

# Images from war zone

**Iraq | Adrian Bernechich**

AUDIENCES will get a sneak peek deep inside a US military base in Iraq via the Monash Gallery of Art's present exhibition, *Camp Slayer*.

Melbourne-born photographer David Hempenstall compiled 165 images of the Baghdad base, which he called home for 18 months while working as part of a 24-man team of the US Army Corps of Engineers charged with analysing remains of mass graves.

The shots around *Camp Slayer* – a converted palace near Baghdad International Airport – depict scenes taken through the 29-year-old's Polaroid camera between August 2005 and January 2007.

"We were part of a mass graves investigation team," Hempenstall said. "It was pretty intense and so we needed to blow off steam and so some blokes would lift weights, some would run and I would take photos. I'd used the Polaroid camera because it was easy to document what I was taking right then and there."

Hempenstall, who now lives and

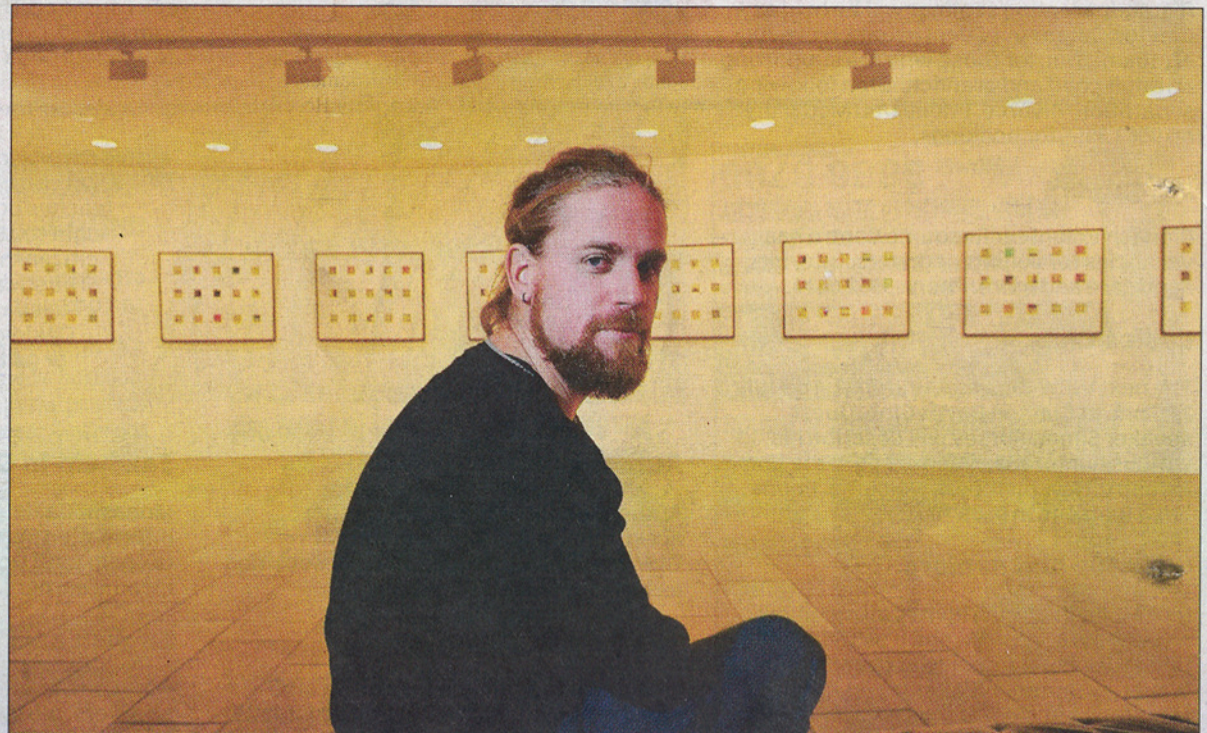
## ART ATTACK

- What: *Camp Slayer*
- Who: David Hempenstall
- Where: Monash Gallery of Art, 860 Ferntree Gully Rd, Wheelers Hill
- When: Until August 2
- Contact: 9562 1569

works in Bougainville, Papua New Guinea, said the exhibition included military vehicles and other "poorly built" infrastructure around the former palace.

Hempenstall said there was no real political message in the exhibition but added that after spending some time in region, he saw the war itself as being "handled incorrectly".

"It's one gigantic mess, and I hope we will not walk away from it in a worse condition than when we found it," he said.



David Hempenstall with pieces from his exhibition, *Camp Slayer*.