

ArtSpace

W o n t h a g g i

Newsletter #15

March 2016

News

February has been a delightfully busy month – particularly with the joint exhibition of John Mutsaers and Susan Hall. The official opening event for the exhibition saw the Gallery bulging at the seams with patrons, old friends, fellow artists and art lovers – most of whom stayed on even though the weather was warm and rather sticky.

The exhibition was opened by Dr Tony Hanning, internationally recognised glass artist and Federation University Head of Art. Dr. Hanning's work is represented in all major collections in Australia and many overseas collections including the V&A Museum in London and the Tacoma Art Museum in the USA.



Dr Hanning (pictured above in the centre between John Mutsaers and Susan Hall), gave an inspiring speech encouraging those present to take time to look closely at the works in order to appreciate the creative journey behind each piece on display.

Early on in the exhibition opening



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Events and Exhibitions

- 10 Mar:- 4 Apr **Janice Orchard** 'Life in a Tin Can' at Artspace Gallery . 10th March to 4th April.
Opening by Brian Paynter MP on 13 March from 2-4pm – ALL WELCOME!
- 20 Mar **Fish Creek Hotel Artspace** – an exhibition instigated, run and curated by Anne Rousac-Hoyne at Fish Creek Hotel. Featuring 33 of the regions finest artists, Mandy Gunn, Bob Hickman, John Mutsaers and Ursula Thienert to name but a few, with only 4 natural ochres to play with. Starts 3pm. ALL WELCOME!
- 20 Mar **West Gippsland Open Studios** 10am to 5pm - www.openstudiowestgippsland.com
- May: **Creative Gippsland :**
5 - 30 May Mandy Gunn at Artspace Gallery – 'Once Was Now Is Exhibition'
15 May Mandy Gunn - Artist's Talk – Artspace 2-4p.m.
29 May Reading, Author Talk/Discussion and Book Signing by Pauline Mackinnon - 'Treasures from the Tide' ArtSpace
Other Creative Gippsland events - TBA
- June: **Winter Solstice** Exhibition and Competition at Artspace Gallery
- 20 Sep-17 Oct: **ArtsPrint** – Print Exhibition at Artspace Gallery

Featured Artist – Sue Acheson

Imagine for a moment that you are blind. Denied to you are the verdant green of our rolling hills, the azure of our seas. And what is more you are denied so much of the pleasure that you and I gain from the warmth of alysin crimson or the chill of cerulean blue in a painting. But then you reach out your fingers and find whorls and shapes creating a journey of discovery of a piece of art that has been created for your senses. Not only can you feel it – but you can smell the freshly carved timber. The art work is a totem based structure in Drouin created by Sue Acheson who is passionate about the role of art in the general health and wellbeing of everyone and who believes most particularly that art should be touched.

Growing up in York, England Sue was always creative. Her father taught her to sew, (“Well Dad sewed better than my mum,” in answer to your question) and so she was always creating her own designs and then making the clothes that she wore. She took art at school but was not encouraged by her parents, or for that matter her art teacher, to pursue an artistic career. Her teacher went so far as to deny access to her portfolio when Sue wanted to use it to gain admittance to a Diploma in Graphics and Communication Design. Her response – she sneaked into the school and took it – of course.

Sue throwing a new pot.



Full fired pots

Naturally she got accepted, loved being really engaged in art, passed and started a career in graphic design. After 10 years she followed her heart and took a course in ceramics and broke her burgeoning career to apprentice with a wood fired earthenware potter. She learnt a great deal, but then needed to get back to her career to make ends meet, eventually running her own consultancy business in graphic design.

In 2002, seeking adventure, she emigrated to Australia with her husband. On arrival her husband told her, “You can get a job if you want, you can work for nothing, or you can do nothing if you want. The choice is yours.” And so Sue went back to her passion of ceramics. She apprenticed to Robert Barron from Gooseneck Pottery for four years. Under his tutelage she learnt the art of creating wood fired pieces. Then she wanted to create her own kiln and took a course in kiln building at the Chisholm TAFE. Kilns, she tells me, are an ancient technology each one having its own character. It is what you wish to create that will determine the shape of the kiln.

Featured Artist – Sue Acheson

Now most artists that I know find a house and build a studio. In Sue's case she bought a cottage, lived in it whilst building a new house, and when that was done transformed the cottage into her studio. Finally she built her catenary arch kiln. It is an impressive structure over 12 feet tall and three layers – solid bricks, porous bricks and adobe. She explains that it takes 36 hours to fire the pieces and then 6 days to cool. In order to stoke the fires she has to wear a welding mask, gloves and apron to protect herself from not only the heat but the glare as well. Incredibly temperatures reach 1327°C. Sue knows this temperature exactly – but it the only thing that she knows exactly. Spurning the strictures of graphic design she now revels in the multitude of outcomes depending on the flow of the fire and the fall of the ash.



Sue's catenary arch kiln

Even though she may create a set of bowls that before firing look fairly similar, after the firing they take on a unique qualities – with each one slightly different to the other according to where it was placed in the kiln. Each has markings on them, almost cuneiform in a way, which are the reflections of what Sue sees everyday – the shafts of light and the consequential shadows through the trees at her home. And now she is embarking on new challenges.



Set of bowls



Sue's wall bling

Featured Artist – Sue Acheson

The totem I told you about at the start of this piece was her first attempt at wood carving – and now she is incorporating that medium with her ceramic pieces to create more structural art. She has decided that she will no longer run to a twice yearly schedule of firing the kiln- she will fire the kiln when she has enough pieces to fire. Sadly for us that will probably mean less ceramic pieces – but on the other hand – it will mean more pieces in other media. It will definitely be more contemporary and probably include more sculptural work.

Sue's Drouin Totem



There are two things Sue says she is proud of. She has now been shortlisted three times in the Victorian Ceramics Award and she has also been chosen by the Skepsi Gallery to showcase her work. Her latest pieces are based on the theme of procrastination and are mountain like structures. She says, “You know there are mountains in front of you and that you need to go over them, or through them, or around them, but you keep putting it off.” One thing I am certain and that is that procrastination is not on Sue’s agenda.

If you would like to see her work she chooses ArtSpace Gallery to exhibit her work in Bass Coast. And if you wanted to travel a little further afield you can join her as part of Open Studio on 20 March 2015 www.openstudiowestgippsland.com.

Liane Arno

John Mutsaers and Susan Hall Joint Exhibition

For John this exhibition marks the beginning of a year of exhibitions and workshops in various venues to celebrate his 30th anniversary as a full time professional artist. His Studio/Gallery/Home in Inverloch will be open over Easter as part of the 2016 anniversary exhibitions. Check out his website for details jmartist.com.au

John's journey towards this particular exhibition began in October last year. The 24 paintings displayed cover a wide range of subjects and feature his trade mark technique of allowing the undertones of the painting to form a part of the character of the finished work. They are all painted in oils on stretched linen.



John Mutsaers in his studio.



A lot of interest was shown in the beach sculptures that appear randomly on the Inverloch beaches featured here in two of Susan's paintings - and previously in our February newsletter..

Susan's pieces showed the breadth of her interests and her skill as highlighted in our February newsletter.

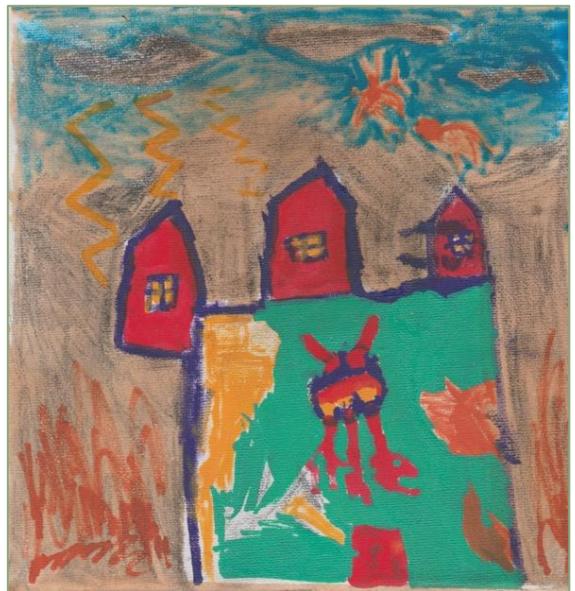
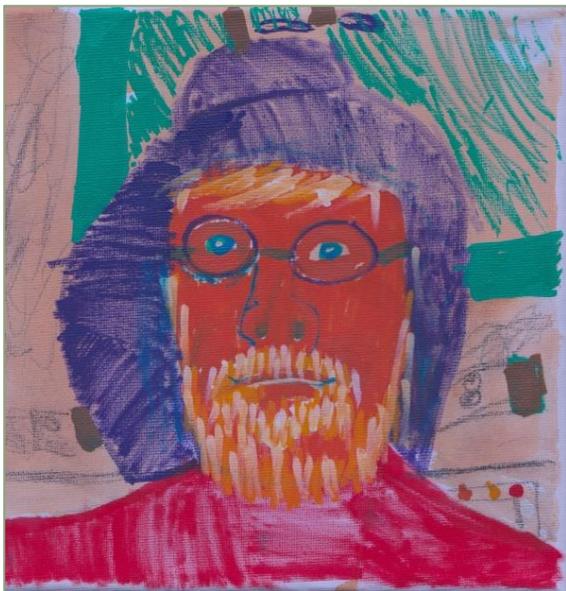
John and Susan were both thrilled with the response to the exhibition and thoroughly enjoyed talking about their work and respective artistic journeys to all present.

*Article with thanks to
Mary Mutsaers
and the Editor*

LAST WORD...

When my daughter was about seven years old, she asked me one day what I did at work. I told her I worked at the college — that my job was to teach people how to draw. She stared at me, incredulous, and said, "You mean they forget?"

~Howard Ikemoto



"(These) are two paintings painted by my grandsons Archie Minster, 7 (a portrait of pop) and Ollie Haber, 7 (a power ranger in the playground near my house).

These two boys are so keen to get to the studio that when they get to Pop and Nana's house the very first question is "When can we paint?" This is usually said even before we get a kiss and a greeting. I keep a box full of little canvasses ready for them, and three other younger ones, to use. I used to give them scrap paper but their disagreement is always, "I'm an artist like you pop and I want to paint on canvas". Luckily there is a shop in Wonthaggi that sells these little canvasses (20cm x 20cm) very cheaply." *John Mutsaers*