Foster at the heart of festival

By Helen Musa

ONE of Canberra's creative stars will be at the heart of a coming celebration of Canberra as a leading-edge design city.

With "Luminary: Remembering Robert Foster," to be set in the ActewAGL foyer's "Ossolites," curator Grace Cochrane has put together 50 handmade works by the late Foster as well as his legendary FINK water jugs, to be sourced from the public.

"DESIGN Canberra," now in its third year, is built on the idea that this is one of the world's most liveable cities in a celebration running over four weekends with most of its content free.

Rachael Coghlan, CEO of Craft ACT's Craft and Design Centre, notes that last year's nine-day event saw 26,000 people across the doors.

Intended to develop audiences, make marketplace connections and solidify the reputation of Canberra as a global city of design, it will feature more than 100 separate exhibitions and initiatives.

Julian Hobbs, better known for his theatre work, has been engaged by Craft ACT as creative producer. Highlights, he says, will include visits from Filipino "Trashion" designer and installation artist Francis Sollano, director of the International Triennial of Design for Social Innovation of Liege, Giovanna Massoni, interior designer David Trubridge and urban renewal guru Marcus Westbury.

An inspired hook-up with the new Vibe Hotel at the airport will see "monumental" glass sculptures by Elizabeth Kelly and other festival events.

In a new initiative, DESIGN Canberra has invited people to open up private homes to the public and invited young creators to artists to create "little pop-ups" in their spaces.

Graphic artist Byrd will lead a tour of legal graffiti sites around Belconnen before an interactive evening of live art and paste ups at La De Da on Lake Ginninderra.

There will be a focus on landscape architecture in the first week and a collaboration with "Contour 556".

The Australian Institute of Architects will run bus tours of notable ACT houses and gardens and the National Portrait Gallery will host "Undercurrent" design markets, November 18-20.

At the heart of DESIGN Canberra is the opportunity to visit our own leading makers in their studios on each Saturday, when select studios will be open 11am-4pm. As well, Canberra snapper Adam McGrath has photographed local designers and makers for a signature exhibition at Canberra Region and Visitor Centre.

DESIGN Canberra, October 27-November 25, full program information at designcanberrafestival.com.au