

# The meaning of home

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AN EMPTY shop on Dangar St has been temporarily converted into a space where members of the public can come together to explore ideas about the meaning of home.

Standing around a table overflowing with materials donated by the Armidale community - including fabrics, tin cans, string, raw fleeces, baubles, wool, dolls, memorabilia, photos, wine bottles and even animal skulls - people are chatting and sharing a little about themselves as they fashion objects that will become part of a collaborative art installation.

Everybody's fingers are busy: Cat MacGregor, one of the workshop facilitators, is knitting a pink-wool heart; Rita Winiger is weaving a bird's nest from cotton and fleece; Jenny Taminiau is constructing a mother and child figurine; Eileen Tomkins is doing a drawing of her cat, using black paint, buttons and pipe cleaners; while Laura Meehan is carefully inscribing song lyrics onto small pieces of paper.

The workshops are being run by visiting artist, Hiromi Tango, who has been taking them to communities around Australia since February 2010, along with her husband Craig Walsh, who specialises in large-scale digital projections.

"When someone comes in, usually



**BUSY FINGERS:** Cat MacGregor, Myfanwy Gullifer, Eileen Tomkins, Hiromi Tango and Jenny Taminiau turning ideas about home into artefacts

I ask what does the notion of home mean to you?" Hiromi said. "And ultimately I'd like to know who you are."

The Home project has come to Armidale in connection with Digital Odyssey, a Museum of Contemporary Art touring project, and local community arts organisation, Beyond Empathy.

Although it is part of the Just One Less initiative to raise awareness about alcohol consumption, Hiromi Tango says people who join in the workshops are not being specifically instructed to bring that issue into their artworks.

"We provide the materials, like

bottles and cans, so people can interact with them, but we are not saying let's talk about alcohol," she said. "I don't want to limit the areas people think about. It's entwined but in a subtle way."

Hiromi hopes that the way the project operates helps to engender a sense of community.

"You have to make an effort to make a community," she said.

"Life is so busy that unless we make the effort to slow down, we don't have a chance to be intimate with ourself and others."

The Home workshops will be held in the shopfront next to Funk Hair on

Dangar St, opposite the Commonwealth Bank, until Wednesday June 22.

Local facilitators helping Hiromi are ceramics artist Myfanwy Gullifer, and Cat MacGregor, a printmaker and art therapist.

People are invited to join in from Tuesday to Friday, 9am - 4pm, Thursday 9am - 6pm, and Saturday 9am - 12pm.

The finished installation will be on display daily from Friday June 24 until Sunday July 3, and portraits of Armidale people taken by Craig Walsh will be projected onto the completed screen.