



A search for space

A month ago, New Zealand painter [Judy Millar](#) was contemplating installing her works for the 2009 [Venice Biennale](#) in one of the Italian city's historic churches.

Last week, the plans were changing rapidly after diocesan officials advised that restoration work on the Renaissance Sant'Antonin Church might not be completed in time for the opening of the New Zealand exhibits on June 4.

While her fellow New Zealand artist at the 2009 Biennale, sculptor [Francis Upritchard](#), will exhibit in Fondazione Claudio Buziol at the Palazzo Mangilli-Valmarana, two possible new venues are currently being explored for Millar's exhibition.

Creative New Zealand (CNZ) is being assisted by the Venice authorities and representatives of the Catholic diocese of Venice, who have already offered two alternative sites – the cool classicism of La Maddalena church, the place in which New Zealand artist Michael Stephenson's *This is the Trekka* was exhibited at the 2003 Biennale, or the 16th-century Chiesa di San Fantin near St Mark's Square.

Millar says she is enthusiastic about the opportunities the two new venues offer.

Her exhibition was fortunately designed to be flexible to fit with different spaces.

"This is just another step in the



The Fondazione Claudio Buziol: Site for New Zealand art during the 2009 [Venice Biennale](#).

process and provides some exciting possibilities for me to adapt the show in interesting ways," she says.

Upritchard's exhibition space involves three rooms facing the Grand Canal.

"This venue provides a big opportunity to have a banner visible from the Grand Canal," New Zealand's Commissioner at the 2009 Biennale, Jenny Harper, says.

"Iceland is showing next door, and although the foundation is not normally open to large numbers of visitors, accommodations can be made to ensure that Francis's component is well visited.

"Several countries, even those with a pavilion in the Giardini have more than one site and ensure that the marketing and publicity makes the most of the advantages of this.

"Despite the more complicated negotiations for two sites, I am confident that this decision ensures the best possible chance of each artist making work of which we can all be proud."

Upritchard continues to create an imaginary landscape with its references to the 15th and 16th-century Flemish painters Hieronymus Bosch and Pieter Bruegel. It will be populated with handmade figures set against architectural structures constructed from glass, wood, ceramics and leather.

"The landscape will combine the antique with the futuristic, making the scene both familiar and unsettling. The work explores ideas about time, hope and evolutionary change," CNZ says.

Millar has painted a series of large-scale canvases, which will "challenge the conventions of display and exhibition design" by allowing viewers to move inside" the works.

Inspired in part by the great Venetian painters of the 16th century, including Tintoretto, the project aims to create a new perspective on and questions about European painting traditions, particularly the relationship between the art object and the exhibition space.