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Janice Gobey with one of the wedding dresses collected for the exhibition.

My big, sad wedding story

Words: James Dowling
Picture: Paul Loughnan

PEOPLE spend enough money on weddings to wage a small war, so maybe the *War Stories* exhibition is aptly named.

Artist Janice Gobey's *War Stories* collection features a series of white wedding dresses, each with a sad story behind it.

Gobey said she wanted to explore women's obsession with a traditional and expensive wedding.

It was odd most people still wanted to get

married, despite the high divorce rate, Gobey said. "If there was an investment with a 50 per cent chance of failure, we would not be rushing to buy it. Yet we still have the need to walk down the aisle."

The artist implies the wedding itself could be a reason women enter into bad marriages.

"Seduced by the opportunity to star in a one-night extravaganza, people often enter into marriages that probably should not have happened," she said.

Gobey said even many independently

successful and educated women did not feel complete unless they were married and had a big wedding.

War Stories is Gobey's third solo exhibition.

The other two, *10 Reasons to Leave Your Lover* and *Disconnect*, also explored relationship breakdown.

Gobey turned to art after her own marriage break-up and found many people could relate to her topic.

"A lot of my friends have been through divorces," she said.

Gobey's background in psychology and sociology led her to explore relationships and the social engineering behind marriage.

"I'm interested in what makes people tick," she said.

"There is a lot of social engineering behind marriage.

"I think governments have a lot to gain from having people in stable relationships."

Her exhibition is at Hawthorn Town Hall, corner Glenferrie and Burwood roads, until March 20.



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