Art triggers debate

By EBONNIE LORD

An emerging art movement has turned the Premier’s head and has got intellectual circles talking.

Environmental Expressionism, first coined by Larrakeyah artist Peter Biram in 2003, is gaining momentum.

Last year the movement was launched by Premier Ted Baillieu, then opposition leader, when art, inspired by the movement, was exhibited at Melbourne’s Queens Hall captured his attention while walking past.

Mr Biram said he had stepped back from some circles for allowing the Coalition to be aligned with the movement.

“Although the movement is political, it is not party political,” Mr Biram told The Express on Thursday.

“It would be great to get Bob Brown involved but he is yet to show interest.”

“We are hoping to attract the premier’s attention again this year, when we hold another exhibition.”

Mr Biram said the movement was born out of concern about global warming and other environmental issues.

“Art can be used as a political tool to create dialogue, we are not saying this is the way things are, art opens up discussion,” he said.

“If we want to question the way things are we need to question why they are.”

A call to power for past civilizations where as politicians come and go,

Callomine artist Ursula Theinert, who lost her art and studio and an upwards of 30 pieces of work on Black Saturday, said she was concerned about the environment and had a special interest in forest management, erosion and waste, which she expressed through her art.

“We have just finished rebuilding the studio, it’s been a long hard slog,” Ms Theinert said.

“The good thing about art is that is it a less threatening way of confronting things, it can show things in a way that gets people talking, rather than polarising them.”

Former Larakeyah artist Kerrie Warren who had experienced the fires first hand said it was hard to bear about the floods with more people’s livelihoods destroyed.

“I was overwhelmed, it was overwhelming to see nature’s fury and the mess it left behind,” Ms Warren said.

Meanwhile, Mr Biram, Mr Theinert and Mr Warren along with Leonie Ryan are among a group of local artists exhibiting at the ‘Emergence: Art on the Move’ at Federation Square next week.

The exhibition runs from Friday to Sunday, 13 February in the Atrium and reproduced on the big screen in the Main Square.

Any artist interested in joining Environmental Expressionism should phone Peter Biram on 0408 586 666.