

Samantha Small

Mrs Allen's Empire



Body found in fire - Forrest

Saturday, 03 June 2006

Media Release ACT Policing

ACT Policing is investigating the death of an elderly lady, whose body was found in a house fire in Forrest earlier today. About 7.30am this morning, police and emergency services were called to a fire at 30 Empire Circuit in Forrest. The body of an elderly deceased female was located at the scene.

Police are currently investigating the circumstances surrounding the incident. ACT Policing Investigators and forensics are currently at the scene. A brief is being prepared for the Coroner.

The identity of the lady has been confirmed, however police will not be releasing those details as there are still other family members who need to be notified.

Anyone who may have witnessed the fire or who may know anything about the circumstances surrounding the fire, and who has not yet spoken to police, is asked to contact Crime Stoppers.

Mrs Allen's Empire is a new series of photographs that document the interior of the home left abandoned after a tragic fire in 2006. Located among the diplomatic residencies of one of Canberra's most prestigious suburbs, the residence at 30 Empire Circuit was left to deteriorate and the once-loved garden allowed to grow wild before it was eventually earmarked for demolition in January 2008.

A day after the fences were put in place and the day before the bulldozers moved in, the artist gained entry to house through a side window to record the horror of its story. Inside she discovered not horror, but a ghostly, tragic beauty, with the impressions of a private inferno still clearly marked on every surface. Although empty, the presence of Mrs Maisie Allen (whose identity was revealed through uncollected mail) was felt all about, taking visible form in the handprints smeared across the main bedroom wall and silhouettes of personal possessions outlined in ash throughout the house.

With the house now long gone to developers, this series of photographs is now all that remains of *Mrs Allen's Empire*, a temporary monument to transience and tragedy.

Uncertain Landscapes

Dianne Tanzer Gallery

22 November - 21 December 2008