



**Thalia
Blunden
(detail), by
Bev Tosh.**

▶ *War Brides: Leap of Faith*, Bev Tosh (Otago Settlers Museum)

BEV TOSH has paid poignant tribute to World War 2 war brides in her exhibition at the Settlers Museum. These women forged love through tumult, taking courageous leaps of faith in doing so. In many cases, the loves were formed with men stationed overseas, and as a result the women often uprooted their lives to travel to their husbands' homelands.

In a multimedia display, photographs of war brides have been treated in numerous ways. The exhibition is bookended by two series of photographs projected on to white parachutes. These symbolise the leap into the unknown taken by the women and simultaneously reflect in their form the shapes of wedding dresses.

Between these stands a row of wooden panels, each painted with an image from a bridal photograph. These panels, which carefully use the grain of the rough timber to enhance the images, stand shoulder to shoulder, a rank of women to match the military ranks of the men. The often fragmentary paintings speak of intrepid hope, and the images form a fine centrepiece to the exhibition.

Other works displayed include a series of "tear bottles" containing individual portraits encased in vials of sea water, representing both the long journey of the women to their new homes and their shed tears.