



Dee Why portrait painter Evert Ploeg on stage during *Namatjira*.

Evert brushes speaking role

Rod Bennett

DEE Why portrait painter Evert Ploeg said his latest job is like nothing he's ever done before.

Evert is a cast member of a play now running at Belvoir St, *Namatjira*.

"I don't have a speaking role or do any acting, my actions are only to paint," he said.

Evert begins painting the lead character, Trevor Jamieson, who is playing *Namatjira*, at about 7.30pm.

"The audience comes in at about 7.50pm and I continue painting for another 10 minutes or so," he said.

"The play begins and I keep painting for five minutes and then Trevor becomes more animated."

Evert leaves the stage area and returns a couple more times in the first act. "Then it's intermission and I begin painting again," he said.

The Archibald Prize finalist, and twice People's Choice winner of the national portraiture prize, has completed one portrait and is now working on another since the show began at the end of last month.

"I takes some time to do one painting," he said. "I'm not doing one a night or anything

THE ESSENTIALS

WHAT: *Namatjira*

WHEN: Until November 7

WHERE: Belvoir St Theatre, Upstairs Theatre, 25 Belvoir St, Surry Hills

COST: \$57, concession \$35

DETAILS:

www.belvoir.com.au

like that. I just keep going until the painting is finished."

Albert *Namatjira* was the first Indigenous Australian citizen.

"In 1956, his portrait was entered in the Archibald Prize and it won," Evert said. "He died a year later."

The artist said that his role in the play sets the tone for the drama.

Evert said his painting was unashamedly western and that there was no linkage to traditional Aboriginal painting.

"There is an energy to this work and a rawness," he said. "But it's from life. It's big and bold and really good."