

Sunday LIFE



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VANUATU MAGIC - It's no mystery why tourists love this little island in the South Pacific. Page 22

A creative desire

Don Milner is a quiet achiever in art world

By GLEN MCHENRY

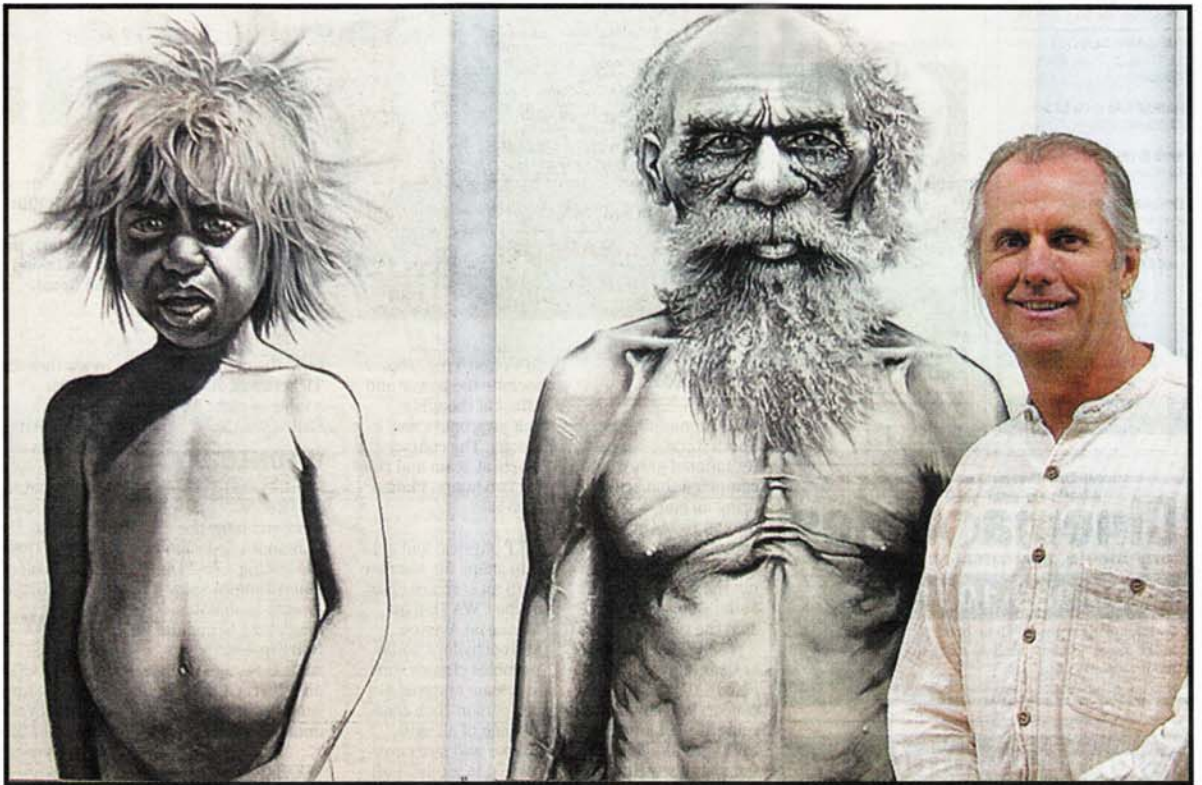
TUCKED away behind the hustle and bustle of Eumundi's famous market precinct, an extraordinary man quietly and unassumingly goes about creating extraordinary pieces of art.

While tourists and visitors through the sidewalks and alleyways of the tiny Sunshine Coast hinterland township, Don Milner is 200 metres away, absorbed in his seemingly effortless craft. You could be forgiven for a sense of being transported to a 17th century starving painters' garret, for this artist is clad in paint-be-daubed rags and his studio is dim, cramped and attic-like. And the artwork is as enchanting and captivating as a Rubens or Dali.

Don Milner, born in Esk in southern Queensland, has been enthralled with art for most of his 50 years. He graduated from the Queensland College of Art after four years with a Diploma of Visual Communications.

"I have a burning desire to be creative," he said.

"It feeds my soul and the genre can be enjoyed in many different media: acrylics, oils, pastels or charcoal. I love them all and painting is currently the outlet for my



FACES: Don Milner's entry in the William Dobell contest.

from year to year can be vague and difficult to interpret. It always appears to be controversial, however, and this contributes to the competition's appeal."

Don's charcoal portrait of an indigenous elder entered in the national William Dobell Drawing

The latest vehicle for Don's talent will emerge from November 30 until December 17. The Totally Nude Exhibition will be on display at the Cooroy Butter Factory and features five pieces each from 30 artists, who are living and working on the Coast. These exponents

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Hal Barton is an internationally recognized artist living on the Coast and Don painted Hal's portrait on a huge canvas for inclusion in this year's Archibald Prize competition - arguably Australia's most prestigious art forum. The Prize attracts 700-plus entrants each year. And while Don did not take out the major award, his portrait of Hal generated interest within a wide range of artist and art-lovers' circles.

"The Archibald is an extremely difficult competition in which to be successful," Don said.

"There are many enormously talented artists participating, and the type of work the judges seek

Competition received wide recognition. The portrait was selected to be hung in a Brisbane gallery - one of only 14 Queensland submissions to be so chosen. Such a distinction is high praise indeed for this humble local artist.

When asked why he chose an Aboriginal subject for the competition, Don said, "I love the character and atmosphere and mystique of Aborigines. They have a profound sadness but also a depth of wisdom which shines through. It is the essence of these things I try to capture in my drawings and paintings, and there is an aura of romance and innocence to these wonderful people, which I will always respect."

of figurative art will showcase their craft in a range of style, technique and media. Don's attention to detail and life-like imagery will be a highlight.

Don has been commissioned to create many portraits, sea-and-landscapes and special projects.

"I thoroughly enjoy the challenge of faithfully reproducing the image a client pictures in his or her mind," he confided.

"It is a delight and personal privilege to meet and occasionally exceed people's expectations."

A selection of Don's work is displayed at the Sandy Bottoms Art Gallery in 33 Hastings Street, Noosa. See his portfolio at the website: donmilnerart.com.au



CREATING: Don in his studio.



PUPPY LOVE: Don's painting of a Labrador.



SUBJECT: Hal Barton with the portrait Don Milner created of him.