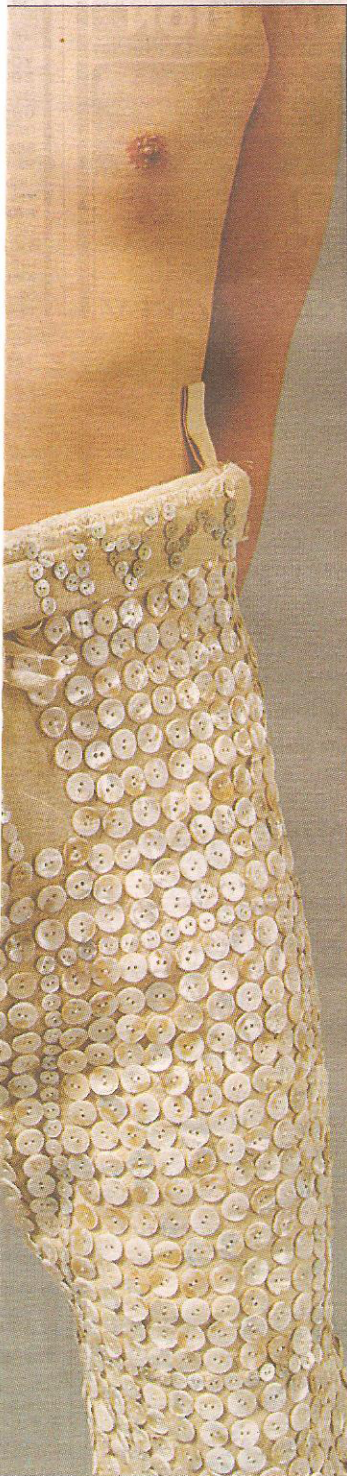


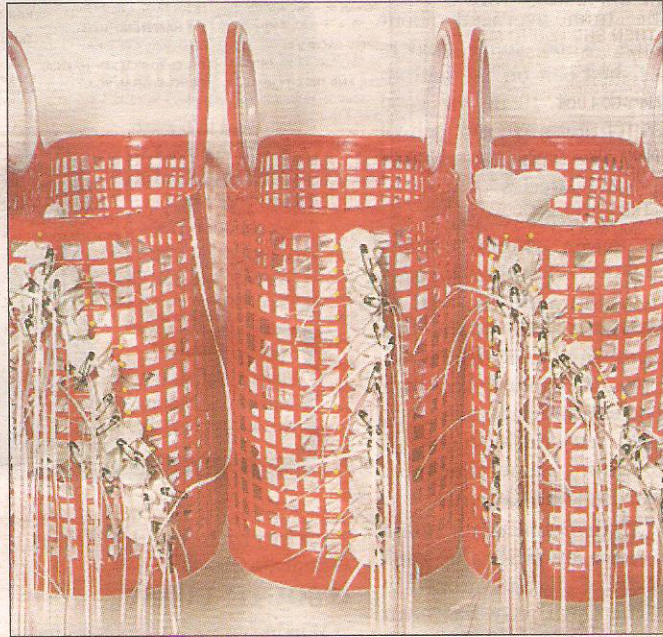
Leading a fine line



Kay Lawrence: Pearl buttons on t about the deadly work practices in the pearling industry in Broome.



Envelope, 2005, by Sophie Morris: Felt as wearable art.



PAINT rags, 2006, by Helen Fuller: Wall installation made from plastic baskets, rags, polyester ribbon and safety pins.

LOUISE NUNN

TEXTILE traditions are being interpreted and applied in exciting new ways in the latest exhibition at Flinders University City Gallery.

The 17th Tamworth Fibre Textile Biennial, *In the World: head, hand, heart*, is on tour from Tamworth Regional Gallery with work by 28 artists.

"Textiles are the oldest and most ubiquitous of humanity's expressive media," exhibition curator Vivonne Thwaites says.

"Familiarity and their long-shared history with people are among the things that make them such an effective medium for artists."

Thwaites is the first South Australian to curate the biennial.

Established in 1976, it aims to show the most innovative textile art works in Australia.

SA artists include Chris De Rosa, Sandy Elverd, Kay Lawrence and Michelle Nikou.

Thwaites says themes of identity, politics, gender, sex-

uality and the environment are present in the exhibition, while the use of textiles in the home has influenced a lot of the work.

"There's a lot of interest in the textile medium by traditional and contemporary practitioners," she says.

"Contemporary artists use traditional textile techniques because it's a strong language and often brings up memories of the past."

Thwaites says recycled materials feature throughout the exhibition.

Helen Fuller recalls her mother's rag bag in her wall installation *PAINT rags*, made from recycled baskets and rags. Fuller weaves different ideas into the piece, including the state of the art world and her place in it.

Sandy Elverd recycles old blankets in a work about the early days of settlement, when missions counted their indigenous population by the number of blankets distributed.

Catherine Grundy uses embroidered Australian flora and fauna to frame dying River Murray gum trees, while contemporary artist Michelle Nikou's tapestry tissue box-holders comment on the monotony and repetitiveness of everyday life.

In a reference to the early days of the Western Australian pearling industry, Kay Lawrence has painstakingly attached pearl buttons to a pair of blanket undertrousers, while emerging artist Sophie Morris felts and matts blankets and sculpts them into wearable objects.

"The fact textiles are rooted in the everyday gives them a tremendous advantage," Thwaites says.

"We will keep seeing them in the work of contemporary artists."

□ The 17th Tamworth Fibre Textile Biennial, *In the World: head, hand, heart*, is at Flinders University City Gallery until August 3.