

Insite

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

The 30-minute art of making people think

AN exhibition by Footscray artist Brendan Lee, on display at the Australian Centre for Contemporary Art, examines Australian culture through mateship and a sense of community. Mr Lee spent six months filming the project, which

comprises two films totalling 30 minutes. The first captures the Australian notion of mateship, through images of "hoons" doing burn-outs in Broadmeadows.

For the second, a look into the pub scene and how alcohol "was the way

Australians deal with being in a blighted, dry land" led Mr Lee to Victoria's towns to observe the local pub culture, which was then compared with the larger pub scene in Footscray.

"I thought it was a good time in the Australian culture to stop and have a

look at it, being that we're always questioning what it is that makes an Australian different from other countries," he said.

The style is of open-ended questions throughout the project, and Mr Lee said he came up with the idea during a recent three-month stay in Los Angeles.

However, his art did not seek to answer questions raised throughout the project.

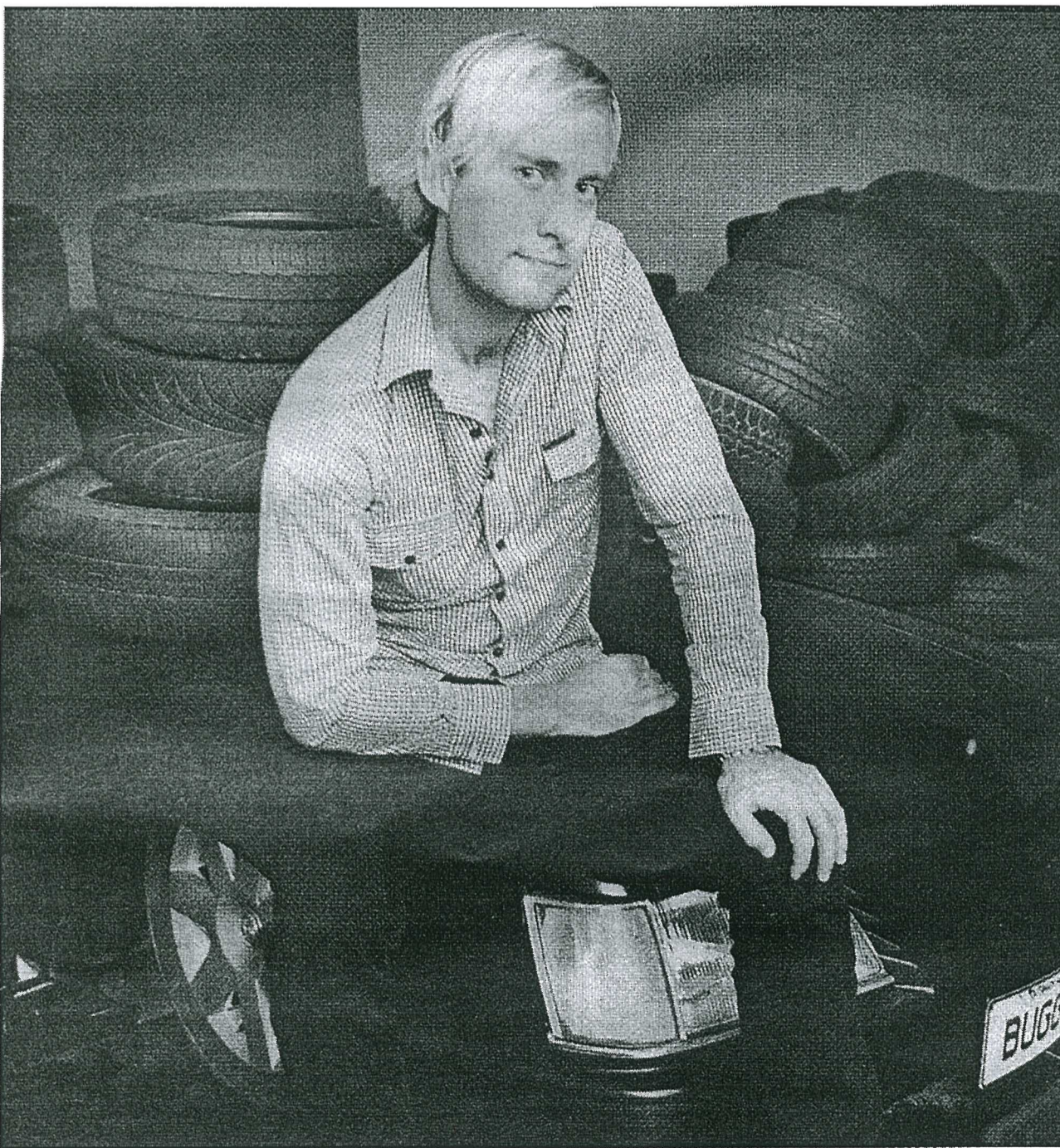
"You have to make up your own. That's what makes good art — it makes you think rather than giving you a breakdown of stats and stuff," he said.

However, the pub-culture film did reveal that the towns with the most pubs and visitors had a closer community spirit.

"Growing up, Melton had only two pubs during my time, therefore for me it was interesting because it was a way to look at how I grew up without the pub culture."

Mr Lee said his next work would include studying the stereotype of women in film history, and is to be displayed at the Bendigo Art Gallery. Next up will be a feature film colourfully called *The Hairy Underbelly of Australian Male Culture*, looking into the ganglands of Melbourne and the way Australian crime films have mirrored Australia.

Proving Ground is on display at the Australian Centre for Contemporary Art, 111 Sturt Street, Southbank, until May 20. Entry is free.



Artistic hooning: Brendan Lee with some of the 300 tyres he used in his film on hoons.