

Media Release

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STEPHEN BOWERS: BEYOND BRAVURA JamFactory Icon 2013

Wagga Wagga Art Gallery is delighted to welcome one of Australia's most renowned contemporary ceramic artists, with the new exhibition **Stephen Bowers: Beyond Bravura – JamFactory Icon 2013**. For over 35 years Stephen Bowers has been creating works that fire the imagination, combining intellect and inventiveness with skills and traditions that stretch back thousands of years.

Initially from Katoomba, Bowers became involved in ceramics in the late 1970s, a seminal time for Australian ceramics particularly in South Australia where the Skangaroovia Funk ethos of ceramics as an expressive medium abounded. Bowers seized the illustrative potential of ceramics and since undertaking a traineeship at JamFactory in the early 1980s, he has produced work rich in ornamentation.

Bowers' practice differs from the majority of ceramic artists, in that he does not seek to be the 'sole creator' responsible for every aspect of production. Instead, his primary role as decorator/designer places him within the long tradition of ceramics as a collective enterprise, from the small rural workshop to the huge manufactories that came into being with the industrial revolution. Tapping this history and mining the variety of decorative techniques, Bowers' surfaces are brimming with recurring imagery such as the ubiquitous cockatoos, willow pattern, Sydney Harbour bridge, and the Opera House which reflect his Australian larrikin spirit.

Throughout his career Stephen Bowers has contributed considerably to the careers of many emerging talents in the craft and design industry in Australia. Bowers has taught numerous workshops, lectures and education programs, both in Australia and overseas; and he has received a range of awards and has been the recipient of numerous artist residencies and fellowships. He has exhibited extensively in Australia and overseas and his work is represented in significant private and public collections around the world.

Stephen Bowers: Beyond Bravura is brought to Wagga Wagga by the South Australian JamFactory, one of Australia's most significant creative institutions. From 1990 to 1999 Bowers was creative director of the JamFactory's ceramics studio, and from 2004 to 2010 he was Managing Director of the organisation. This exhibition is the first of the JamFactory's *Icon* series, celebrating the achievements of South Australia's most outstanding and influential craft and design practitioners.

Stephen Bowers: Beyond Bravura – JamFactory Icon 2013 will be on display at Wagga Wagga Art Gallery from Saturday 7 February until Sunday 22 March, 2015.

Stephen Bowers: Beyond Bravura – JamFactory Icon 2013 is a JamFactory touring exhibition.

Stephen Bowers: Beyond Bravura – JamFactory Icon 2013 is supported by Visions of Australia, an Australian Government program supporting touring exhibitions by providing funding assistance for the development and touring of Australian cultural material across Australia.