

# ArtSpace

W o n t h a g g i

Newsletter #9

September 2015

## Your Art Collection Exhibition 2015

your art  
collection



Clockwise from top right  
Kerry Spokes, Do Noble,  
Jan Long, Ken Griffiths

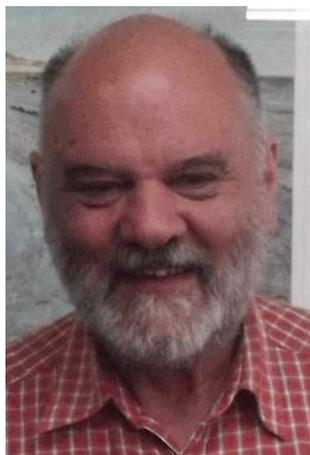
Two of our artists have the chance to win this year's Bass Coast Shire YAC Award.

Ken Griffiths is well known to you all. This year he received two YAC awards. Kerrie Spokes is a constant feature of ArtSpace is also vying for the prize, as are Do Noble and Jan Long.

There will be a selection of not just the winning works – but up to four works by each of the artists – one of which will be chosen to become part of the Council's Art Collection. The winner will not only receive a prize of \$5000. The exhibition will take place from 5 - 9 September 2015 from 10.00am - 4.00pm. It will also be open during cinema hours.

And if that isn't enough for you – and you are in Melbourne – be sure to see the Salon de Refuse – where our exhibiting artists, Ursula Theinert and Ellen Palmer Hubble have their pieces. It is at Hilton Melbourne South Wharf, 2 Convention Place, Melbourne up until the 14<sup>th</sup> of October. And ... admission is free! Click on the link to see a preview <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bfJdd5-qTWM>

## Featured Artist: Dennis Leversha



"Remember the pest controllers that had the jingle, "One flick and you're gone"? Well - have you ever wondered why there is a pronounced dot above the i in the **Flick** sign?" Dennis asked. He starts the story remembering a time when he first started work following the gaining his Diploma of Fine Art (Painting). It was 1964 and he had just finished a Department of Education Studentship. He had been given £15 a week by the Department to help him with his studies. "If it hadn't been for that my life would have taken a different path as my parents could not have afforded for me to go on to tertiary education," he said. As part of the contract he was required to work for two years in industry before he could formally be given his qualification.

He started work at Neon Electrics. Salesmen would come into the workshop with ideas for neon signs for business. He would take the rough sketches and create illustrations demonstrating what the sign would look like once it was finished.

And so there was an assignment to create the Flick sign. From concept drawing to refinement and then the design was approved and the sign manufactured. It was mounted on a huge white surface with everyone waiting in anticipation as the evening fell and the light was illuminated. You guessed it what hadn't been envisaged in the illustrations was the effect the neon light had in creating a merging of the letters. Yes – Flick had become THE four letter word. Hence the pronounced dot over the i! He assures me that it was not him that did the final drawing – but whatever – it was a good lesson learned.

Dennis had always loved art. He was always a good drawer but didn't think that was where he would end up. He studied science – believe it or not with now local history buff Ray Addicoat as his teacher – and failed. As he says, "I was hopeless at science but s#\*% I could draw a Bunsen burner with my eyes shut." When he was accepted into RMIT to study art he was needing a place to board and managed to find it through a chance meeting with the Musical Director and the Stage Manager of the Australian Ballet Company. As he hitchhiked along Toorak Road at 1.30am (I didn't ask what he was doing at that hour) they picked him up, got to chatting and that led him to being allowed back stage to do pen and ink drawings. It was there that he met the wardrobe lady who had a room for board in Kew. He would bicycle in from his lodgings to attend lessons as well as refine his pen & ink drawing techniques on the colourful cast and characters of the ballet.

He did well until he spilt Indian ink all over a ballet dancer's tutu!



His fascination for the finer arts continued when he left the Neon Electric Company to join the Princes Theatre as a painter of stage scenery. It was a wonderful time when he met the likes of June Bronhill, Frank Thring, Tex Morgan and even Marlene Dietrich. He worked with one of the last of his craft, Dres Hardingham who back then was over 75 years of age. Dres had already developed scene painter's knees. In those days both sides of the scene were well secured – but the rest was on a floating floor. As the scene painter got to the centre of the massive scenes which were 45 feet wide and 22 feet high the boards got more springy thereby putting a lot of pressure on the painter's knees. Today, Dennis suffers from dodgy knees – but frankly he is unsure if it goes back to this time – or perhaps when he started to pursue his passion of later life of painting vast murals. Never in favour of the restraints of scaffolding he always used solely a ladder to reach the heights of buildings. Occupational health and safety laws and perhaps a bit of common sense on Dennis' behalf has seen him now restricted to 1.8m which means that the loftier portions of murals need to be left untouched.



Whilst at the theatre he took on various functions such as stage hand and maintenance man. Sometimes he found himself up on the roof replacing slate tiles. He thought it was such a waste to throw the tiles away and so he bought a dentist drill and carved pendants out of the tiles and sold them. June Bronhill even ended up purchasing one.

After finishing his two years in industry, Dennis went to Teacher's College and ended up with a teaching position at Preston East Technical School. There were two wonderful things that happened to him. The first was that his boss turned out to be John Adam (multi award winning artist and now local Phillip Island resident), and the second, and more importantly it was a time when he married his lovely wife Bev whom he had met three years earlier at RMIT.

They started looking for permanent teaching positions. They were prepared to go anywhere in the state except Mildura as they felt that was too far away from Melbourne. The only criteria were that there needed to be two positions in the same school or two positions in different schools within commuting distance. As it turned out they found two positions in Swan Hill and found on accepting that they comprised two thirds of the Art Department. So from Swan Hill to Sale and finally to Wonthaggi in 1972 where they taught until 1991 – qualification based training for Dennis including a stint at Dandenong TAFE and night pottery classes for Bev.

In the meantime both Dennis and Bev continued to create art. Dennis gained a reputation for painting in the figurative style and has worked in pencil, water colour, oils, acrylics, block printing and ceramics.

His first mural was for a shop in Mirboo North. The owner wanted to turn a house into a café and sought Dennis' help. He wanted to have Dennis paint a scene which included a horse and dray with several logs. As the owner had a real live dray in the front garden Dennis suggested combining the real life with the painting and so it became – with the café being named The Bullock Dray Café.



The mural is still there 20 years on. Dennis has now done an incredible 32 murals all over this Shire and adjoining shires and is delighted to say that no one has vandalised any. That being said some people did remove the logs at one stage from the dray in Mirboo North but when the word was put out that if the logs were returned no questions would be asked, they duly found their way back onto the dray.

Right now he is heavily involved in the Bass Coast Historical Society as well as ArtSpace Wonthaggi. You will find his work, and that of his wife Bev, at ArtSpace where he has different works every month. On September the 8<sup>th</sup> ArtSpace is having its inaugural AGM from 3.30pm at the Wonthaggi Union Community Arts Centre. He is encouraging everyone interested in art to turn up – regardless of whether they are a member or not. "We are in an enviable part of the world where art is an important part – so the more people who can shape the direction of ArtSpace – the more representative it is of our community."

He shows no sign of quitting – despite the dodgy knees.

**PS ....**

Well the financial year has ended - the books are balanced - and it is time for our inaugural Annual General Meeting. Whilst only members are able to vote, all of those interested are invited to attend. See you at the Wonthaggi Miners Community Arts Centre on September 8<sup>th</sup> at 3.30pm

**PPS ....**

Entries for artists under 25 that live, work or visit Bass Coast or South Gippsland are now open at [www.ForHumanCulture.com/apply](http://www.ForHumanCulture.com/apply) and close on September 24 at midday. See the attached flyer for details.

**PPPS ....**

Our own Kay Lancashire has been announced as this year's Feature Artist for the Bead Society's Annual Expo. In the meantime she has an exhibition at the Meeniyani Art Gallery.

**TOUCHED...  
Moved ... Inspired**

An exhibition of wearable art and hand-crafted jewellery  
By Kay Lancashire

August 23 to  
24 September 2015

Opening event  
Sunday 26th August 2pm

**Meeniyani Art Gallery**  
84 Whitelaw Street  
Meeniyani VIC 3956  
Opening times  
10-4 weekdays  
11-5 weekends  
Closed Tuesdays

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meeniyani art gallery

**PPPPS ....**

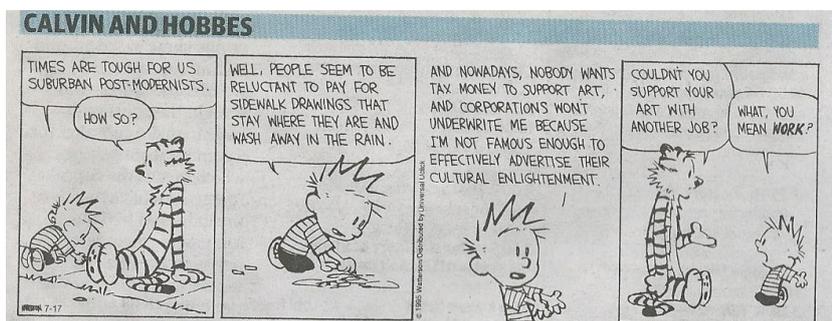
Artists' Society of Phillip Island (ASPI) is holding a discussion forum led by Warren Nichols to explore 'What is Contemporary Art?' After all many art shows include an award for contemporary art so it would be good to get it right! All art lovers are invited to attend what they hope will be a spirited discussion accompanied by wine, cheese and tea and coffee. Why not join them on Sunday September 27 from 1-4pm at the ASPI Artspace, Boys Home Road, Newhaven. There will be a nominal fee of \$5 to cover costs.

To help gets things going, Warren has asked those who might be interested in attending to send him an image - or a link - of a visual arts example which they think may be described as 'contemporary'. Please send these by Friday September 18 to [wazandra@netspace.net.au](mailto:wazandra@netspace.net.au)

"A piece of art is never a finished work. It answers a question which has been asked, and asks a new question."

**ROBERT ENGMAN**

*The Last Word*





# *From the hands of the* **Master's** *apprentices*

**It's ForHumanCulture's inaugural Art Prize and Show  
for young South Gippsland & Bass Coast artists!**

- 2D Works Only.
- People's Choice Award.
- 1st & 2nd Prize per Category.
- Two Age Categories - 13-17 & 18-25.
- 18+ Artists May Sell Their Works.
- Framed & Unframed Works Accepted.

**Entries Close 24th September @ 12 noon.**

**Short-listed applicants will be attending the Opening Gala Night  
with special guests, refreshments, live music and more.**

For Terms & Conditions and Entry Details visit  
[www.ForHumanCulture.com/apply](http://www.ForHumanCulture.com/apply)



**Over \$1000  
Worth of Prizes**

Entries may be published on the ForHumanCulture website.