

Gallery in the Mall opens with panache

An ambitious new gallery in Todd Mall opened on the weekend.

Ambitious in the current economic climate and also in that not all of its eggs will go into the Indigenous art basket.

While it opened with an impressive show from Watiyawanu Artists, dominated by a massive and brilliant canvas from Wentja Napaltjarri, Peta Appleyard Gallery's first show in the new year will be mostly of female nudes by non-Indigenous Melbourne-based artist, David Bromley.

He is one of "Australia's bigger art exports", says Ms Appleyard.

Her intention is to "invigorate" the local art market, "get people talking, interested", encourage people in their "journey of collecting", of not only Aboriginal art but all art.

The current show has work by 18 of the 25 artists painting at Mt Liebig, with emerging artists included in the judiciously hung spread.

On the rear wall is a dynamic canvas by the late Bill Whiskey Tjapaltjarri (who earned his name for his facial hair – whiskers – not a drinking habit).

Ms Anderson spoke movingly about this "grandfather" who was an important influence in her life.

She congratulated Ms Appleyard, whom she remembers as a child growing up out bush, for "standing and showing that anything can be done" in this time of economic crisis and for "the love and inspiration" she has given to the artists. - **KIERAN FINNANE**

