

Struggle street fast becoming a distant memory for sought after Balmain artist

By Ashlee Betteridge

While many artists struggle to pay the bills, Balmain local Andrew McIlroy has been fighting to keep up with demand for his dramatic contemporary oil works.

Andrew's show last month at the Art Equity Gallery was a completely sold out before it even opened, and the artist currently has a long waiting list of buyers vying for his work.

"The show sold out in 24 hours, a week ahead of opening night, it was overwhelming," Andrew said.

The success followed two smaller shows, which also rapidly sold out.

"It was great, I finally started to think 'I think I can make a career out of this,'" he said.

"For this show I had to work 20 hour days to get ready. My hands were blistered and bleeding and I had to wrap them in rags just to keep holding the paintbrush."

Andrew describes his work as

temporal and highly visual, drawing inspiration from nature.

"I create very overpowering, large oils, that are highly glazed with a very smooth texture. It's almost like looking at a hologram," he said.

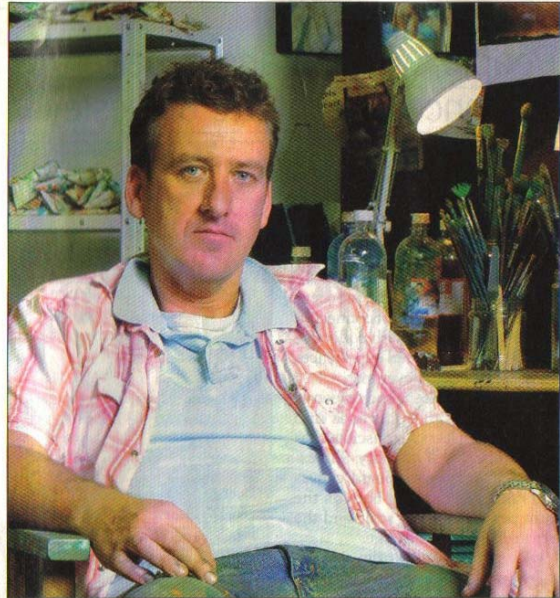
Andrew has been based at the 1+2 studios at Rozelle for the past 18 months, and feels the group atmosphere has helped improve his skills.

"It's an interesting mix of people and artists there – definitely worth preserving," Andrew said.

"When somebody there has a show coming up, there's an infectious energy in the place."

Andrew's skills will be taking him overseas later this year, with a group show coming up in New York in September. He will also be going to study in Paris later this year for a three month stint, and has plans for another solo show in 2008.

For more information on Andrew visit www.andrewmcilroy.com.



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