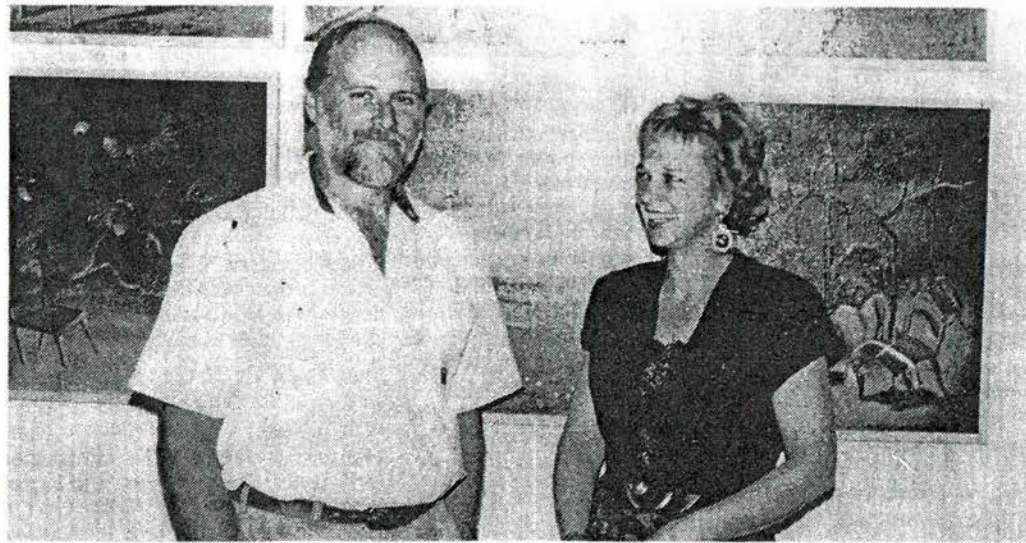


# Exhibition recalls issues of early contact period



ARTIST Helen Norton with Gordon Byers at the opening of her exhibition at Kreations Gallery.

RECENT works by Broome artist Helen Norton, currently on show at Kreations Gallery are stunning, and often stark, depictions of the life and issues that confronted Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people living in the north during the early contact period.

These issues continue to be a factor in present day Aboriginal/non-Aboriginal relations today.

Ms Norton's representations are fabulously done, unafraid, and often quirky. They address, without fear or favour, issues of conflict between the white settlers of Australia and its Aboriginal inhabitants.

The works are explorations of emotions and incidents, as she tries to understand the ironies that come from ignorance and fear.

"I've not set out to change the world, but I would like to pry its eyes open a bit," Ms Norton said.

"The culture of Aboriginal people must be saved. Many white Australians have lost their tracks ... and seem to be coming undone at the seams.

"We've got to acknowledge and respect the Aboriginal culture and spiritual ties to the land quickly, and learn from it."

Ms Norton maintains that she does not take sides in her depiction of early contact period history, but merely makes observations of incidents from a distanced viewpoint.

Ms Norton's uses a variety of mediums in a number of different ways — oil, gouache, acrylic, watercolours and charcoal — depending on what the spirit of each painting demands.

"Some of the pieces may not be what you could take casually, but no person has ever overthrown a haunting guilt or solved a problem of the past or present without looking at it in all its truth," she said.