THE ARTS

Parncutt tipped to replace Myers as NGV president

By GINA McCOLL

THE controversial succession of Allan Myers as president of the National Gallery of Victoria's board is all but concluded, with the Baillieu government believed to be poised to announce Melbourne investment banker Bruce Parncutt as his replacement today.

A former senior vice-president of Merrill Lynch, Mr Parncutt has served on the NGV's board of trustees since 2005 and has chaired the NGV Foundation, which handles donations and bequests of funds and art, since 1995.

Mr Myers, an eminent QC, originally announced he would retire from the board in April after nine years, a few months before former NGV director Gerard Vaughan, allowing for comprehensive renewal at the top. Mr Myers' term was later extended amid a controversy over his potential succession by retailer Naomi Milgram.

Trustees may serve only nine years in most circumstances, meaning Mr Parncutt could serve until 2014.

Like Mr Myers and Ms Milgrom, Mr Parncutt has been a generous arts benefactor, while his investments have ranged from the foodie (the King Island Company) to the bookish (Text Media, sold to Fairfax in 2003).

Spokespeople at the gallery and for the Premier and Minister for the Arts declined to comment.

SPACE

BAMBOO ART The Ian Potter Museum of Art's slightly unusual housing of antiquities and contemporary art is something Indian artist Jitish Kallat has chosen to address in his exhibition Circa, which includes a 120-part sculpture evoking bamboo scaffolding, commonly used in Asian countries. Kallat's scaffolding is adorned with reliefs of animals devouring each other (detail pictured below), an image he says was inspired by imagery on the central railway station in his city, Mumbai. "I see it as a peculiar image of survival and sustenance, where every animal is eating something else that also has a life. To me it became an alphabet of survival that could be inscribed on the surface of the bamboo.”

As well as responding to the historically layered architecture of the museum, the exhibition involves opening up some of the usually closed areas used to hold its antiquities. Co-curator Natalie King says “the exhibition spans six months with duration a core theme - some works will appear briefly while others will be anchored within the museum for the entire time.” Kallat's work is being shown alongside four moving-image works by fellow Indian artist Gigi Scaria, a precursor to a larger exhibition by him next year. The two artists are included in a forum to be held at the Sidney Myer Asia Centre on Monday night.

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