

GALLERY SHOWCASE

The state of the art shows

By Suzanne McDonnell

NO WONDER Melbourne is called the arts capital of Australia. Almost every suburb or nearby country town boasts a local gallery.

A visit to your local gallery, whether it be privately or publicly run, is usually educational and never boring.

You might find something to marvel at, think about or be shocked by. You may even leave thinking that with a set of paints or some old scrap metal from the garage you could do better yourself.

Gallery hopping has become quite a Sunday institution for many Melburnians. Some folk skip from gallery to gallery looking for a piece of sculpture for a hallway. Others just want their artistic appetites whetted by the works of relatively unknown art-

ists through to those of the great masters.

Current exhibitions worth taking a look at include:

■ The Pierre Molinier exhibition at the Australia Centre for Contemporary Art. It will, at best, titillate you and, at worst shock you.

The French surrealist artist (1900 to 1976) who appears to have had some unusual sexual fetishes, is often described as a precursor to Robert Mapplethorpe.

He produced photographs and paintings that were erotic self-portraits, often depicting himself as the divine hermaphrodite.

They were never exhibited during his lifetime and this is the first time they have been shown in Australia.

If you are easily shocked, then don't go. Among the 75 photographs on loan from Canada are images of Molinier dressed in black stockings and suspenders,

plenty of genitalia, other erogenous body parts and assorted bondage and phallic devices.

Certainly, the exhibition is fodder for your next dinner party conversation. It runs until February 13.

■ So you love your car. Then 'The Road — The Car Contemporary Attitudes' exhibition is right up your street.

The exhibition provides a timely assessment of the relationship between the road, the car and our sense of self-identity and place.

The 20 items on display juxtapose contemporary artworks with statistical, factual and technical information — handy facts for petrolheads. For example, in 1990 Melbourne cars were found to contribute 90 per cent of carbon dioxide to the air, 95 per cent of atmospheric lead. Cars are stationary for 90 per cent of their lives, go about 42,970 million kilometres a year, average 16,811 kilometres per year and use 28 per cent of the nation's fuel.

It can be seen at the Waverley City Gallery, Wheelers Hill until 13 January.

■ FROM 1 February until 6 March The Museum of Modern Art at Heide Park and Art Gallery, Bulleen, will exhibit The Baillieu Myer Collection of the '80s. The extensive collection of 95 works was donated by Baillieu Myer and is an impressive and comprehensive sample of important contemporary Australian paintings from the 1980s.

Selected with the advice of the late Georges Mora it features works by Micky Allan, Juan Davila, Vivienne Shark LeWitt, Roger Kemp, Caroline Williams, Gordon Bennett, Charles Blackman, Peter Booth and others. It will be launched by the chairman of the Australia Council, Mr Rodney Hall, tomorrow night.

■ OPENING today at the City of Caulfield Arts Complex (1pm to 5pm) is the city's permanent art collection on view to the public for the first time.

The collection of 200 items was started in 1975 but has works from many famous artists living in the area in the early days of the city.



Weird: 'Les jambes d'amour' is typical of the provocative work of Pierre Molinier on show at The Australian Centre for Contemporary Art until 13 February.

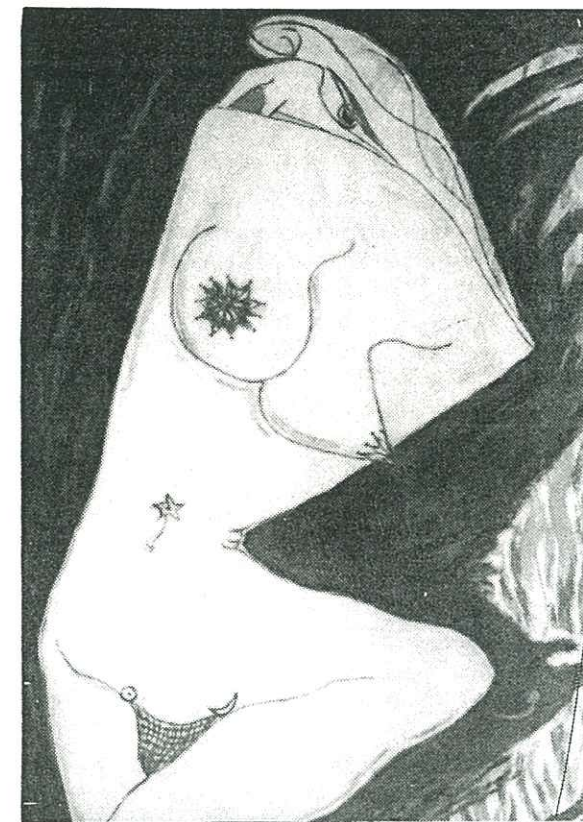
Painter and war artist, Sybil Craig, lived most of her life in her family home in Caulfield, painter and muralist Harold Freedman was also born and lived in the city.

It is also the home of Erica McGilchrist, a pioneer of the women's art movement in Australia and many members of the well-known Boyd family.

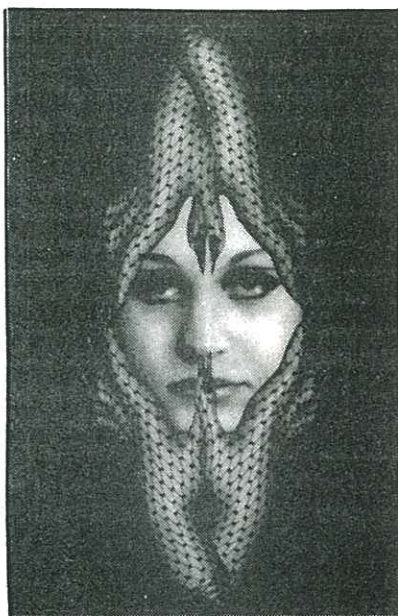
Six pieces of Merric Boyd's pottery are in the collection. In the 1950s artist Fred Williams began to visit the home of Arthur Boyd who lived with his potter father Merric and his mother Doris, a painter in the area.

■ IT is the last day the 'Surrealism in Australia' exhibition at the Ballarat Gallery can be seen. Over 100 works with such well-known names as Sidney Nolan, James Gleeson, Albert Tucker and Max Dupain on display from 10.30am to 5pm.

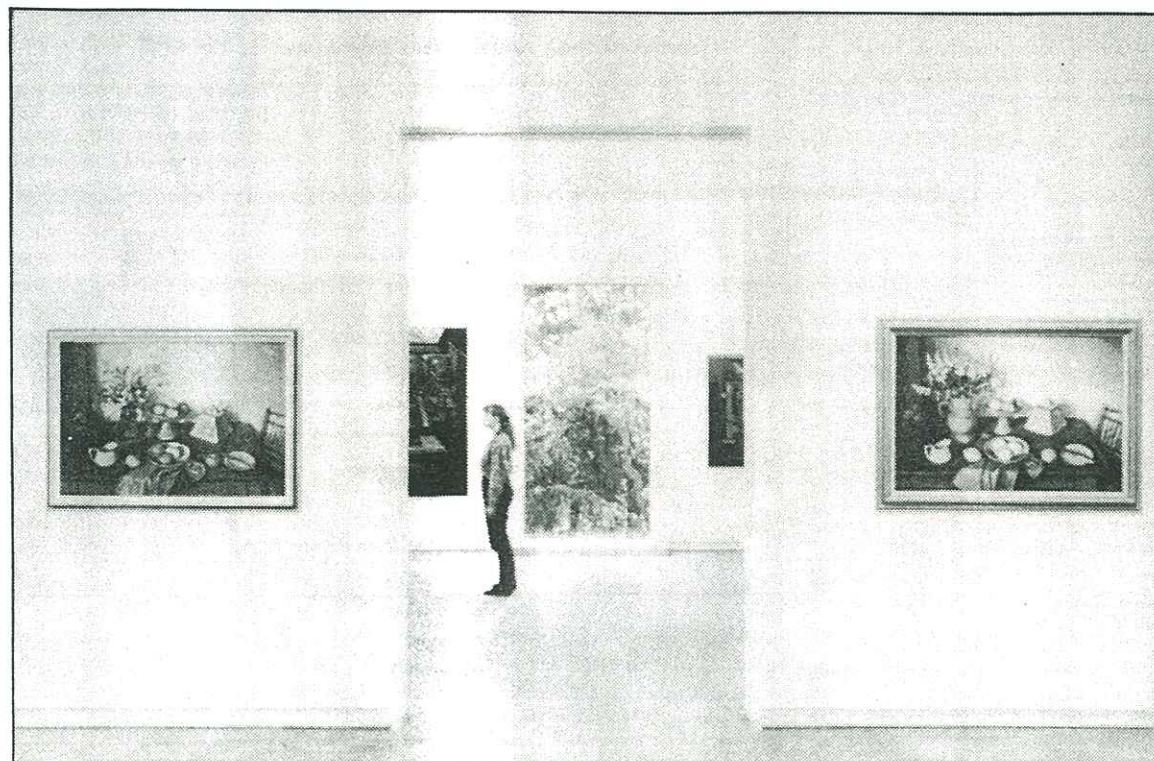
The Gallery has also housed the original Eureka Flag since November 1895 when it was donated by the widow of John King, a trooper who took part in the attack on the Eureka Stockade.



'Large White Nude': One of 10 works by Roy Opie at Lyall Burton Gallery, Fitzroy, until today.



Handiwork: 'Portrait of de Hanel Koeck', 1968, by Molinier.



Historic: The Museum of Modern Art at Heide Park and Art Gallery, Bulleen, will exhibit The Baillieu Myer Collection of the '80s from 1 February until 6 March