Poetry of the rib takes out the Blak

Cathy Pryor

SHOUFAY Derz, a 2
old Sydney art studer
won this year's $10,000
prize for religious art
work inspired by the
poetry of ancient Persi

The final-year stude
the College of Fine A
Sydney was awarded th
for a series of prints
Linking Back (Part 1). I
first major prize Derz h
and puts her in the co
of previous Blake w
including John C
George Gittoes,
Friend and Justin O
who won the inaugura
in 1951 also at the age o

Derz said yesterday s
not come from a re
background and wa
working out what spiri
meant to her. Her wor
digitally manipulated
tography, with image
resemble the bones of
cage superimposed on a
reflective background.

The aim, she said, w
the viewer to be drawn
state of contemplation s
to the meditation in th
poetry that was w
around the 13th centur

"Obviously my work r
where I am as a person
age, and I am just try
find my way," she said.

The Blake prize was
ded by a group in Melb
including a Catholic pri
architect, a lawyer and
ish businessman in an
to raise the standard o
temporary religious art
cross religious boundar

Over the years the
has attracted contr
over how artists hav
trayed religion.

More than 300 entrie
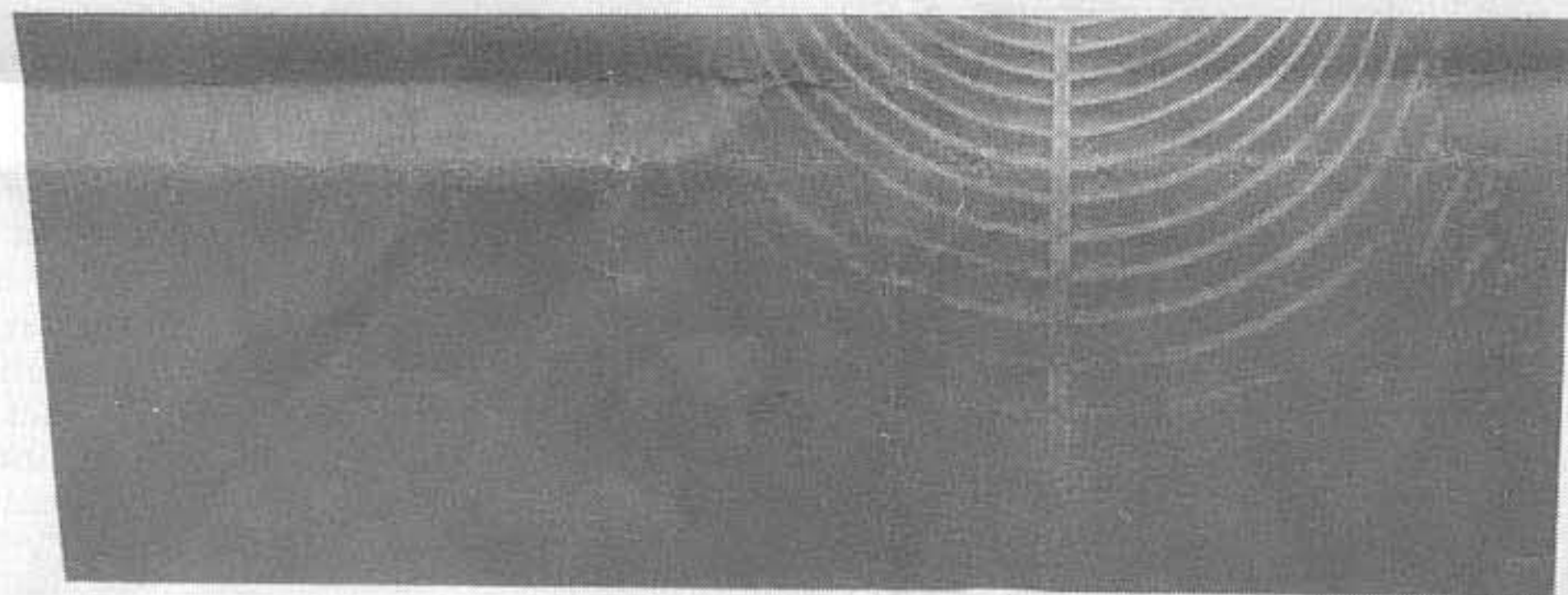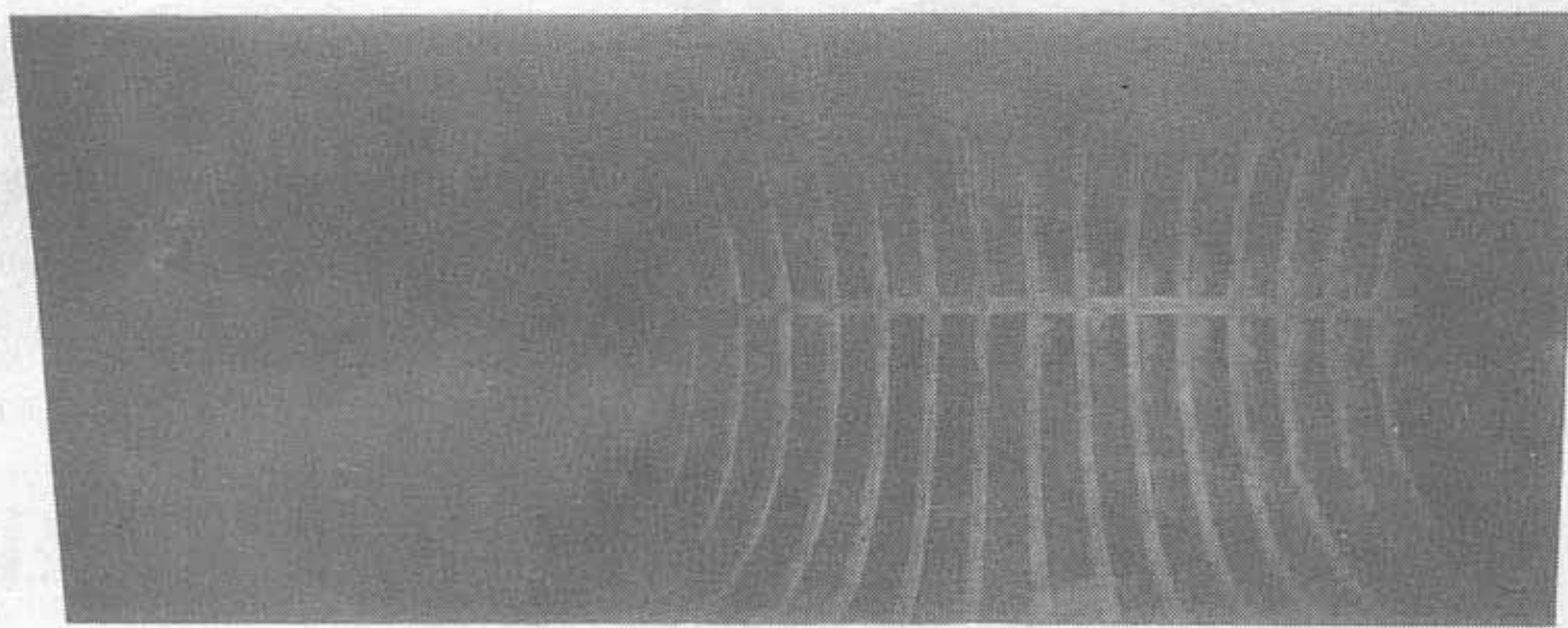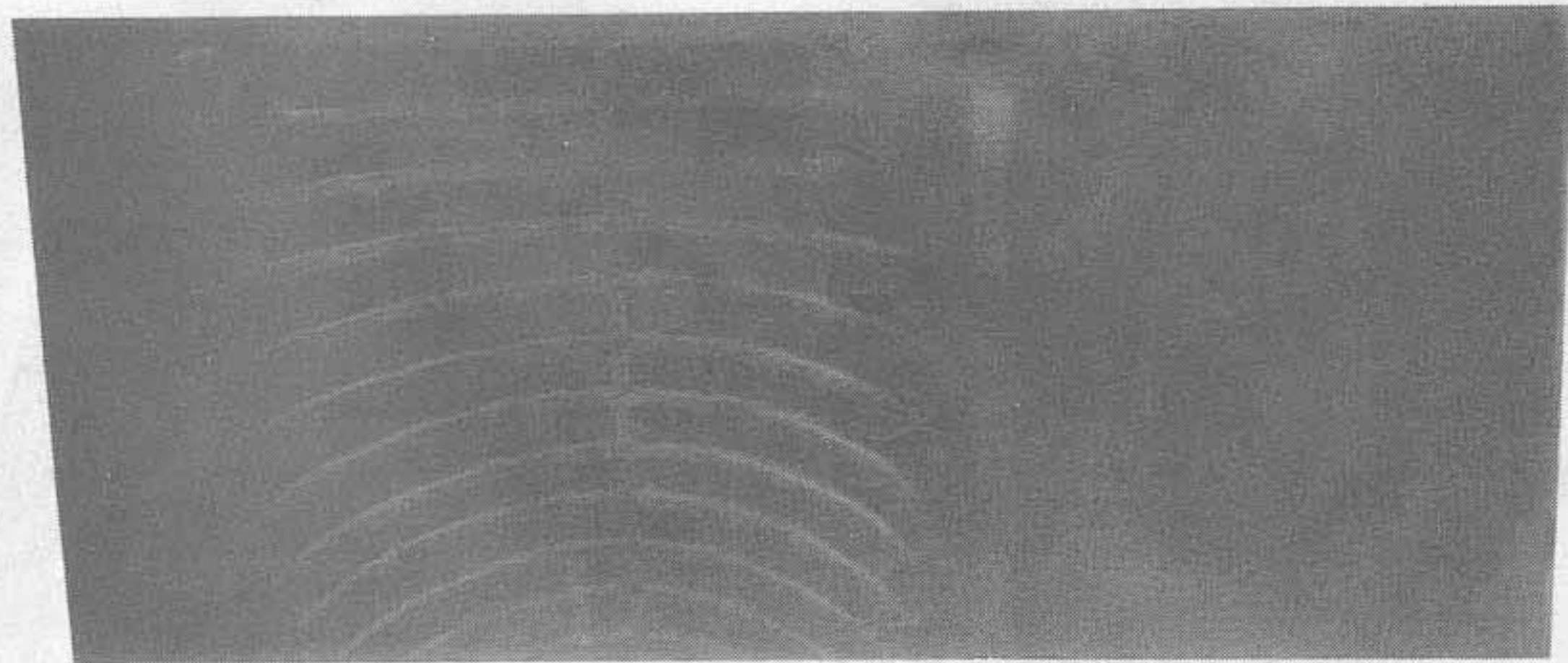received for this year's
with 81 chosen for disp
Sydney University's Si
mann Black Gallery
works will tour regiona
and Victoria.

Included in the exh
are traditional depicti
religious scenes to mo
temporary works su
Barry Tate's *The Appa*
which consists of a cur
gold discs lit up to rev
image of the Virgin Ma

Blake Society chair
Petersen said while r
would be able to disce
religious elements in al
works on display, tha
part of the "excitement
whole concept of the B

Derz's work, while no
ously religious, provi
contrast between ligh
dark, and would provid
ers with varying inte
ations, she said.

"The more you st
front of it, the more y
and that encapsulates
the Blake is all about.

nding her winning way: Derz shows off her Sufi-inspired successful entry

Picture: Alan Pryke