

Prahran protest has artists super scared

22 June 2010 by Liam Ryan



Artists protest the Cooper Review recommendation to ban art as superannuation.

A PRAHRAN protest has warned the visual arts industry will be devastated if self-managed superannuation funds are banned from buying works.

David Bromley's Chapel St studio hosted the Australian Artists Association's "Save Super Art" campaign launch last Wednesday.

The campaign calls for the Federal Government to reject the findings of its Cooper Review, to be released on June 30.

The review will recommend the Government scrap art acquisition from self-managed super funds, saying paintings are "collectables and personal use assets".

Campaign convener Tom Lowenstein said the move would cost Australia's \$1.5 billion visual arts industry about \$100 million a year and devastate everyone from framers to indigenous artists.

Armadale painter Victoria Watts said about half of her sales were to self-managed super funds and the changes would most impact on emerging artists.

"If you want to paint serious work, you want collectors to buy it, and collectors are generally buying in their super funds," Ms Watts said.

Toorak photographer Joyce Evans said photography was not often a super funds purchase, but the review's flow-on effects would still be huge.

"Everybody has a right to choose what they wish to invest in," Ms Evans said.

Mr Lowenstein said the report had lumped art with coin collections and golf club memberships.

"There doesn't seem to be a realisation of what art is all about," Mr Lowenstein said. "Art over the years has proven to be a valid and sensible investment for many people."

He said galleries reported 15 to 20 per cent of sales were to super funds.

Prahran artist David Bromley said the review's recommendation was "flippant" given the art community was still reeling from the global financial crisis.

Spokesman for Arts Minister Peter Garrett, Ben Pratt, said Mr Garrett was to meet with arts sector representatives within a month to hear their concerns.

A petition for opposers to the Cooper Review recommendation is at savesuperart.org.au



Campaign convener Tom Lowenstein and artist David Bromley.