

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

Pain of battle lingers

Two Canberra artists are showing their work about war at an American exhibition next month, **Helen Musa** writes.

WAR HAS always been a fruitful, if grim, avenue for artistic exploration, and recent times have proven that it is still so. It's good to see then that two Canberra artists, Nasser Palangi and Farideh Zariv, have turned their experience of the not-so-distant Iran-Iraq War to artist effect in a series of works to go on show at the North-eastern University's Curry Student Center Art Gallery in Boston, Massachusetts, on January 8.

History Recalls, the university says, is a forum for all those who like to use their artistic talent to share their experience or voice their views about war and oppression.

The hope is that people from both sides of a conflict can meet to extend the hand of friendship, with the ultimate aim to prevent future wars by displaying their work and bringing awareness to the rest of the world.

Four artists, two from Canberra and two from the United States, who have lived through war as ordinary citizens, will be exhibiting photographs, drawings, paintings and murals reflecting their experiences during these times.

Regrettably, the university notes, despite the work spanning over 25 years, time is of no essence and the stories have remained the same. Palangi and Zariv are joined by two photographic artists Rania Matar and Naveed Nour.

Palangi was born 1957 in Iran's Hamedan, a city with a 3000-year history.

He moved to Tehran and continued his studies of fine art at Tehran University, establishing a career in painting from 1977 to 1988.

Alongside his career as a painter, he also developed an interest in mural paintings and, during the Iran-Iraq war, created the still-standing mural in the city of Khorramshahr from 1981 to 1982 as well as several mural projects in different areas of Tehran. In 2000, he was commissioned to do murals in Dubai and Seattle.

In 2001 he moved to Australia, and adopted Canberra as his home.

In Canberra he also started to develop mural painting projects through workshops and by engaging with different communities.

In 2003 Palangi was commissioned by the Migrant Resource Centre to create a mural for the Woden Bus Interchange with the subject "Building Unity".

His public artworks have continued to grow in scope and size, leading to the larger Weston Creek Art Wall created in 2005.

During this time Palangi has exhibited his paintings in Iran, Canada, China, Lebanon, Britain, Austria, Turkmenistan, Dubai, the US, Singapore and Canberra.

Zariv was born in Tehran, where she received her Bachelor of Arts in graphic design from the Faculty of Fine Arts, later studying at Sureh University in Tehran.



DARK DAYS: Nasser Palangi, *Iranian family during the Iran-Iraq War*, 1980-88, Print, 1984, Iran.

History Recalls is a forum for all those who like to use their artistic talent to share their experience or voice their views about war and oppression.!

She has been a practising artist for 15 years and has 10 years of experience as a gallery director in Iran and Australia, where she works with her husband Nasser Palangi, and their two artist children Fatimeh and Amin.

In 2000 Zariv took part in the project of the world's longest painting, organised by

Medecins Sans Frontieres in the United Arab Emirates.

She was the recipient of a grant by the Australian Government for *Hand of Fatima*, which was exhibited at the Canberra Museum and Art Gallery in 2005 and at the Bo-Kaap Iziko Museum in South Africa this year. She is now studying towards a master's degree in printmaking at the ANU.

Matar trained as an architect at Cornell University, then studied photography at the New England School of Photography and in Oaxaca, Mexico, with *Magnum* photographer Constantine Manos.

She is a full-time freelance photographer and focuses on the Middle East, photographing the changes that are occurring, especially to women and children in Lebanon where she has been

documenting the aftermath of war in that country.

Nour was born in Cologne, Germany, to Iranian parents and in 1971 moved with his parents and sister to Iran. He studied photography at Tehran University's School of Fine Arts while travelling throughout Iran, including the war zones, during the 1980-1988 Iran-Iraq war and documented the social and economic effects of war on society.

He later worked for the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in Ankara, Turkey, and went on to study photography at the University of Ottawa. He now works for North-eastern University.

■ *History Recalls* is at the Curry Student Center Art Gallery in Boston, Massachusetts, from January 8-27.

Engaging with the Hoods in nicely twisted plot

Red Riding Hood, a pantomime by Peter McDonald. Ickle Pickle Productions at Belconnen Community Centre Theatre until December 22. Bookings: 6247 1223.

FOLLOWING last year's *Goldilocks* success, director Justin Watson and writer Peter McDonald have conspired to produce the only version of *Red Riding Hood* to mention the corrupt failed company Enron which, news reports said, "lied about its profits and stands accused of a range of shady dealings, including concealing debts so they didn't show up in the company's accounts".

But don't worry, this is just a pantomime



FRANK MCKONE

Review

in the long tradition of humorous social commentary. Even the younger audience members followed a very twisted plot in which Granny and the Wolf are business rivals. They quickly learned when and how

to call for the Good Fairy of Marketing, played nicely by Josie Dunham as a quite daffy character who finally brings a new cookie-making cooperative into being and marries off Granny Hood (Dave Smith as the panto dame) to Wolf Jackman (Peter Russell) who baulks at wearing Granny's skirt and shawl because he is a male wolf (while she gets hot under the collar in his oven).

Red Riding Hood (Kat Brand) marries Martin from Accounts (Anna O'Leary), the three evil robotic blind mice (well-played mechanically by Grace Connelly, Rebecca de Costa and Clare Sheehan) are properly defeated by management consultants Michael Mouse (Jennifer Maclean), Stuart

Mouse (Erin Cassidy) and Gerald Mouse (Irena Reedy). And Wolf's offside Crookwell, played strongly by Jaime Isfahani, is left rather lonely, except that Santa appears to make everyone happy in the end.

You'll have to see the show to appreciate McDonald's Terry Pratchett-like mind, with any number of musical references and bits of other fairy stories built in. It's just as much fun for the adults as the children.

Directing, choreography and an intriguingly simple set-change device all show the skills which we have come to expect from Ickle Pickle, resulting in excellent performances from all the young actors in an engaging production.