



PRECISION: Bayeux Soldat II-US Medic, 2004.

IT SEEMS Queenstown was always waiting for Raymond Arnold — his ultimate scenic and industrial muse.

The Victorian-born artist, whose work has ranged from ochre-tinted landscapes to forensically detailed etchings of World War I battle uniforms and French lace, is the subject of a beautiful new monograph — the fifth in a series published by Quintus Press.

A new exhibition of his work also opened at the Bett Gallery in North Hobart last week to coincide with the monograph's release.

The exhibition features a series of diptych paintings of the Tasmanian Speciality Timbers saw mill at Lynchford, near Queenstown. A huon pine butt sits on pallets in the middle of the exhibition, kindly donated by the mill.

Arnold moved to Queenstown in 2006 but had a long prior relationship, dating back to a walking trip to the state as a 17-year-old. He says his first reaction on seeing the town and its raw topography was: "Shock and awe".

He spent time on the Franklin River blockade after moving to Tasmania in 1983, when the West Coast mining town presented a less friendly face to blow-ins of a conservationist bent.

"Queenstown for me has been different phases," he says. "As a young man, it was a place to get through as quickly as you can. Then I began seeing the possibilities over the field trips and the years."

While living in Hobart, he would visit the area once a year on his own. He also organised regular excursions for his students from the Art School, where he taught printmaking and art and the environment, during the 1990s and early 2000s.

"I thought it was a good place for young artists to be," he says. "Academic life can be a bit cloistered, which can be good — you need that time for study and reflection — but also you need to experience new things."

"Tasmania is rich in heritage and in natural landscapes, and those two things come together on the West Coast in a magnificent way."

"It's a rich and stimulating terrain to explore with a number of issues: sustainability, the romantic landscape, redemption in a healing and regenerating sense, both of the landscape and the people through culture."

"Queenstown is a microcosm of worldly issues — the whole global picture of resource management and economic pressures."

One of the works in Arnold's new exhibition stands out, and not just because it's a hand-stencilled screen print amid the paintings.

Its attention-grabbing quality is that the colours are remarkably fresh and pretty. The top half is a rich red, the bottom the gorgeous emerald green we like to think Tasmania is (not the parched grey reality of drought and drylands).

But the image is of the notoriously polluted King River, which for so long carried off the filth of the Mt Lyell mining operations.

The green is the reflection of rainforest trees in the river, the red, on closer scrutiny, is the toxic river mud embedded with tyres and other trash.

"The King River is a new possibility for me," says Arnold, who has come to the end of a two-year stretch of parking himself at the Lynchford mill to make studies for his paintings.

He was entranced by the sawmill, which mills salvaged huon pine as well as wood from the Toopekana plantation near Strahan. "It's quite a beautiful place — the activity of it, the men who work there, the preciousness of the timber."

Most of his paintings view it through wire-mesh fencing, though, giving a forbidding effect.

On show

Until September 2: Prints by Madeleine Goodwolf and raku-glazed ceramic and metal sculptures by Jonathan Partridge form an exquisite joint exhibition at the Handmark Gallery. Goodwolf has created one etching collaboratively with Partridge, who is having his first exhibition in Tasmania after many years of studying in Asia and working as a sculptor of statues of the Buddha.



OPEN-CUT: Arnold's etching, Iron Blow Mine/My 1992-2008.

Ray's edge on things



applaud
GABRIELLE RISH

"If you want to develop a story about the problems with Tasmanian forestry, it isn't with saw logs, it's about woodchips," Arnold says.

"At the same time, you can't make a picture of a timber mill in Tasmania without entering into a debate. The wire does act as a distancing, cutting-off thing."

The wire also has a textural appeal for Arnold. He says that together with the stacks of timber, it provides a kind of warp and weft effect.

If there is one recurring motif in his art over the decades it is seams and edges.

The series of World War I uniforms, which he did in France, look like they were executed by a tailor, so precise is the drafting of the clothing's construction. ("My sister is a costumier, and I'm influenced by her a lot.") The French lace series is all joins, seams and splits like rent stockings.

His magnificent *Iron Blow* diptych features the facets and ore seams of the old open-cut mine.

"Seams show where the edge of a thing is — a seam separates one thing from the other. It makes the world real," he says.

Iron Blow and the King River image are the only prints in the new exhibition. Arnold says printmaking no longer suits his life or his mood.

"The French etchings were obsessively worked. Generally I would only get two or three

FENCE-BUILDING: Ray Arnold with one of his *Specialty Timbers* series. Picture: KIM EISZELE

done in my six-month stints. They were a bit like constructing an object. The paintings are more expressive, more direct, you live in the moment.

"To be able to work at the mill — *plein air*, with the scent of pine and the weather — it's not as industrial, it's more experiential. I need painting to carry the power in the West for me."

He points to his personal favourite of all his works, *Imaginary Landscape — Eighteen Months in Tasmania* (1984), an eight-panel etching.

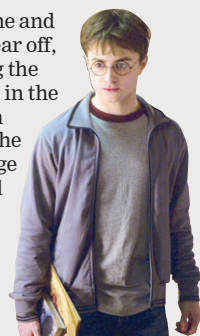
"Why Queenstown?" he says. "It's trying to find this again — the scale of it, the issue of it. But I can't make panoramic etchings any more. I'd just be repeating myself."

● **Raymond Arnold, Quintus, \$39.95, is in bookstores now. The exhibition is at the Bett Gallery until September 9.**



hotGOSSIP

➤➤ Warner Bros has gone and given Harry the school year off, announcing it is bumping the release of the sixth movie in the **Harry Potter** series from November to next July. The studio says the date change is a business decision and not because of any production delays on *The Half-Blood Prince*.



➤➤ In further Harry Potterish news, the actor who plays him, **Daniel Radcliffe**, has revealed to Britain's *Daily Mail* that he suffers from a mild form of dyspraxia, a neurological disorder that impairs coordination. It is sometimes mistaken for clumsiness. "Thankfully his condition is very mild and at worst manifests itself in an inability to tie his shoelaces and bad handwriting," Radcliffe's rep told the paper.

➤➤ **Johnny Depp, Jude Law** and **Colin Farrell** are donating their salaries from *The Imaginarium of Doctor Parnassus* to the late **Heath Ledger's** daughter **Matilda**. Ledger had started filming the movie when he died from an accidental drug overdose in January. The three stars stepped in to fill his role when filming resumed in March. They decided to donate their fees to his daughter after discovering that she was left out of his will.

➤➤ Rugby fan **Clint Eastwood** is looking for actors to play the parts of New Zealand's All Blacks in the 1995 World Cup. Eastwood is directing the film adaption of British journalist John Carlin's book on the New Zealand v South Africa match, *Playing the Enemy: Nelson Mandela and the Game That Made a Nation*. **Matt Damon** is reported to be set to play Springbok captain Francois Pienaar but no actor has yet been named to play All Black captain Sean Fitzpatrick. Carlin sold the film rights to **Morgan Freeman**, who will play then new South African president Nelson Mandela, who used the 1995 World Cup for a symbolic healing of apartheid wounds.



➤➤ Meanwhile, **Matt Damon** and wife **Luciana** have a new daughter, **Gia Zavala Damon**. Damon met Luciana while she was working as a bartender in

Florida. They married in 2005. She has a 10-year-old daughter by a previous marriage and the pair have a two-year-old, Isabella.

➤➤ There won't be much "livin' la vida loca" for **Ricky Martin** these days — he is now the father of twin boys. The 36-year-old Puerto Rican singing star had the children via a surrogate mother, and the babies were born a few weeks ago. "Ricky is elated to begin this new chapter in his life as a parent and will be spending the remainder of the year out of the public spotlight in order to spend time with his children," his reps said.

➤➤ Imagine a James Bond movie directed by **Steven Spielberg**. It could have happened, according to former Bond star **Roger Moore** in his new memoir, *My Word Is My Bond*. The book, due out in November, recounts the time Moore bumped into a young Spielberg at a Paris hotel. "He was a huge Bond fan and said that he would love to direct one of the films," Moore says. "He'd recently had great success with *Jaws* and *Close Encounters* and was considered a very hot property. I was rather excited at this news and went looking for [Bond producer Cubby Broccoli] to tell him." But Broccoli shook his head and asked, "Do you know how much of a percentage he'd want?" Moore says it's always been policy that no Bond director ever gets a slice of the box-office profits.

➤➤ Sweet screams are made of this. **Annie Lennox** is recovering at her London home after having spinal surgery to release an impinged nerve. The singer-songwriter underwent the operation after suffering a painful back spasm while attending the international AIDS conference in Mexico as an ambassador for Oxfam. Lennox, 53, has blogged about her situation on her website.

