

A revealing portrait

Vincent Fantauzzo uses art to support human rights, writes

Angela Saurine

exhibition

Amnesty International Annual Art Exhibition

Tap Gallery, 278 Palmer St, Darlinghurst; tonight, until Sunday, noon-6pm, free, 9361 0440, tappgallery.org.au, vincentfantauzzo.com

HIS gripping portrait of the late actor Heath Ledger led to widespread acclaim early this year, and now Vincent Fantauzzo is putting his new-found fame to good use.

The 30-year-old artist, whose picture of Ledger was named the People's Choice winner at this year's Archibald Prize, will exhibit a powerful portrait of an anonymous Aboriginal woman at an Amnesty International Australia exhibition this week.

The ARTicles exhibition — celebrating the 60th anniversary of the universal declaration of human rights — is on at Darlinghurst's Tap Gallery.

Fantauzzo began thinking about the Stolen Generation when his friend Baz Luhrmann was making the film *Australia*.

"Painting Heath was probably more personal at the time... but this is completely different," Fantauzzo says.

"It's not so much about the individual in the painting — it's more about the concept of bringing awareness to the idea of Aboriginal culture being erased or covered up in the past and revealed again more so now.

"I have been doing a bit of my own research, talking to people and asking them about their experience.

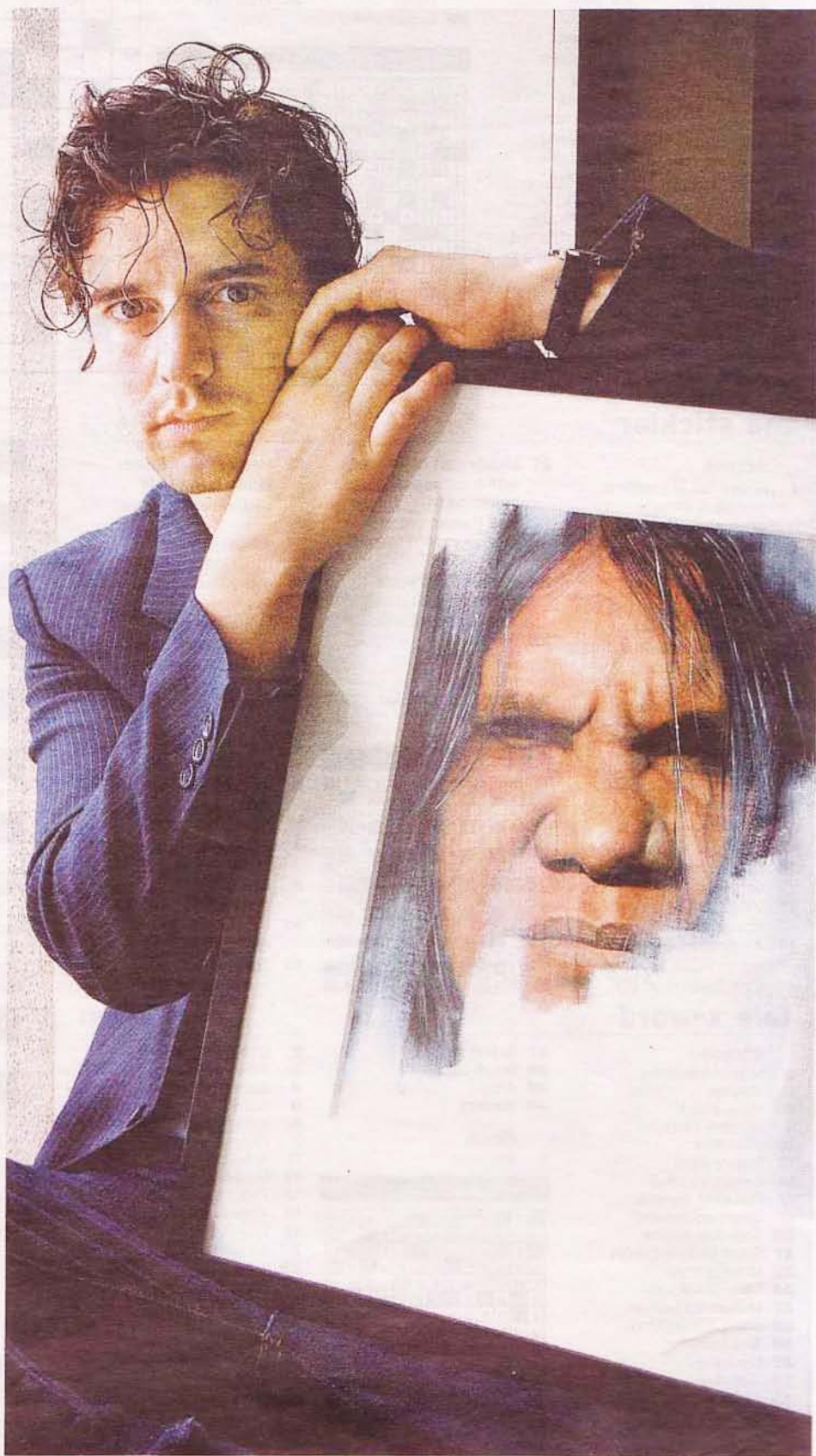
"I have had so much exposure, which puts me in a privileged position to do other things and have people take a look at them."

Fantauzzo also painted a portrait of Brandon Walters, the young Aboriginal star of *Australia*, which hung at the premiere in Sydney last week.

Although he is currently living in Hong Kong working on another exhibition, Fantauzzo made a whirlwind trip home to walk the red carpet for the film's opening.

Ledger sat for Fantauzzo in Perth last December, just weeks before he died from an accidental drug overdose in New York.

Fantauzzo gave the painting of Ledger to his grieving family, who, in turn, donated it to the Art Gallery of NSW.



Exposure: Vincent Fantauzzo, with his work for the ARTicles exhibition

Picture: Katrina Tepper