

Stephanie Smiedt's *Nike II* work is sure to impress. RIGHT: Stephanie is off to New York to study.



Budding Border artist has the world at her feet

Identified as an outstanding talent, Stephanie's career has been fast-tracked by winning a scholarship to the US. **Sue Wallace** reports.

STEPHANIE Smiedt, who grew up on the Border, has been awarded a coveted art scholarship to study and work in New York.

She was the winner of the Marten Bequest Travelling Scholarship for painting which aims to advance the artistic careers of Australian artists.

Smiedt, 28, lives in Sydney and will use the scholarship to travel to New York next year to participate in the International Studio and Curatorial Program.

The program partners international artists, providing a studio space and critical feed back from New York critics and industry professionals.

"I was so excited when I heard, it will be a wonderful experience to work in New York and I plan to develop my next body of work there," she said.

"Just to have the studio space and be mentored by these people will be a great opportunity, also it will mean a lot to have on my resume that I have studied and painted in New York."

Since 1967, Marten Bequest Travelling

Scholarships have assisted mainly of young, talented Australians to explore and develop their artistic gifts abroad and interstate with many returning to shape the richness of the cultural landscape.

John Chisholm Marten, who died in 1966, established these scholarships through his estate.

He had a life long interest in the arts and literature and the estate grants the scholarships to deserving young artists to assist them in achieving their dreams.

Smiedt's interest in art was sparked by teachers at Albury and Xavier high schools before she attended boarding school in Sydney and studied at the National Art School in Sydney.

Over the years she has had several solo exhibitions, the latest called *Nike* was held at Depot II Gallery in Dank St, Sydney, and she hopes to take the exhibition to Melbourne later in the year.

"I am really looking forward to spending time developing and researching my next body of work, the *Nike* series took about 12 months to develop," she said.

Smiedt said she was taught to paint using traditional techniques with oils on linen, but she now used spray paints on linen to create her works.

"It is like I am using the old and the new and you could describe me as a collage artist as I stick and move things around and create different forms," she said.

"I am basically very interested in colours and abstract work."

Music is another of Smiedt's great loves and inspires her when she works.

"It takes me into a zone to paint and I just love creating my work," she said.

Her long term ambition is to have a gallery of her own in New York or Berlin and she sees the scholarship as a stepping stone to achieving her dreams.

"Painting just feels so natural for me and I throw myself into it and really enjoy it," she said.

She will leave for New York in February and hopes to have an exhibition at the Albury Regional Art Gallery, where she spent lots of time during her early years.