Biennale unites artists around world

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AS October's Mildura Palimpsest Biennale draws near, two international artists have been exploring the connections between Mildura and their homelands.

The biennale is celebrating its 10th anniversary and 70 artists around the world will be represented.

Bill Balaskas, one of the artists taking part, is originally from Greece and studied economics there before moving to the UK to study art.

He has been conducting research in Mildura before deciding on what his biennale project would look like, but he said meeting local Greek community members had provided inspiration.

He has interviewed remaining elders who had migrated here following World War II, which drew parallels to the younger generations in Greece facing financial uncertainty.

“It was a very emotional and interesting experience because the kind of stories they were telling me were very similar to the stories you might hear from young people at the moment in Greece who leave the country because of the economic crisis to try to find a better future,” Mr Balaskas said.

“This is the exact same kind of narrative that you would hear from people (here) in the late ’70s, early ’80s or even ’90s... so I’m very interested in trying to highlight those connections.”

Junichiro Iwase, a Canadian artist of Japanese ancestry, has been in Mildura three weeks and for his biennale project has completed an installation in the glass atrium at the ADEA building.

The material Mr Iwase works with is egg shells and he decided to continue the use of natural materials in Mildura with the help of branches found by the Murray River.

He said he was curious to see if there was a connection between where he’s from and Mildura, while also opening up discussion around disposable materials.

“(I wanted) to transform something people don’t normally think about, or take for granted, and to try to transform it and try to communicate something that normally people just see as discardable material,” Mr Iwase said.

“This year’s biennale theme is “Wherever all at once... here” and artists who have completed projects throughout the year are expected to return for the October long-weekend event.

Palimpsest curator Jonathan Kimberley said the theme was about global discussion in the local place.

“Every artist comes to do a residency over a period of time in the region and a number of projects also run over a long period of time,” Mr Kimberley said.

“The October long-weekend is like a celebration, it’s really about everyone coming and having an experience together.”