

## Mainly for women

# Special affinity with the Kimberley

The rugged and relatively underpopulated Kimberley attracts creative people. Echo reporter Kandy Curran recently caught up with Broome painter Helen Norton, who has put together a stunning exhibition.

Helen Norton has a special affinity with the Kimberley. After recently returning from a Kimberley painting expedition, she was greatly inspired by not only the power and beauty of the landscape, but the character and history of the area.

An emotive and thoroughly dynamic exhibition titled *Blood from Stone* has evolved, and is on display at Kreations Gallery in Broome from September 18.

The emphasis is on man's presence and the conflict of one culture meeting another. She focuses on the story of

"Jandamarra" or "Pidgeon", the Australian outlaw and hero who stood against white man's coming to the Leopold, Oscar and Napier Ranges with his cattle and sheep.

The work explores Pidgeon's journey from his first days as a young stockman, then an armed tracker, to outlaw at Windjana Gorge and on to his demise at Tunnel Creek.

Other pieces look at the sometimes ironic presence of man on the landscape, while other works study the pure abstract beauty of the Kimberley region.

Like a migratory bird, Helen has been drawn to Broome and outback. Her diminutive features and build contradict her incredible physical energy and enthusiasm for life. She also exudes a passion to create.

Born in Melbourne in 1961, Helen

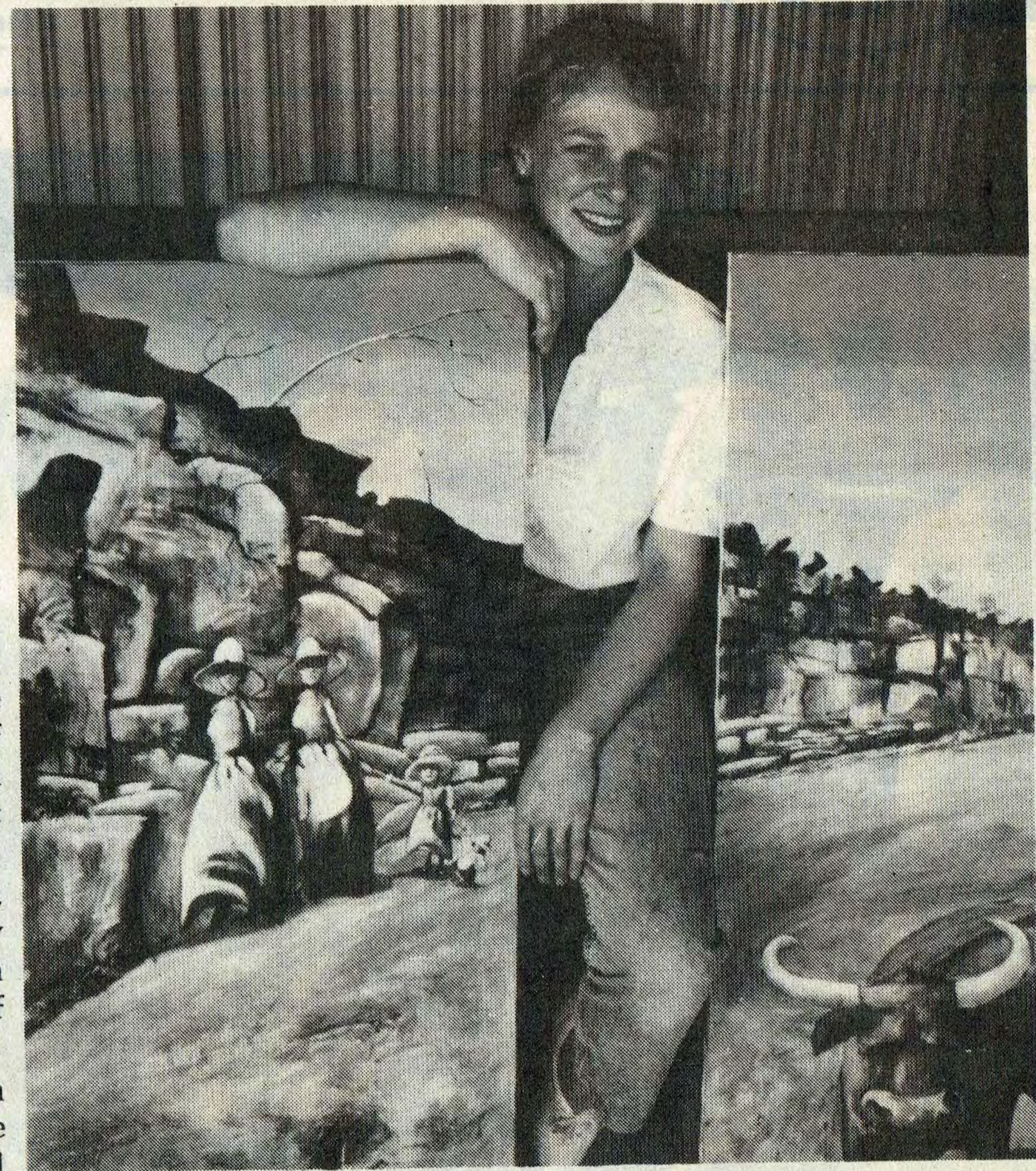
abandoned the city when she was 16 to spend the next 10 years in the South Australian and Northern Territory outback on stations and bush camp outposts.

"I participated in anything from professional shooting to fencing and station work of all kinds," she said.

"Although circumstances and conditions didn't allow much time to paint during these years, a lot of solid groundwork was laid down and stored for that elusive right time.

"I have no formal training. Life, looking and experimentation are my teachers. I use different mediums in many different ways as the spirit of each painting requires."

From her base in Broome, Helen sells locally, in Kununurra, the Pilbara, Perth, interstate and overseas.



PICTURED: Artist Helen Norton with parts of "Blood from Stone".