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**ARTS (DECEMBER 10, 2007)**

Using art to save our Fragile Planet

LEXI LANDSMAN

ART can be a weapon to save the planet from the devastation of global warming and make the world aware of how our acts shape the future.

This was the message Jewish artist Lia Klugman had in mind when she created two striking ceramic works that will feature in an exhibition at NG Art Gallery alongside the works of 40 artists, titled *Fragile Planet*.

The exhibition, which was opened by author David Malouf last week, runs until December 22.

"Art is a tool of change, of culture, of customs, of learning and of passing lessons onto future generations," the 44-year-old artist explains. "Art is a very easy way to access information and focus your mind."

Her first work *Mother Earth* shows the body of a pregnant woman, but where her stomach distends Klugman has created a map of the world. The inspiration behind it arose from her experience living in Zimbabwe for three years.

"I represented [the woman] with African culture around her. I always get amazed by how strong and wonderful the African women are and how hard the nature is in Africa, with poverty and AIDS."

Her second work *Burden* shows a young boy with a pained expression, lying on his stomach and carrying the world on his back. Klugman says the boy represents the future generation and what our generation will leave to them.

"It's a child with an ethnic, tribal look," she explains. "He represents any sort of third- world country, with the message for our generation to think about the burden we're leaving them, saying, 'Don't let us carry your mistakes.'"

Klugman, who was born in Brazil and immigrated to Sydney in 1990, says that she was eager to partake in the exhibition and felt that collectively their art could send a powerful message about the need to protect the earth.

"They represent our need to look after our fragile planet for the generations to come," she explains. "We have to stop and think about the earth a bit deeper – about attitudes, how we use water and what little things we can do to make changes for the environment."

Jewish gallery owner Nicky Ginsberg, who opened the gallery earlier this year together with an accompanying restaurant called *Mission*, said she chose the concept for the exhibition because she wanted to do something to support the environment.

"It explores the dichotomy between the desire to save the planet and humanity's addiction to consumption that threatens the very existence of the earth," she says.

Ginsberg asked the artists to interpret the theme in any way they chose and gave them each a 45-centimeter spherical papier-mâché globe to work with.

"It forced them out of their comfort zones and, instead of on a flat canvas, they communicate the urgency of action needed on climate change on something spherical," she explains.

The globes will be suspended from the ceiling as a mass installation and dramatically lit to add to the experience of the exhibition and its theme.

Together with Klugman's works, Jewish artist Osnat Almog will also have an abstract painted globe featuring in the exhibition.

Other artists whose works will be exhibited include Peter Kingston, Mai Long, Patricia Casey, Shane Dunn, Peter O'Doherty and Steven Vella.

A percentage of the proceeds from the sale of the artworks will be donated to the Australian Conservation Foundation.

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DECREASE FONT

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Using art to save our Fragile Planet (December 10)

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