

The queen's tale

SARAH McNEILL

Photomedia artist Eva Fernandez's carefully constructed photographic print of Spain's medieval queen, Isabel I, is a reference to some of the great Spanish artists of the 1600s.

Queen Isabel's table is arranged with exotic imported fruits, speaking of a multicultural country that dominated Europe and much of the world for more than a century.

The print, *Isabel I La Catolica*, is a finalist in the prestigious National Print Award, now showing at Fremantle Arts Centre.

Eva's Spanish parents were post-civil war refugees and she was born in Canada before the family moved to Perth.

For several years, Eva's multimedia photographic work explored Australian culture in exhibitions like *(Terra) Australis Incognita*, but now she has turned her attention to her Spanish origins.

For centuries,

Catholics, Jews and Muslims had lived in harmony in Spain. Much of the country's architecture was inspired by the Moors, who invaded the country in the eighth century.

But that came to an end in Isabel's reign.

In 1474, Isabel, Queen of Castille, married Ferdinand II of Aragon,

a marriage of political unification.

Isabel, a powerful and effective ruler, lowered the crime rate, lowered debt, financed the voyage of Columbus that led to the opening of the New World, and ordered the conversion or expulsion of Muslim and Jewish subjects in the Spanish Inquisition.

"History is cyclic," Eva said. "Muslim immigration was topical then as it is now."

"But what is central to this work is my exploration of my own Spanish culture."

Eva's print is composed of 10 images digitally manipulated and combined in high quality giclee print on to heavy,

archival art paper.

The exhibition of 49 finalists, showcases the nation's best prints and artists' books, from classical printmaking to cutting-edge interpretations of the medium.

In Australia's richest print award, WA artist Sam Bloor won the \$16,000 first prize for his

relief print *In Unison*, which was carefully removed from a graffiti-covered wall, and Victorian collaborators Elvis Richardson and Virginia Fraser won second prize (\$6,000) for *Femmo Issue 4, 5 & 6*, an ironic triptych of magazine covers.

The finalists are on show until November 12.



Don't be deterred by Tut's curse

The Curse of the Pharaoh, or King Tut's Curse, is one of the world's most famous curses.

But don't let it stop you from visiting the exhibition, *Tutankhamun: His Tomb and His Treasures*, which opens at the Perth Convention Centre this weekend.

Ever since King Tutankhamun's tomb was discovered in Egypt's Valley of the Kings, stories have circulated that whoever violated the boy king's final resting place would face a terrible death.

Legend had it that those people associated with opening the tomb in 1922 soon fell victim to the

curse, dying in mysterious circumstances.

Supernatural investigator and professional sceptic James Randi noted that Howard Carter, who discovered the tomb and removed the mummy of Tutankhamun from the sarcophagus, lived on for 16 years before dying of cancer.

Sergeant Richard Adamson, who guarded the burial chamber round the clock for seven years, lived for another 60 years until his death in 1982.

The highest profile death associated with the curse was that of George Herbert, the fifth Earl of Carnarvon, a British aristocrat and amateur

Egyptologist who financed the search and died mysteriously a year after the tomb was opened.

In fact, Randi says, Lord Carnarvon suffered from poor health before he arrived in Cairo, and died from a decidedly mundane mosquito-carried disease.

According to Randi, Howard Carter did not invent the idea of a cursed tomb but did exploit it to keep intruders away from his history-making discovery.

When Carter and Lord Carnarvon entered the tomb's interior chambers in November 1922, they found treasures, golden shrines, jewellery, statues, a

chariot, weapons, clothing and the mummified body of King Tut untouched after more than 3000 years.

Despite rumours of the curse, its treasures were carefully catalogued, removed and included in a famous travelling exhibition called the *Treasures of Tutankhamen*. The exhibition's permanent home is the Egyptian Museum in Cairo.

The exhibition that opens in Perth Convention Centre this weekend re-creates the burial treasure in its original archaeological context so people can experience that historic moment when Carter first saw the burial chambers of Pharaoh Tutankhamun.

In association with the exhibition, archaeologist and Egyptologist Zahi Hawass will give his famed *Pyramids, Mummies and Cleopatra: Recent Discoveries* lecture at the Riverside Theatre on Wednesday, October 5, at 7pm.

The exhibition is on show until Sunday, January 15, next year and is open daily from 10am. Book through Ticketek.

Whoever violated the boy king's final resting place would face a terrible death.



See the treasures that were placed in the tomb to accompany King Tutankhamun on his journey to the next world.

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