



• The charming premises now converted to a gallery for contemporary art in South Yarra.

A new home for contemporary art

by Pamela Evans

"Melbourne first in establishing international venue for contemporary art — a step toward wider community awareness." So said a recent press release.

The Australian Centre for Contemporary Art "Will be the first public gallery in Australia to be devoted exclusively to contemporary art on a local, national and international basis."

The Minister for the Arts, the Hon. Race Mathews opened it late last month. The address is Dallas Brooks Drive, The Domain, South Yarra. The gallery has been created in a charming Victorian park-keeper's villa residence.

Elegant iron railings and a large, handsome tree protect the front of the house, there is a shrubbery at the back.

As I walked up the path it was easy to envisage Jan Edward's antique toy collection finding a safe home here. Her unique museum at Ballarat is in dire need of a shelter.

However one leaves the past behind, stepping through the door into an interior which has been gutted, painted a dazzling white and flooded with suitable lighting.

The opening exhibition included works by Robert Jacka, described by gallery director John

Buckley as "one of Australia's most eloquent abstractionists. There were sculptures by Bill Woodrow and British architect, Peter Cook contributed some splendid architectural drawings.

Paintings by Irish artist Michael Mulcahy were exhibited until October 27.

Currently there are photographic works by Jochen Gerz and a video and photographic installation called Love Stories, this is mounted by Randall and Bendinelli.

John Buckley explained that the "centre is to provide a venue for temporary exhibitions of paintings, sculpture, installations and photography, embracing also areas of architecture, fashion, film, video and music".

It will also play an important educational role, providing the community with an audio-visual facility, public lectures, seminars and newsletters. Art lovers are promised access to the latest art journals and magazines as well as material which should be of particular interest to students of the fine arts.

Funding is provided by the Victorian Ministry for the Arts and the Visual Arts Board of the Australia Council. However it is hoped that financial independence will be possible through substantial public and corporate support.

The Australian Centre for Contemporary Art is open Tuesday to Friday, 10.30 am-5 pm. Saturday and Sunday 2-5 pm. For further information telephone (03) 636422.