



Baw Baw Shire mayor David Balfour (second left) and shire cultural development officer Karen Whittaker-Taylor (right) receive the Chinese art gift from Wild Dog artists (from left) Leonie Ryan, Laurie Collins and his wife Marian, Kerrie Warren, Jenny Murray-Jones and Eileen Harrison.

Chinese artwork a reminder of tour

The Wild Dog's from Down Under artists have returned from a successful international tour and last week made a special presentation to Baw Baw Shire of a piece of art gifted to the group by a prominent Chinese artist.

The six contemporary artists, who all live in the shire, began their ambitious project more than two years ago when they created a selection of 2D and 3D visual art titled and themed 'Gippsland'.

The artists included Kerrie Warren, Leonie Ryan, Eileen Harrison, Jenny Murray-Jones, Laurie Collins and Gary Miles.

The aim of their project was for each artist to tell a story through a touring exhibition, to foster interaction and understanding within their own community, but mostly, their great hope was that this eclectic mix of stories, dreams and ideas would resonate amongst other cultures and communities.

The exhibition was launched at the West Gippsland Arts Centre in August 2006. The collection then toured a variety of Victorian galleries before making the journey to Warragul's sister city Jiujiang, China on a cultural exchange in August this year.

The artists and the exhibition received great publicity, featuring on the front page of five newspapers and the

artists were interviewed for television twice.

They signed hundreds of catalogues and the exhibition was visited by many official guests as well as many locals including university students, artists, the young and the old.

The artists were also honored to be taken to visit the famous traditional Chinese painter Mr Fu Meiying during the exchange.

Mr Fu was born in Jiangxi province in 1928. He is well known for his plum blossom paintings and is famed for his work "A plum blossom in Southern China." He has exhibited widely in China and overseas.

Mr Fu painted a water color painting titled "Tall and Straight, Gentle Lotus", while the artists watched, which he later gave to them as a gift to bring back to the Baw Baw Shire.

The artists had the work professionally framed on their return to Warragul and formally presented the painting to mayor David Balfour at last week's council meeting.

During council's briefing session before the meeting, the artists gave a Powerpoint presentation of their trip and spoke to council about their success and meeting with Mr Fu.

The artwork will form part of the shire's official art collection and will hang in the council chamber in Warragul.