

## Penny Byrne

### Bio

1965 - Born, Victoria

1987 - BA (Fine Art Ceramics), RMIT, Melbourne

1997 - Bachelor of Laws (LLB), La Trobe University, Melbourne

1990 - Grad Dip (Ceramics and Glass Conservation and Restoration) West Dean College, United Kingdom

"THE porcelain figures have graced many a suburban mantelpiece: elegant ballerinas, cute curly haired boys, ceramic whales.

But in Penny Byrne's hands, there's a twist to their saccharine tweeness. A ballerina wields a samurai sword, a boy wears army fatigues, a whale drips blood.

It's not the shock of the new but the shock of the familiar that prompts many to laugh when they first encounter Byrne's creations, which is fine by her.

As a student of ceramics conservation in 1990 she was given a porcelain statue of a woman with a dog at her feet to restore.

"I made a pink bow and put it round the dog's neck," says Byrne. "I didn't say anything to the assessors. I just left it to see if they would pick up on it. And they didn't. That was my first naughty little act."

Since then she's become naughtier. When her mother, who owned an antique shop, gave her a couple of Dresden figurines of ballerinas to restore a couple of years ago, Byrne quickly realised the figures were beyond help. But not beyond use. She created *It's murder on the dance floor* in which a ballerina wielding a samurai sword has beheaded another. It was a nod to the bloody *Kill Bill* movies and their samurai swords. It was also a winner of Melbourne's Linden Postcard Show in 2005. Since then, her career as an artist has taken off."

Excerpt taken from "Beware, these pretty things bite" (Taken from Sydney Morning Herald by Joyce Morgan, March 6, 2007).

'Byrne takes this genteel art form and flings it into the brutality of current affairs and international politics. A practicing conservator, Penny Byrne restores the ceramics and glass of the nation's top museums, but outside this employment she reworks vintage porcelain figurines and statues with pronouncements on politics and popular culture' (Taken from "Upfront", The Art Oracle by Michael Reid)

### Solo Exhibitions

2007 - Blood, Sweat and *Fears*, Sullivan+Strumpf Fine Art, Sydney

2006 - Penny Byrne, *Mantelpiece*, Linden Centre for Contemporary Art, Melbourne

### Group Exhibitions

2007

Sullivan+Strumpf Fine Art, Sydney

2006

New Social Commentaries 06, Warrnambool Art Gallery

The (Royal) Melbourne Show

Sullivan+Strumpf Fine Art, Sydney

Linden Postcard Show, Linden Centre for Contemporary Art, Melbourne

2005

Sydney Affordable Art Fair

Sullivan+Strumpf Fine Art, Sydney

Linden Postcard Show, Linden Centre for Contemporary Art, Melbourne

2003

Castlemaine State Festival Ceramics Award, Castlemaine, Victoria

2002

Pat Emery Award for Emerging Ceramicists, Victorian Ceramic Group, Montsalvat, Victoria

2001

Pat Emery Award for Emerging Ceramicists, Victorian Ceramic Group, Northcote Pottery Kiln Gallery, Victoria

## Awards

2006 - Warrnambool Art Gallery New Social Commentaries 06 exhibition (finalist)

2005 - Linden Post Card Show, Postcard Winner

2002 - Pat Emery Award for Emerging Ceramicists, Victorian Ceramic Group, Honourable Mention

2001 - Pat Emery Award for Emerging Ceramicists, Victorian Ceramic Group, Honourable Mention

1988 - Meat Market Craft Centre Ceramics Studio Residency (12 months)

## Publications

2007. Morgan, J. "Beware, these pretty things bite" Sydney Morning Herald, Tuesday 6 March Sheedy, Chris  
"Q&A: Love your work", Sunday Life magazine, 18 June 06, p10

2006. Loble, Katrina "Events – The Royal Melbourne Show", Domain, SMH 13 April, p4

2006. Clement, Tracey "Victoria Bitter", Metro SMH, April 21-27, p23.

## Collections

Artbank

Mildura Arts Centre, Victoria

Warrnambool Art Gallery, Victoria