THE relationship between Eyre Peninsula artists and their West Coast home will be explored in an exhibition as part of the Adelaide Fringe Festival.

The exhibition - tough(er) love: art from Eyre Peninsula features artists from around the region including Port Lincoln, Whyalla and Ceduna, as well as smaller regional communities.

It will be launched in the Flinders University City Gallery at the State Library of South Australia later this month.

Eyre Peninsula is one of the toughest places in South Australia in which to be an artist but it gives much in return as a region, offering freedom, access to landscapes of spectacular beauty and traditional significance, and fostering a strong sense of belonging.

The region, so far removed from perceived centres of culture with their audiences, galleries and art schools, demands that its artists be very self-reliant and resourceful.

To survive and develop as an artist takes a special kind of commitment.

The result of a year-long project initiated by Country Arts SA, tough(er) love explores the complex relationships twelve West Coast artists have forged with their region.

The exhibition comprises new work by painters and sculptors John Baily, Cindy Durant, Amanda Franklin, Siv Grava, Joylene Haynes, Karl James, Elma Lawrie, Verna Lawrie, Beaver Lennon, Leith O’Malley, Pungkai and John Turpie.

It challenged them to create works that offer insights about making art and their sense of place within the region and the wider art community.

The exhibition is a first for Port Lincoln artist Amanda Franklin who will have six or seven pieces on show.

Ms Franklin has had artworks in major exhibitions before but it is the first time she has created a body of work for an exhibition.

She said curator John Neylon initially visited Eyre Peninsula to see work by a number of artists, then selected 12 from different cultural and personal perspectives to continue working with, toward the exhibition.

He kept in touch with them throughout the process.

Ms Franklin said her work had a strong connection with the West Coast, celebrating country and taking inspiration from the natural environment, and that was reflected in the pieces she created for the exhibition.

The exhibition will be launched on Friday, February 22 and will be open to the public from Saturday, February 23 until Sunday, April 28 in the at the Flinders University Gallery in the State Library of South Australia.

Exhibition curator John Neylon will give a public talk on Saturday, February 23 at 2pm.

Once the exhibition closes in Adelaide it will tour South Australia, including Ceduna (July 1-August 15), Port Lincoln (August 24-October 6), Elliston (October 16-December 1) and Streaky Bay (December 11-January 29).
Breaking News on the Tough(er) Love exhibition.....

tough(er) love
23 February 2013 - 12 April 2015
Curated by John Neylon

Eyre Peninsula is a tougher place than most in which to make art. The region, so far removed from perceived centres of culture with their audiences, galleries and art schools, demands that its artists be very self-reliant and resourceful. To survive and develop as an artist takes a special kind of commitment. But it gives much in return as a place which offers a sense of freedom from urbanised life, access to landscapes of spectacular beauty and traditional significance, and the knowledge or sense of belonging to this place, known to many as the ‘West Coast.’

In 2010 selected artists from across the region and from different cultural and personal perspectives were invited to explore and express the complexities of this ‘tough love’ affair from which there is ultimately no walking away, no letting go.

The outcome is Tough(er) Love, to be presented by Country Arts SA in association with Flinders University Art Museum, at the Flinders City Gallery.

Comprising new work by both Indigenous and non-Indigenous painters and sculptors – John Baily, Cindy Durant, Amanda Franklin, Siv Grava, Joylene Haynes, Karl James, Elma Lawrie, Verna Lawrie, Beaver Lennon, Leith O’Malley, Pungkai and John Turpie – the exhibition reflects the practices of those working out of larger population centres including Port Lincoln, Whyalla and Ceduna, as well as smaller regional communities.

For official opening details and touring dates please visit:

Siv Grava, Terrain 3, 2012, acrylic on canvas
Tougher love on display

FLINDERS University Art Museum and City Gallery is presenting an exhibit titled ‘tough(er) love’, which presents an expose on the enduring love affair between art and place occurring within the Eyre Peninsula.

Featuring new works by Indigenous and non-indigenous artists from the Eyre Peninsula, the exhibition is promised to tell a visually compelling story of passion, commitment and belonging in one of the toughest regions in South Australia.

The result of a year-long project initiated by Country Arts SA, funded through their ‘New Exhibitions Fund’ and curated by John Neylon, this exhibition explores the complex relationships twelve West Coast artists have forged with the landscapes they have captured.

It will reflect on the practices of these artists working out of population centres including Port Lincoln, Whyalla and Ceduna, as well as smaller regional communities. Artists with works displayed include John Bailey, Joylene Haynes, Elma Lawrie, Cindy Durant, Verna Lawrie, John Turpie and Beaver Lennon.

‘tough(er) love’ has challenged the participating artists to reflect on their practice to create works which offer insights about making art and their sense of place within the region and the wider art community.

Common themes amongst the works on display include representations and celebrations of country, individual and community histories, nature as inspiration, the impact of change and exploration of inner life.

Alex Reid, Group Executive Director of Arts and Cultural Affairs, Department of Premier and Cabinet officially launched the exhibition at the Gallery on Friday, February 22.

The exhibition is presented in association with the Adelaide Fringe Festival 2013.

The exhibition continues until Sunday.
TOUGH JOURNEY FOR ARTISTS

Two years ago John Neylon embarked on a journey unlike any he had in his years as an art curator.

His brief, from Country Arts SA, was to locate and engage artists on Eyre Peninsula for an exhibition in Adelaide.

Neylon knew that artists in remote areas worked under different conditions to their city counterparts. What would he find? And what kind of art emerges from a place of extraordinary beauty but considerable hardship?

tough(er) love, at Flinders University City Gallery, addresses these questions and more.

It’s eye-opening in several respects, with stunning works in painting and sculpture by 12 artists who span the length and breadth of the West Coast.

John Baily, Cindy Durant, Amanda Franklin, Siv Grava, Joylene Haynes, Karl James, Elma Lawrie, Verna Lawrie, Beaver Lennon, Leith O’Malley, Purkgai and John Turpie live there for different reasons but are bound by their commitment to art and place.

“The title tough(er) love just leapt out at me one day,” Neylon says. “To be an artist these days is always hard work but when you work in remote circumstances, where there’s really no infrastructure, you’ve got to be committed.”

Neylon says extreme weather, bushfires and failed crops are among the biggest challenges facing West Coast communities.

But they are by no means the only ones, something he became acutely aware of when he visited glass artist Cindy Durant.

Durant lives with her husband and son in extreme isolation at Cactus Beach.

She was leading Neylon to her studio behind her house when she cautioned him to stop.

“I said, ‘what’s going on?’” Neylon says.

“She said, ‘Oh, we often get some big brown snakes in the kiln shed here, just want to make sure there’s no slipper marks’.

“I said, ‘what happens if you get bitten?’

“She said ‘I’ve got a plan’.”

Durant’s plan involves travelling roughly 20km to the nearest town, Penong, where she assures Neylon someone would help her get to Ceduna.

As well as the exhibition Country Arts SA had another objective for the project — to see whether a curator could push the artists in new directions, or perhaps inspire them to extend their practice.

“Artists working in country areas often have a good market for their work and often work to commission,” he says. “It’s great for business but sometimes can make them a bit risk-averse.”

During his visits Neylon offered feedback and suggestions. The artists responded and the results have extended well beyond the works on display in Adelaide.

“I got an email from Cindy today to say she has been accepted for quite a prestigious scholarship in America,” Neylon says.

“The artists are all reporting in and saying that being involved in the project has led to other things. I think it’s an unfolding adventure.”

Elliston artist Siv Grava makes landscape paintings of captivating luminosity. As one of the better-known artists, Grava, in her fifties, has won awards for her work and a loyal following.

At the other end of the spectrum is Beaver Lennon who works out of Ceduna. A relative newcomer to SA’s arts scene, Lennon is still in his twenties but already attracting a lot of attention.

He hails from a family of respected indigenous artists, including his grandmother, Verna Lawrie, and her sister, Elma Lawrie.

Neylon says Lennon’s landscape paintings follow in the tradition of Albert Namatjira and the Hermannsburg school.

“The country he depicts traverses vast areas of land which encompass the Great Australian Bight westward from Ceduna, the Gawler Ranges, the Nullarbor Plains to the west and the Breakaways at Cooper Pedy, and further inland to the north,” he says.

Neylon says tough(er) love doesn’t end when the exhibition closes in Adelaide on April 28.

An SA regional tour next year will take in 14 venues, from large centres to small towns.

“So the journey continues,” he says.

LOUISE NUNN

tough(er) love is at Flinders University City Gallery until April 28.
ABOVE: Red Lake or Painted Lake,
Joylene Hames, 2012 acrylic on canvas, 850mm x 1988mm

LEFT: The Head of the Bight,
Beaver Lemon, 2012 acrylic on canvas, 822mm x 1175mm
‘Tough love’ at Kapunda gallery

Tough(er) love- art from the Eyre Peninsula, is the highly anticipated exhibition on display at Kapunda Community Gallery Inc. until June 16.

In 2010 Country Arts SA Visual Arts Touring Program in association with the Flinders University Art Museum began working with selected artists from across the region.

They were invited to explore and express the complexities of this ‘tough love’ affair from which there is no walking away, no letting go. To survive and develop in the remote West Coast an artist needs a special kind of commitment.

But the rewards are a sense of freedom from urbanised life, access to landscapes of spectacular beauty and traditional significance, the sense of belonging.

Curated by John Neylon, the exhibition comprises new work by both indigenous and non-indigenous painters and sculptors: John Bailey, Cindy Durant, Amanda Franklin, Siv Grava, Joylene Haynes, Karl James, Elma Lawrie, Verna Lawrie, Beaver Lennon, Leith O’Malley, Pungkai and John Turpie.

The works presented at Kapunda, a limited selection from the entire exhibition, include paintings, prints and glass work.

Open daily 10am to 4pm the Gallery is located above the Library, corner of Main and Hill Streets, Kapunda.

Free admission, with access for the disabled.
Opening for tough love

COUNTRY Arts SA’s Visual Arts regional touring exhibition 'tough(er) love', which will showcase art from across the Eyre Peninsula, will receive a double opening in Ceduna.

The exhibition will first open at the WestArt Gallery at Ceduna Memorial Hall on Poynton Street from July 4 to August 2, then at the Ceduna District Health Services Foyer on Eyre Highway from July 1 to August 15.

Ceduna’s community arts group ‘WestArt’ and the Ceduna District Health Services will host high profile opening at both venues on July 5.

This will be the first time tough(er) love will be on display on the Eyre Peninsula since it’s opening exhibition in Adelaide.

Manager of GP Plus Health Centre Rebecca Kavanagh will officially open the exhibition at the Ceduna District Health Services Foyer from 6pm, and Ceduna Mayor Allan Suter will officially open the exhibition on behalf of WestArt at the Ceduna Memorial Hall Gallery at 7pm.

Country Arts SA CEO Steve Saffell will attend both openings.

In 2010 Country Arts SA Visual Arts Touring Program, with the Flinders University Art Museum, invited Eyre Peninsula artists to express the complexities of their ‘tough love’ affair with their native region.

The exhibition consists of new works by both Indigenous and non-Indigenous painters and sculptors, including John Bailey, Cindy Durant, Joylene Haynes, Elma Lawrie, Verna Lawrie and Beaver Lennon.

Curator John Neylon said tough(er) love is the result of a curatorial process, which supported each artist in reflecting on and extending their practice.

“This process played a crucial role in the creation of outstanding and visually dynamic works for the exhibition,” he said.

Mr Saffell said this exhibition is supported as part of Country Arts SA’s ‘Learning Connections’ arts access program.

“Country Arts SA has an ethos which supports and showcases diverse contemporary work by regional South Australian artists,” he said.

The exhibition at the WestArt Gallery will be open Thursday to Friday from 10am to 2pm, and Saturday from 9am to 12pm.

The exhibition at the District Health Service Foyer Gallery will be open Monday to Friday from 8.30am to 6pm.

All members of the public are welcome to attend the official opening on July 5.

New work: ‘Seven Sisters and the Old Man’ by Verna Lawrie, one of the works which will be on display during the tough(er) love exhibition.