

Trevor's tea cosies take to Melbourne

CHALPAT SONTI

PORTLAND crocheter Trevor Smith will soon have some of his creations once again grace a major Melbourne exhibition.

Mr Smith's crocheted teapots will be part of "A Boy's Own Story", an exhibition focusing on male artists working with textiles, being held by the Johnston Collection in East Melbourne.

The Collection holds an annual exhibition in Fairhall, the home of its late benefactor William Johnston, a lifelong collector of Georgian, Regency and Louis XIV (18th and 19th Century) period objects of fine arts who on his death bequeathed them to the people of Victoria.

This time around it will run from September 30 to February 4 and is based on what its promoters call a "too often repeated assumption" that men did not and do not have any manual skills in knitting and sewing.

For Mr Smith, who has been exhibiting his creations for more than 35 years, it will be the second time he has been part of the annual exhibition, the first in 2010-11 when it focused on artists based in the south west.

Some of his work then went on display in the National Wool Museum in Geelong.

His love of crocheting goes back to his childhood, when at primary school age he was taught the skills by his mother, and he got back into it in a big way 10 years ago when taking part in contributing items to "The Big Hole



CROCHET has been a hobby for Trevor Smith since he was a boy, and some of his work will be exhibited in Melbourne from next week.

Yarn" exhibition in Panmure.

Mr Smith has been busy since, and the 22 items he is exhibiting in Melbourne are what he calls "character tea cosies".

"They're either famous people like Liberace, Cleopatra or Dame Nellie Melba or types of people depending on their calling like a butcher or baker," he said.

"I like to do characters that have a distinctive (attributes) that tell their story."

Using pure wool with foam rubber, polystyrene, foamcor and wire for bases, he estimated each tea cosy took 8-12 hours to make and more complicated items up to 50 hours.

Mr Smith said anyone who goes to see his work exhibited in Melbourne would experience a couple of unusual scenarios.

The first is that Fairhall is on a suburban street where parking permits are required so those attending don't simply turn up at the door.

Instead they book in advance and are picked up at a location nearby and transported to the venue by mini-bus.

The second is that the exhibition items are not in defined areas, but interspersed among Mr Johnston's own collection.

"It's quite unique seeing these within that setting," Mr Smith said.

To find out more about the exhibition, or to book tickets, visit johnstoncollection.org.