



Installation by Fiona Davies in foreground: Returning soldiers were often suffering from infectious diseases and other afflictions and were kept in isolation.

RESILIENCE in times of adversity

IN ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF THE 80TH ANNIVERSARY of the commencement of World War II Vivienne Dadour curated this exhibition — *Resilience in times of adversity* — which explores the personal, historical and political aspects of life for Australians in the years 1939 to 1950.

Using archival and historical materials sourced from people or the relatives of people who lived through that time, the exhibition looked at the multi-faceted nature of war — the tragedies as well as the resilience.

Anne Graham reflected on the harshness of the lives of women working at the Lithgow Small Arms Factory when accommodation for the workers and the young families they brought with them was in short supply and many lived in makeshift camps. Old sewing machines and empty cartridge cases form one installation.

Fiona Davies' floating silk sheets, with their ethereal lack of substance, reprise the unreality of their

return for those who were ill and still on a long road to recovery. These people were often put into isolation because of infectious diseases. This installation is a continuation of Davies' *Blood on Silk* project which originated as a cross-disciplinary collaborative project of ideas between a physicist, the late Dr Peter Domachuk of the University of Sydney, and Davies, a visual artist. It has been interesting to watch *Blood on Silk* morphing through a number of different incarnations here and overseas.

Sean O'Keefe researched the background to the place known as Hoaxville, the faux township where chemical weapons were stored in tunnels and sidings at Marrangaroo Army base in Lithgow.

The exhibition sourced historical materials and stories—oral histories, old film, photographs and letters—which had long been forgotten or even never known by many today. And Darug man Chris Tobin reflected on the Aboriginal soldiers, their contribution and valour while overlooked in their own country.

Photographs Blue Mountains City Art Gallery

