

Off-wall creatures head off to London

Sarah Swain

A LEATHER jacket with missing buttons found in a Vinnie's bin has taken a northern beaches artist all the way to London and into a gallery that shows work by legendary artist Banksy.

Artist Ren Thackham, whose work is exhibited in Manly's quirky Second Coat exhibition, is on her way to the UK capital, where she hopes to sell some of her intriguing animal heads for thousands of dollars.

They're made mostly from recycled leather coats and will go on show at a trendy gallery that has displayed art by Banksy.

The project grew out of a task to create a wolf mask for young Sydney filmmaker Ethan Hatton-Warham.

Thackham didn't have enough of a budget to buy proper leather so used a leather jacket she'd seen at a charity shop. It inspired her to create a whole range of animal heads.

"I was thinking 'this used to be an animal, and they killed the animal to make a jacket, and I've killed the jacket to make an animal,'" Thackham said.

A fox made from tweed and corduroy jackets, a giraffe crafted from a silver jacket and a motorbike coat, and a leopard made from a black fake leather jacket are among the creations to go on show at the Brick Lane Art Gallery in London's trendy East end as part of a show called Art In Mind. It's a huge coup for Thackham.

The collection was on show at Avalon Art Gallery, and remaining sculptures can be seen at B-Side Creative Space in Brookvale.

Thackham's also a successful short filmmaker, with her latest zombie flick *Brainless Killers* winning at the Sydney Indie Film Festival as well as at festivals around the world.

"It's zombies treating humans the way we treat animals," she said.



Ren Thackham, who is exhibiting at the B-Side Creative Space, pictured with Miguel Gonzalez. Picture: Annika Enderborg