

# Artist's works highlight dyslexia

By FELICITY WOLFE

GROWING up an undiagnosed dyslexic shapes much of the raw emotion contained in British artist Mackenzie Thorpe's works.

Whether a giant bronze statue, a simple resin casting or a delicate pastel painting, each piece evokes a feeling of either hope, joy or despair.

To help raise awareness of dyslexia and what can be done to help children who suffer from it cope and succeed at school and in life, a monumental exhibition of Mr Thorpe's work is on display at Millbrook until tomorrow.

One of the organisers of the exhibition, Guy Pope-Mayell, of the Cookie Muncher's Charitable Trust, said the despair is a common feeling for dyslexics, who are often labelled "stupid or dumb" when they struggle to read and write. He hopes the exhibition will enhance a growing awareness of the "gift of dyslexia".

"Now that it [dyslexia] is on the radar, the shame goes and people are more willing to come forward and say 'I'm dyslexic'," Mr Pope-Mayell said.

"Mackenzie is a walking example of a man who has lived with the shame and got past it."

Though Mr Thorpe was unable to attend the opening of the exhibition, his Australian and New Zealand agent, Trevor Harvey, said the artist's early struggles to be understood often came through in his work.

"He is a very emotional artist and his dyslexia has been a major influence in his life," he said.

Other influences evident are his working class Northern England upbringing, which brings an appreci-

ation of the hard labour of the working man and the dignity of having work to do.

Though many pieces acknowledge life's struggles and despair, many pieces highlight the importance of friendship, love and hope.

Mr Harvey said the exhibition was put together in "record time" and was perhaps one of the most comprehensive collections of Mr Thorpe's work around.

Admission to the exhibition is free and proceeds from sales will go towards the Dyslexia Foundation of New Zealand.

The exhibition is open from 11am to 2pm at the Millhouse Conference Centre at Millbrook until tomorrow.



The despair of being misunderstood . . . British artist Mackenzie Thorpe's bronze statue with, left, his Australian and New Zealand agent Trevor Harvey and Guy Pope-Mayell, of the Cookie Muncher's Charitable Trust.

PHOTO: FELICITY WOLFE