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Title:

Speech opening Australian art exhibition, John Martins Ltd.

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SPEECH BY THE PREMIER, MR DUNSTAN, OPENING AUSTRALIAN ART EXHIBITION.

JOHN MARTINS LTD. 7.3.74

Sir Edward and Mr Ian Hayward, Mr Dridan, Ladies and Gentlemen:
Thank you very much for asking me to open your Festival Exhibition. I think that one of the joys of the Adelaide Festival is the way in which it involves people who don't normally take a particularly active part in the arts and the number of exhibitions and displays it generates which, otherwise, probably wouldn't see the light of day.

There are the star events in the main arena. But there's a whole kaleidoscope of other happenings either as part of the Festival proper or on the swelling fringe.

The main business houses and stores have been enthusiasts for the Festival from the start and generous supporters of it - like us, it's not entirely altruistic, they know it's good business.

Their participation is a valuable part of the Festival, not only for the interest of the special exhibitions themselves, but for their part in making people more Festival-conscious and also add to the general Festival spirit.

South Australians are proud of their Festival of Arts, they enjoy it and they look on it as one of the essential ingredients which make up the unique flavour of this city, which make it the most enjoyable place in Australia in which to live.

The big stores generally, and John Martins in particular, have reason for self-congratulation for their part in bringing this about. In past Festivals John Martins have featured a major one-man exhibition. This year the combination of Martin's and Mr Dridan has produced something different.

It's been known for some time that there are some very fine paintings held in private collections. Mr Dridan went round and discovered just how good they are.

He's selected about 130 for this display - and persuaded the owners temporarily to part with them. Many of them are on public display for the first time and will be of considerable interest to scholars as well as delighting lay art lovers.

One of the most obvious things apparent from even a cursory glance around this exhibition is the diversity of the Australian painting tradition.

The accomplishment of a Dobell, Gill or Streeton is well known. Less familiar is the work of Horace Trennery, a magnificent painter who was neglected in his lifetime and who is still little known.

A look at the seven Trennerys on show here should convince anyone of his merit. Dunstan Collection, Special Collections, Flinders University Library.

This exhibition then does two things. It gives exposure to particular works normally only seen by a very few and it highlights the achievement of past Australian artists who still do not get the recognition that is their due.

It is a credit to the company and to Mr Driden and a very worthwhile contribution to the Festival. I have very much pleasure in officially declaring it open.

Thank you.