

Laurie Collins' Newsletter June 2010.

Laurie is thoroughly enjoying life since retiring from teaching and his new life as an artist has been extremely busy. Here are the main highlights so far!

Jan. Blarney Books at Port Fairy asked Laurie to exhibit. The "Untold Stories (2)" exhibition there, He exhibited Jan 16th until Feb 28th and was delighted to see many old friends at the opening. This exhibition had both small sculptures and large floor sculptures and coloured ink sketches and half of the exhibition sold.



A one day **Art and Soul Festival** at Churchill Island where artists have stalls and bands play music was a pleasant way to sell his work in January.



Two pieces called 'Door into Nature' and 'Rings of Earth' were accepted at the **Contemporary Art Society** exhibition "Contemporary by Nature" held at the **Herring Island Summer Arts Festival** (in the middle of the Yarra River). Laurie had to punt them over on the punt.

The local community asked Laurie to decorate a large gate that is to be placed at **Nangara Reserve** entrance. He cut out letters and welded animals onto the existing gate.



Feb. On Valentine's Day Drouin held a successful **Open Studio** where about 14 local artists held their studio spaces open for visitors. Over a hundred guests visited Laurie and the other artists to see how they work. It was a lovely sunny day so Laurie placed his sculptures around the shed driveway and sat in his shed and talked nonstop.



Laurie attempted an ink portrait of a fellow teacher Bryan Whelan for a show called '**Vicarchies**' at Gallop at Narre Warren.

We had not had any interactions from **Ishka**, a large complex of shops selling mainly Asian arts and craft for some time. In May Laurie was asked to exhibit some pieces in a new large showroom including "Flower" and to renew his stock of birds and dogs for their retail stores.



At the conclusion of the Herring Island exhibition Laurie was asked to place his sculptures at **Toorak Library** for a further exhibition.



March. A group exhibition "**Art Blitz**" at the Kingston Arts Centre contained a piece by Laurie on their theme "Off the Wall" that had to be created in 24 hours from hearing the theme.

Art Gippsland is a Rotary run exhibition held over the March Labour day weekend to showcase Gippsland artists with works for sale. Laurie showed several large pieces, including "Key to my Heart"



Laurie had a stall at **Harvest of Gippsland** at Lardner Park along with a number of other artists as the organizers were trying to say that art coexists well with food. Many of the

public were unsure about shopping for art at the same time as they sampled wine and food. Laurie sold some birds and dogs

An event to celebrate our cultural heritage called “**Inspired**” at the Heritage Hill Museum in Dandenong had a theme “Unlimited Possibilities” with a multicultural theme. They tell artists the theme on Friday night and works are submitted on Sunday. The exhibition was held 22 March to 22 April. This idea provided Laurie with an interesting challenge.



The Baw Baw Shire asked Laurie to draw at **Farmworld** as an attraction for their stand.



April. At Easter the inaugural **Easter ARTS Festival** was held at the Drouin Butter Factory. Opened by Russell Broadbent, M.P. this three day festival called “**The Journey**” was an initiative of the Uniting Church to outreach the local and arts communities and showcased art, language and music as well as the religious features of Easter. Lots of fun and fellowship was had by all. Laurie was involved in the organizing committee. He made “Climb” and “The Chain”



Caleb had a graduation ceremony at Monash, Churchill at which he officially graduated as a primary teacher. He now teaches 2’s 3’s and 4’s at Metung Primary and loves it.

Laurie exhibited several art pieces in the Trafalgar art show including “Mortgage”



Art Melbourne is a three day show in April at the Exhibition Building in Melbourne in which Laurie had pieces under the Serigraph Gallery banner. This is an exciting annual event to showcase artists and their supporting galleries. Laurie sold “Key to my heart” and a number of small pieces



May. A similar **Open Studios** day held in May for Creative Gippsland for Warragul was also well attended although the weather was not as nice.

Alexandra Rotary Show received a supply of seats, birds and dogs for their annual show.



The **Art Teacher’s Art** group held another annual exhibition at Gary Miles ’hall in May. The theme this year was “**Every Other Colour**” and Laurie enjoyed the challenge of using many different colours on his pieces. A well supported opening night was had by all.

The inaugural **Jindivick Sculpture Show** at **Jack’s of Jindivick** was held during May for **Creative Gippsland**, as part of a local shire initiative to celebrate art in Gippsland. Laurie sent 8 large pieces for the garden. Watch this space as this show looks to grow.

For a show at Yarram Court house Gallery called “**Where do you draw the line**” Laurie produced a serious piece about the imprisonment of refugees called “Borderline” and a fun piece using a washing line.



Gembrook Market and **Rokeby Market** continued to see Laurie sell his craft work (dogs, birds, bench seats etc). This is a good opportunity for Laurie to meet people he knows, especially his ex-students and he enjoys a good chat. He often accepts commissions

June. Laurie set off on a giant step by exhibiting for the first time at the **Francis Keevil gallery** in Double Bay, Sydney. The exhibition (3rd -16th June) called "**Tell Tales**" was with another artist called Ann Gordon . The show was successful and the gallery have requested another exhibition next year. We enjoyed seeing some of the sights of Sydney and catching up with Marian's younger brother Stephen and his wife Kristen and her cousin Phil and Mary-Lou. One sculpture of a little girl in red holding a red balloon appealed greatly as several small girls were seen hugging her.



While in Sydney Laurie entered 2 small pieces in an exhibition called '**Cadence**' at the **Red Gallery** .Laurie and I delivered them by public transport to a small gallery next to where the magazine "Art Almanac "is produced.

While we were in Sydney the Baw Baw shire opened the park at Thorpdale . Laurie had made a big sculpture "**Echo**" as part of the rejuvenation of the area. See previous newsletter.



' **Blarney Books** at Pt Fairy held another art show around reading a book and reacting to it and Laurie entered two pieces based on the book by Alan Marshall called "**These are my people**" .The sculpture shows Alan being lowered down a mine shaft in a bucket.

Two weeks after the Sydney exhibition Laurie and Marian went to New Zealand for two weeks to explore the country. This was a challenge as we had not done this with just the two of us. We hired a car and travelled around the country .Marian managed to break two ribs in a fall on the first day which made life hard for her but we saw a lot of art galleries, museums and nature parks. We only toured the north Island but we hope to have an exhibition" **Reflections on New Zealand**" in **November at Gary Miles Gallery.**

Three local galleries, **Kongwak Gallery**, **Serigraph Gallery** and **Town and Country Gallery**, have been happy to accept some of Laurie's pieces and are selling consistently.

The Incinerator Recycle show, Williamstown Contemporary Arts Festival and Yering station were some of the exhibitions that rejected offers of Laurie's work. Part of the fun of putting your stuff out there!

The **Butchershop Hotel in Bunyip** commissioned a steer made of metal containing old butcher's implements. This has been featured in the current edition of "Country Life"

Yinnar ARC held a show requiring the use of recycled materials so Laurie put in a piece that made a comment on his feelings about the hand gun culture. This piece is confronting and a piece that will probably never sell but part of his need as an artist to express his feelings.

Thanks to all who have helped Laurie with his art, bought or commissioned his work or just plain enjoyed viewing it at all the different venues. Much work has been left out but can be viewed on his website. See www.lauriecollins.com.au