



Fins, scales and tall tales

Murray Cod: the biggest fish in the river

A SWAN HILL REGIONAL ART GALLERY EXHIBITION TOURED BY NETS VICTORIA

Ludwig BECKER
b. Darmstadt, Germany, 1808
Murray Cod – *Maccullochella peelii* (detail)
c.1858
hand-coloured lithograph
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by Frederick McCoy
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National and Exhibitions Touring Support (NETS) Victoria is proud to present **Murray Cod: the biggest fish in the river**, a rich showcase of visual art inspired by Australia's most iconic fish, which will journey along the Murray River and across regional Victoria, New South Wales and Adelaide before closing at Melbourne Museum in June 2008.

Consisting over 40 works of art by 27 artists, this timely and unique touring exhibition examines a great fish that symbolises the Murray River itself. A fabled fish, the Murray cod has a special place in the nation's imagination with its mouth that is as big as any storyteller and its tail that is as long as any yarn.

Major highlights of this NETS touring exhibition include:

- The first time the public will be able to view a selection of significant drawings and lithographs by colonial artist and naturalist Ludwig Becker, which form part of the collection of Museum Victoria.
- Never before seen series of eight images by renowned Australian photographer Narelle Autio who was commissioned to document the relationship between people, the Murray cod and the environment.
- A striking selection of works predominantly created by indigenous artists that explore their spiritual and personal association with the Murray cod and its river. Includes paintings and prints by Ian Abdulla, sedge grass weavings by Yvonne Koolmatrie, carved and painted emu-eggs by Bluey Roberts and Esther Kirby, paintings by Kurwingie Kerry Giles, linoprints by Badger Bates and a sculpture by Lorraine Connelly-Northey to name just a few.
- A historic photographic slide show that provides a profound insight into the cultural and social importance of fishing for Murray cod. With imagery collected from Museum Victoria, the State Library of New South Wales and the family albums of Swan Hill residents and beyond, this slide show invites visitors to each gallery to share their own cod tales.

Guest curator John Kean said, "The Murray cod is esteemed as eternal and ancient, it inhabits a deep pool in which varied and contested positions co-exist. This exhibition seeks to bring together disparate voices to a subject that is inflected with passion and informed by local history."

NETS Victoria has provided funding for the development of this exhibition through Arts Victoria's Touring Victoria program and will manage the extensive 18 month tour to seven venues, which opened in Swan Hill Regional Art Gallery in December 2006 and will close at Melbourne Museum in June 2008.

Georgia Cribb, Director of NETS Victoria said, "This unique NETS touring exhibition celebrates the significance of the Murray cod from an environmental, cultural and historical perspective. It has something for everyone and will arouse nostalgia while presenting leading contemporary works of art and highlighting ecological concerns for this much loved and honoured fish."

Don't let this big fish be 'the one that got away'!

For tour details please refer to the enclosed itinerary or visit www.netsvictoria.org/MurrayCod/.

A beautifully illustrated 36 page codalogue can also be purchased through each tour venue or NETS Victoria for only \$10.

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