

miscellanea

CULTURAL AFFAIRS OFFICE OF THE EMBASSY OF AUSTRALIA ♦ WINTER 1999

DOWN UNDER & OVER HERE



A journey into the creative world of children's literature will unfold with a new exhibition at the Leigh Yawkey Woodson Art Museum in Wausau, Wisconsin on November 13.

Down Under & Over Here: Children's Book Illustration from Australia and America comprises 60 original illustrations from 21 Australian and 30 American children's books. Titles include Australian classics *Blinky Bill* and *Possum Magic* and highly acclaimed contemporary novels *Rose Meets Mr. Wintergarten* and *Sign of the Seahorse*. American favourites include *Make Way for Ducklings*, *The Little House*, *Quail Song*, and *Josefina*.

Children learn their own history and the history of people from other places in books such as *Watch the Start Come Out* and *The Ox-Cart Man*. Whether a youngster lives down under or over here, universal themes pepper the pages of their beloved childhood books. These themes define not only cultures, but also the people who populate each country – and who populate the colourful and inventive stories with which children so readily identify.

Down Under & Over Here focuses on three themes:

- *Traditional Legends & Fantastic Tales* highlights illustrations by Aboriginal and Native American artists. The works, including *Enora and the Black Crane* from Australia and

Quail Song from the United States, show ancient stories that have been embraced by the modern cultures of both nations.

- *Family & Friends* touches on the many different kinds of families found in the pages of children's books. Titles such as *Shoes from Grandpa* by Australian author Mem Fox and *A Chair for My Mother* by American writer Vera Williams show children who they are, and why they are important.
- *Town and Country* – the final theme – highlights Australian and American landscapes, cities and their people. Rural and urban scenes fuel young imaginations and create visual adventures about the world that lies beyond the security and familiarity of home. Town and country life are explored in the Australian title *Way Home* and from America, *Heartland*.

Down Under & Over Here is the result of a dynamic collaboration between the Woodson Art Museum and the Marathon County Public Library in Wausau. More than 55 educational programs and special events for children and

Left: *Blinky Bill* by Dorothy Wall, 1939

Right: *The Little House* by Virginia Lee Burton, 1942

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YOUTHFUL SUCCESS



Tim Draxl

Australian cabaret singer Tim Draxl recently became the youngest singer to perform at the renowned Oak Room in New York City. Draxl, 17, also performed his cabaret show *Love Is Where It Starts*, the tale of a young person finding himself through music, at one of New York's premier cabaret venues *Don't Tell Mama*. The show, in October, was a sell-out success and earned him an invitation to perform at the closing of the 1999 New York Cabaret Convention.

Draxl is currently rehearsing for the Australian national tour of *The Sound of Music* and promoting his debut CD *Ordinary Miracles*. His recent accolades include a MO Award (Australia's equivalent of a Tony Award), and the Australian GLUGS theatre award "Performer On The Way". Most recently he was voted the Face of Music for '99 in *Australian Vogue* magazine.

TOOLS AS ART: THE HECHINGER COLLECTION



It Cuts Both Ways by Susan Dorothea White, 1998

Tools as Art: Fantasy at Work is the latest exhibition from the John Hechinger, Sr. collection. The hardware-inspired Hechinger Collection consists of sixty sculptures, paintings, photographs, crafts, prints, and drawings, which artists transformed from everyday work tools into instruments of imagination, creativity and craftsmanship. The exhibition is currently showing at the National Building Museum, in Washington DC.

The works of two Australian artists are featured in this collection: Susan Dorothea White's *It Cuts Both Ways*, 1998 and Richard Tipping's *Drill-a-phone*, 1997.

For a number of years, White's work has explored the idiom 'it cuts both ways,' which means to have an equal or similar effect on one person as on another. Referring to the balance between gender and races, the bold sculpture suggests that any potential movement of either pair of hands would activate both pairs equally. To realize the piece, White replaced the handles of garden shears with hands carved from salvaged huon pine and clothing for the sleeves.

Drill-a-phone resembles a conventional telephone, apart from its handles, which have been replaced by a drill. This is a contemporary interpretation of a conventional object and is made of bakelite, wood,

steel, and cording. Both of these works have since been purchased for the collection.

Jim Dine's *Tool Box* is the cornerstone of the collection. It consists of ten screen prints, combining various tools, treated as both decorative elements and animated objects, to create images of Pop culture and Dine's personal life. Other well-known artists in the exhibition include Arman, Walker Evans, Claes Oldenburg, James Rosenquist, Lucas Samaras, Jean Tinguely, and William T. Wiley.

The Hechinger Collection began in 1978, when hardware industry pioneer John Hechinger, Sr. began collecting art that highlighted the company's livelihood and displayed it throughout the building to inspire employees. Today the collection includes more than 350 works, spanning a wide range of media, styles, and themes.

For further information about the Hechinger Collection contact Sarah Tanguy, Curator at tel: (202) 462-6719 or e-mail: stanguy@pressroom.com

The National Building Museum is located at 401 F Street, NW, Washington DC. Tel: (202) 272 2448, Website: www.nbm.org

