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**NEW HORIZONS:** Coopers Plains artist Febe Zylstra with some of her 'quite emotional' work, preparing for her first US exhibition.

# Artist's odyssey to Chicago

By **PENNY BRAND**

SHE says it's confronting. Some would prefer soulful.

The kind of painting that offers a deep feeling of emotion; one that can make sadness look beautiful.

Coopers Plains artist Febe Zylstra is taking her moody art to Chicago.

She joins artist Wayne Howie in

the international exhibition, *Are We There Yet? - The Australian Odyssey*, from June 17-24.

Zylstra, 42, said she began painting 13 years ago after a bout of post-natal depression left her desperate to try alternative therapies.

While admitting to still have "ups and downs", she can control her emotions through her art.

"As part of my recovery I got

into painting," she said. "My art has become my therapy. I paint, I do it to be healthy."

She has taken her art across Queensland but the Chicago exhibition will be her first major break overseas.

"We have an agent over there, she's Australian and has been over there for about seven to eight years," she said.

"She liked our work and

wanted to put it out there. As it turns out we've got support from the Australian Consul-General (Elizabeth Schick) who will be opening the exhibition."

Zylstra said she found her work through her dreams, memories, current socio-political issues and immediate surroundings.

Anchored within her work is a figure accompanied by a host of symbolic references, subtexts

and often humorous sentiments. "My work is really based on social commentary. A lot of my work is quite emotional, quite confronting," she said.

"In a subtle way I try to capture something that I notice in society. I guess a part of my title is as a society, are we there yet? There is that struggle, that hope."

■ Visit [www.zylstra.com.au](http://www.zylstra.com.au).