in the GIGS schedule allowed this solo venture to blossom earlier than first thought.

FROM LIFE: the figure demonstrates Percy's continuing exploration of the nuances within the human figure.

Compressed charcoal and ink feature as well as her recent experiments with watercolours.

Percy says the freedom of life drawing appeals to her.

"It's a blank canvas," she says.

"I go into a quiet space and the form's there.

"I see it and then sort of often more subconsciously it's like a meditative, relaxed state of taking the brush to the ink, you look at the model and then that flows on to the paper.

"You feel the form and it just flows."

The artist's approach to her work in general picks up similar feelings.



Albury artist Alison Percy says her first solo exhibition, now open at Wodonga's GIGS Art Gallery, reflects her passion for life drawing. Pictures: BEC HAYCRAFT — THE BOWER CO

"I don't feel I have to produce any particular style of work for anybody, it's all for me, which is really liberating," she says.

"I feel I've got the freedom to explore and that brings on growth.

"Everything that I do seems to be fresh, clean, lot of white space, less is more, which is a terrible quote, but less is more, it's just true.

"It's funny how ... you do something that feels right and it leads to something else, it's like a full circle that's meant to be."

Percy expects some people may think viewing the naked body is a little confronting, but says her exhibition may surprise. "It's not about the nakedness," she says.

"It reflects a respect which I view of the life model and my journey to find ways to capture the human figure."

Satisfied with her present state, Percy feels "relaxed, centred and full of renewed energy for what the future may hold".

"Each step is leading to further opportunities and development of myself as an artist, which is so rewarding," she says.

"I don't have any expectations of where I'm wanting my work to be.

"I'm just allowing the journey to unfold."

FROM LIFE: the figure can be seen at GIGS Art Gallery, Gateway Village, Lincoln Causeway, Wodonga, until June 14.

The gallery is open Tuesday to Sunday between 10am and 4pm, free entry.



Percy explores the nuances of the human form in *FROM LIFE: the figure*, on display until June 14.