

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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HEIDE'S NEW GARDENS - TRANQUILLITY AND ART

The gardens at Heide Museum of Modern Art are as integral a part of the organisation as the artworks themselves. Heide's six and a half hectares of gardens are an ever varying, tranquil environment of majestic trees, shrubs, flowering plants and paddocks that extend down over the river flats to the banks of the Yarra River. From the famous Kitchen Garden, formal perennial walks and parterre gardens to woodlands and parkland dotted with contemporary sculpture, the overall effect of Heide's gardens is one of intimate discovery.

Heide is now unveiling new and recently restored gardens across the property as part of its 2005-06 Redevelopment Program.

Sir Rupert Hamer Garden (NEW)

The **Sir Rupert Hamer Garden**, the gently sloping hills located to the south-west of the Heide III redevelopment, is a collaborative project between O'Connor + Houle Architecture and Elizabeth Peck Landscape Architect. The Hamer Garden's twin hills blur the conceptual distinction between art object and landscape, with one of its prime viewing angles seen from inside the Albert & Barbara Tucker Gallery via a large floor to ceiling window.

The Hamer Garden will include a major, new sculpture commission, *Rings of Saturn* by Inge King, a highly respected Australian sculptor, as well as subtle night-lighting emanating from a series of large glass moonlights that punctuate the landscape.

The Garden's hills also have a programmatic function, acting as an acoustic and visual buffer to protect the Heide site from the traffic of nearby Bridge Street.

Kitchen Garden (RESTORED)

Heide's much-loved **Kitchen Garden**, which was created by one of Heide's founders, Sunday Reed in the 1960s as an accompaniment to the Heide II building, has been newly-restored under Heide's current Redevelopment Program.

This popular attraction was originally a 'working garden' supplying vegetables, herbs and fruit for meals prepared by Sunday, an innovative cook. The garden is fully enclosed to protect it from marauding animals as well as floods. Ravaged by floods even during recent years, Heide's gardeners have maintained the historical plantings in the garden as well as returning the lower section to rotating crops of vegetables. Sunday Reed's great love of roses continues in the many plantings at the head of each garden bed. The upper section of the garden, set on higher ground, is also dedicated to cascading fragrant roses, perennials and herbs – *Achillea*, *Evening Primrose*, *Helenium*, *Eucomis (Pineapple Lily)*, a wide range of *Salvia*, Sunday's much loved blue iris and along the top fence, an impressive stand of *Dahlia imperialis (Tree Dahlia)*. The paths throughout the garden have been freshly laid, including new wooden borders.

The restoration work has extended to Heide's **Rose Walk** originally installed in 1988 by then Head Gardener, Simon Dickeson. Adjacent to the Kitchen Garden, the walk includes some of Sunday Reed's favourite flowering plants, including *Rosa mutabilis* and blue iris. The **Rose Walk Pavilion** dates from 1991 and marks the transition from Rose Walk to the paddock (now part of the Connie Kimberley Sculpture Park). The pavilion, designed by architect, Gregory Burgess, was acknowledged in 1995 with the Kevin Borland Timber in Architecture Award.

Sidney Myer Education Centre surrounds (NEW)

The **Sidney Myer Education Centre**, designed by O'Connor + Houle Architecture, is set amongst existing trees on the eastern perimeter of the site at a 90 degree angle to Heide II. Perfect positioning provides the

Centre with an outlook over the rustic scene of Heide's newly named **Connie Kimberley Sculpture Park**, which includes Jeff Thomson's *Cow* sculptures. The Sculpture Park also includes the *Rosa chinensis mutabilis* plant famously captured in the foreground of Sidney Nolan's painting, now part of Heide's Collection.

The Education Centre is not only linked architecturally to Heide III but also botanically. A *Ginkgo biloba*, one of the oldest species of trees, will feature outside both buildings. In consultation with O'Connor & Houle Architecture, Heide's Head Gardener, Nick Harrison has selected architecturally strong trees and fragrant plants for the area immediately in front of the Centre, the **Helen Macpherson Smith Garden**. This sensory styled garden will feature a native grove of frangipani trees, rosemary, rice paper plant and the beautiful *Eucalyptus scoparia* (Wallangarra white gum).

Karakarook's Garden (NEW)

The integration of sculpture and design are part of the continuing vision for Heide's gardens. In 2005 artist Lauren Berkowitz was commissioned to create a 'living sculpture' that responded to the Kitchen Gardens of Heide I.

Berkowitz's concept responds to self-sustaining agriculture and joy of gardening that formed such an important part of John and Sunday Reed's lives. The rectangular form of the garden sculpture is framed by a gravel border and divided into stripes of varying widths and plantings to create a carpet like effect.

Edible species native to the area have been selected in collaboration with Head Gardener Nick Harrison and Indigenous botanists, to create a strong visual form of texture, colour and depth. The plant range features flowers, foliage, fruits, berries, tubers and leaf textures that will change subtly across the seasons. These include combinations of *Bulbine bulbosa* (*Bulbine Lily*), *Hydrocotyle laxiflora* (*Stinking Pennywort*), *Pultenaea pedunculata* (*Matted bush pea*), *Convolvulus erubescens* (*Australian Bindweed*), *Themeda triandra* (*Kangaroo grass*), *Arthropodium strictum* (*Chocolate lily*), *Chionochloa pallida* (*Red-anther wallaby grass*) and *Goodenia humilis* (*Swamp goodenia*).

Karakarook's Garden will come into full flourish in November 2006 to celebrate Heide's 25th Anniversary as a public art museum.

History of Heide's gardens

On purchasing the Heide property in 1934, John and Sunday Reed commenced the planting of hundreds of European and exotic trees. Friend and artist, Neil Douglas, among other friends, was instrumental in helping the Reeds establish Heide's early gardens. Their vision for Heide's gardens saw them select the drought tolerant Osage orange trees (*Maclura pomifera*) - named after the Osage Indian tribe who used the wood for their bows - planted in three groves across the property, including the grove around which the 1960s Heide II house was built. These elegant trees, with their unusual, puckered, fluorescent green fruit, have since been placed on the National Trust of Australia (Victoria) Register of Significant Trees for their 'rarity in cultivation'.

The property reflects changes in the Reeds' botanical focus during their lifetime with the lower reaches planted in the 1960s with Australian natives. Well-known and much-loved aspects of the Reeds' initial garden include the famous oak tree planted by John Reed in 1935; the original grove of Osage orange trees; the Violet Tunnel; a beautifully scented walled perennial and rose walk; the fruit orchard replanted with heritage apple and pear trees; the Wild Garden; the Vegetable Garden and the Doll's House in which Sidney Nolan's original Ned Kelly paintings were once stored. In contrast, the plants surrounding Heide II reflect the simplicity and elegance of this modernist building. Osage Orange trees bisect the house from east to west; a towering gum shades the main patio and the verdant woodland garden (viewed from the entry breezeway) is under-planted with layers of green – *soft tree ferns*, *Dicksonia antarctica*, *Acanthus Mollis*, *Hellebores*, *Griselinia scandens* and *Illicium floridanum*.

The gardens surrounding Heide I were restored in 2001 as the first part of Heide's current Redevelopment Program. The gardens surrounding Heide II have been restored as part of Heide's 2006 works.

Heide's gardens are an integral part of the Heide experience. Considerable research has been undertaken by consultants, O'Connor + Houle Architecture and Elizabeth Peck Landscape Architects, and Heide's gardeners, headed by Nick Harrison, to fully understand the legacy of these two heritage listed properties (Heide I and II). Their expansion and maintenance are an ongoing project.

The new aspects of Heide's extensive gardens will officially open as part of the Redevelopment Program unveiling Tuesday 18 July 2006.

Heide Museum of Modern Art

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Hours: Tue-Fri 10.00am – 5.00pm; Sat/Sun/Public Holidays 12.00noon – 5.00pm

Admission: All Areas - Adult \$12, Seniors \$10, Concession \$8.

Single Area (Heide I only) - Adult \$8, Seniors \$7, Concession \$5.

Gardens – Free

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