

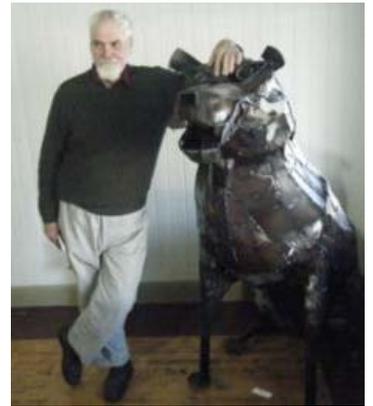
Laurie Collins' newsletter December 2009



Well, retirement has not been just sitting back and taking it easy! The last newsletter was done just at the point of me taking long service leave now this one is after most of a year doing art based work. It certainly isn't boring and it has been both fun and challenging.

I have said yes to almost all possibilities this year and that has seen me also mentoring another teacher, being part of a small art group, teaching Computers for absolute beginners and judging the odd art show as well as making single pieces for some exhibitions and holding a few of my own.

The highlight of June /July was the '**On the Wild Side**' exhibition at the Meeniyan Art Gallery. Laurie shared the exhibition with two other artists, Pauline Johns, who made Venetian masks and Chris Beehag a textile artist who embroidered wildlife scenes. Laurie sold half his pieces including Snarl a 2 m high dog who was the star of the show.



The 2009 Fringe furniture festival had a theme called **Silver**. Laurie submitted two pieces, both tables. One piece called Zeppetable had a sculpture of a miniature zepplin tied to its mooring pole as the backboard. This was galvanized to give a silver appearance and contains a large mirror.

The other piece called Table Setting used lots of silverware (knives, forks and spoons) with a mirror made to look like a spoon. These pieces were exhibited at the Craft Market in North Melbourne during September. Neither piece has sold as yet

Laurie was selected again to exhibit at Yering Station in their Annual Sculpture Show with a piece that reflected on our trip to China in March. The work was a large red metal Chinese Star called "Chinese Reflection" the shape being similar to that embroidered on furry winter hats that we saw in Beijing. The back had lots of junk sculpture reflecting the back of many buildings we saw in China. To our delight the piece sold..



As part of the Yering Station Sculpture Show the artists who were accepted were asked to exhibit smaller works in the rooms in Collins St of the Yering Station accountants. Several pieces, including 'Aspirants', spent time at the 19th floor of Arnold-Bloch Leibler accountancy being enjoyed by their staff.

Over the year he also had pieces in The Brunswick St Gallery small works show, Caulfield Grammar Art Show, Tyers Art show, Leongatha Rotary art show and Strathcona Art show

Laurie was invited to place a piece in the Moreland Sculpture Show by the curator who saw his piece at the Incinerator Gallery, Moonee Ponds. This piece called '**Seed**' shows new life and new directions springing from old junk (representing past history). My mother is seen here as she came with us on a cold winter's day to the opening. Dancers dressed in black used Seed as part



of their impromptu dance during the opening. Coburg is part of Laurie's stamping ground as a child and bought back fond memories



Blarney Books and Art in Port Fairy held an exhibition that delighted Laurie in its concept. They asked artists to buy a book that they sent and respond to it with an art piece. Laurie chose a book on the life of Madam Curie and made 3 sculptures. One piece called shows a young Marie Curie so engrossed in her reading that she is unaware that her siblings are piling chairs up in a heap behind her, waiting for any movement from her to cause the whole lot to come tumbling down. This piece received the Story teller's Award and was bought by the bookshop. A double delight. We are about to take the 'Untold Stories' exhibition after revamping to this Gallery in January 2010.

Laurie happily sent 6 pieces to New York to a small sculpture show that had advertised for participants and nothing happened. We had no word back as to whether the pieces were even taken out of the box. Eventually the people in New York asked for money for the pieces to be posted back. They have returned and will form part of the 'Untold Stories' exhibition at Port Fairy.

August was not the best month as Laurie suffered several rejections. Toyota sculpture show in which he had previously exhibited and Tessellar Festival both rejected his applications. 'He who Discovers', an exhibition at Walker St Gallery in Dandenong cancelled the exhibition stating not enough quality pieces were received. Bendigo has a gallery attached to Latrobe university and had a vacant exhibition space until Christmas but did not think Laurie's work was suitable. He also submitted work for Woolhara and Basil Sellars art prizes but didn't make the short list. The down side of being an artist!

In August the Box Hill Community Arts Centre had the 2009 Biennial Art Competition with the theme "House" so Laurie entered as he had made a metal wall plaque of the Californian Bungalow he grew up in at Regent.



Laurie put 5 pieces in the Leongatha Rotary Art Show in October. Two pieces sold and he won a highly commended for 'Lift', a balloon lifting a chunk of I beam.



Slow Horse was a large sculpture Laurie placed in exhibition at a gallery called "Art Gallop" at Narre Warren. The piece won and has been bought by the gallery owner. Many people have admired it.

Laurie had his retirement function at school and this was a delightful occasion with lots of ex colleagues, ex students and members of the community saying a farewell to this part of his life.

We made our first art based visit to Art Sydney this year under the auspices of the Brunswick St Gallery. We spent the day mounting artists' pictures before the exhibition and enjoyed an up-market opening night (Lots of high heels, short skirts etc). Little notice was taken of Laurie's work with only 2 pieces sold although contact was made with a gallery and he gained a commission of a larger scale work.

While in Sydney, we made contact with a gallery called the Francis Keevil Gallery in Double Bay. The owner was a lovely lady and there is a chance of an exhibition there this year.

Laurie was also involved in helping a small group of students create sculptural works for Drouin's Path of Achievement. About 10 pieces were made with a variety of schools and aspects of the community represented. A book has been published and the process has a double page spread!. Laurie also had an article written for the Gippsland Country Life and this was quite an impressive looking piece.



A work that has been in progress for most of the year is a large (6m by 6m) sculpture called 'Echo' that has now been installed in a public park at the entrance to Thorpdale. This sculpture commemorates the largest Tree found in the Southern Hemisphere (which has since been cut down). It also symbolizes the rolling hills now planted with potatoes and the middle circle contains remnants of metal equipment used by people to settle and then work this land. The piece is not finalized yet as a garden will be planted and a chair added in the autumn. Thanks to Baw Baw Shire for their commitment and assistance during this process.

The "Untold Stories Sculptures and Sketches" Exhibition from November 27th

was a chance for Laurie to demonstrate to our locals the range of his current works. This exhibition was held at Gary Miles' Bradley Hall, Drouin West in December and showed Laurie's small table sculptures, large outdoor sculptures and his sketches. About 150-200 people came to the balmy opening night and Laurie thoroughly enjoyed catching up with lots of his ex-students and their parents as well as other friends and acquaintances. Thanks to everyone who came and to Gary, Maggie and Azzadine for their great assistance!



Laurie still does Rokeby Market as well as Gembrook Market and he has done a number of interesting and challenging commissions also.

The year is over and we have certainly had some great high points. Personally, our three children are doing well, Caleb has just been appointed to teach at Metung Primary school, Emily is still at Ringwood where she is one of the head Librarians and Kathleen is now science coordinator at Drouin. Marian continues to work way to hard (6 days a week usually) and she had pleasure at seeing her little brother Stephen, get married to the lovely Kristen.

On a sadder note our lovely Jess dog died and we now have a new dog Barney.

Thanks to everyone who has supported me over the year, sometimes by your kind words, friendly smiles and sometimes by your buying of one of my works. It

is very affirming .

The new year starts with a bang with the Pt Fairy Exhibition and other shows loom as well. Hope everyone who reads this is as happy and busy as us and we hope the new year is just as delightful as the last one.

Good on ya. Laurie and Marian.

Remember the website is found easily by typing Laurie Collins Sculpture into Google and it is updated at least each month as I do new work

We are more than happy to see you too so give us a call and drop in 56285224 and address 420 Main Jindivick Rd Jindivick.