

Laurie's Newsletter to June 2009



January 2009 saw a scramble to finish enough pieces to go to an exhibition called 'UP and'. The work was displayed at Yarram Courthouse with small prints from Helen Timbury, a graphic artist from Drouin. The exhibition (Jan 07-14) was very successful with Helen selling several pieces and Laurie selling 10 of his 26 small figurative sculptures.

Laurie then took his sculptures to Churchill Island (off Phillip Island) to a Art and Soul Festival where he had a lovely day drawing and listening to music. The best part was meeting a man who showed him (on a later visit) how to use a plasma cutter. Laurie has since bought one and loves using it.

Laurie's next exhibition was at Drouin and also called 'UP and' at the Old Butter Factory on Thursday 5th February. He combined with fellow artists Joan Price, doing mixed media including textiles and Helen Timbury, displaying her prints. This exhibition had an enormous opening night with over 150 people attending. Two days later the bushfires of Black Saturday occurred (Laurie was manning the exhibition when Joan arrived to tell him to go home as our house was in the line of the Labertouche fires). (It came to within 1km but no real harm done to us!)

The exhibition was still a success although many people were too distracted to attend after the opening night.



The 'Inspired' exhibition at Heritage Hill Museum in Dandenong (22nd March to the 22nd April) was designed to be a challenge to artists. The event was to celebrate our multicultural heritage, with the topic "Journeys" given out on the Friday night, and the work to be presented by Sunday. Laurie did a complicated piece showing a woman and a girl struggling to find a new home (with their own home broken behind them). The sculpture contained a boat crossing the seas, being refused at several points and then being offered an open door with a welcoming figure. The piece was interesting but has since been broken up and reused in different ways.

During March Laurie and Marian spent 12 days in **China** as part of the Education Tour with 17 secondary students and 7 teachers. We had a wonderful time visiting Shanghai and Beijing as tourists and Jiujiang as an education delegation that visited 5 Chinese sister schools. We were spoilt rotten, saw lots of concerts, given heaps of gifts, ate lots of Chinese banquets, talked English to classes of 60 and saw an entirely different way of educating children. Lots of photos await anyone who asks.



The end of the China trip marked the beginning of Laurie's long service leave. Thirty years as a teacher is a long time! It is his intention to retire at the end of this leave at the tender age of 55 and pursue his art full time. This is a new era for us but he has been very busy and so far is really enjoying the change.



As soon as we returned from China, Laurie took his pieces to **Art Melbourne**, which is a 4 day showcase of galleries at the Exhibition Building in Melbourne. Laurie's art was presented by **The Serigraph Gallery** from Neerim South and the **Brunswick Street Gallery**. Almost all of the work he exhibited was sold, including 2 large sculptures. Several buyers were impressed with the work displayed and wanted to see more. A Sydney gallery wants Laurie to send work to them to display.

The Art Teachers Art Inc are a group of art teachers (both state and private), from local secondary schools who joined for the second time to produce an exhibition of their works called "**Red**", at Bradley Hall (1st-17th May). Laurie joined 14 teachers in this wide ranging modern art exhibition. Out of the twelve pieces that Laurie sent, four sculptures were sold.





Another exhibition at the Yarram Courthouse Gallery was called “**Waterworks**” from 14-26th May in which Laurie entered two works. Neither has sold but they will have further outings yet.

At the same time, Laurie entered a piece call ‘Leaf Litter’ in the “**aRtECYCLE Ephemeral Sculptural Installations**” (May 13-24), at the Walter Burley Griffin designed Incinerator complex at Moonee Ponds. His piece was seen momentarily in a filming of the exhibition shown on Stateline, an ABC TV program aired

on the Friday night.

Creative Yarragon Art Show ran from 29th to 31st May to showcase Yarragon and other West Gippsland talent. This is aimed at encouraging Melbournians to see Gippsland as a creative tourist destination. Laurie entered 4 pieces



The ‘**Open Studios Tours**’ occurred on Sunday 15th February, Sunday 3rd May and Sunday 31st May.

These were self guided tours where people traveled from one studio to another to visit 11 artists, looking at their studio, their work and the processes involved. Laurie thoroughly enjoyed talking to a wide variety of people who traveled out to see him, although some limitations occurred on the February tour day, as the CFA were still restricting travel in the region following the bushfires. The May days were both fine sunny autumn days which encouraged a number of visitors to find their way to talk to Laurie and see his work.



All through this time Laurie has continued his trips to the **Rokeby, Gembrook and Foster Craft Markets**. These times are greatly enjoyed as he draws, paints and catches up with people he knows as

he sells his work. He also gets inspiring ideas or exciting challenges from commissions that take him in new directions.

An article about Laurie’s work appeared on page 87 of ‘**The Weekly Times**’ (13th May 2009) with a lovely photograph of Laurie holding a piece called Economy. [The Weekly times story is also online, here's a link:](http://www.weeklytimesnow.com.au/article/2009/05/14/77985_country-living.html)

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The Annual **Mirboo North Art Show** went ahead this year although the town was struggling after the bushfires and Laurie entered 5 of his works. Two sold and he won a judges’ award.

In between these exhibitions Laurie attended the **AGIDEAS** conference which presented ideas, creativity and designs to emerging designers. Apart from the fact that he was the only old, white haired, coloured-shirted tall man amongst young black-wearing people, he had a good time and gathered lots of ideas.

He also gave a workshop at the **Design and Technology Teachers’ Ass (DATTA)** Conference to replace another speaker who could not attend. Again he enjoyed this and gave out advertisements to teachers so he could talk at their schools about creativity and metalwork. We will see what comes of this.

Baw Baw Shire Council decided to make a “**Path of Achievement**” to honour sporting clubs, community groups and people who were involved in the local community through service or volunteering. Various groups that include the Koorie community, local schools and other organizations have worked on metal pictures to go on the side of the Drouin swimming pool. Laurie has been helping four school kids from years7 to year10 to learn how to weld and to make metal designs to symbolize these specific clubs.

Three pieces of work have gone to the **Spring bank** bed and breakfast which is hosting a Sculpture garden. Other pieces have gone to **Serigraph Gallery** at Neerim South and the **Town and Country Gallery** at Yarragon. **Jacks** restaurant at Jindivick, Gary Miles’ **Bradley Hall Art Gallery** and **Jinks Creek** winery also show Laurie’s larger outdoor pieces.

To see more of Laurie’s work, look at his Website by typing “**Laurie Collins Sculpture**” into Google.