

TODAY: BLUTAK GALLERY

TOMORROW: NATIONAL GALLERY

By Rachel Loveday

One day their works may be hanging at the National Gallery of Australia, but for now, graduating visual arts students at the University of Wollongong are happy to be showing their works in a new exhibition on campus.

While the third-year students are only months away from graduations, their work proved to be in high demand at an auction at the university's BluTak Gallery on Thursday.

The auction, organised by the students-showcased 73 nude artworks from a variety of different mediums ranging from paintings and drawings to abstract and glass pieces. The artworks managed to make a profit of over \$5000.

Third-year student; Megan Leckey, whose work sold for \$200, was feeling the heat at the start of the auction, but eventually relaxed and was pleased by the outcome.

"In the beginning I was worried, but I'm happy that my work sold," she said.

Fellow third-year student; Boni Cairncross, whose work managed to sell for \$220, stated that despite mixed opinions of nudity in the arts, it is a strong theme in the arts industry.

"The nude is quite a strong theme in Arts history, most people think it's a bit weird, but it actually is a genre in the Arts industry," she said.

Ms Cairncross also believes that students need more space and opportunities to display their talent both at university and out in the world.

"The Faculty of Creative Arts has a gallery. It is open for artists to exhibit their work, but it's more for the graduate students, I don't think the undergraduate students have the space to exhibit their work.

"There is the (Wollongong) City Gallery that has space for artists to exhibit their work, which is not accessible for emerging artists, it's more for well-known and established artists."

The bulk of profits will be used to fund an exhibition at the end of the year-a last chance for the students to display their creativity and talent before they launch into their careers in the outside world.

Ms Cairncross also described how the impending exhibition will give graduating students a chance to shine as they have more freedom in their last year of study.

"It (the exhibition) focuses on our third year artworks, because, at this time, you are doing artworks that you would like to do, rather than being directed to do."

The profits from the auction totalled \$5,410 with only two items passing by bidders.