

Wyndham Art Gallery 177 Watton St, Werribee

LOCAL

An exhibition of work by artists living in Wyndham.

Aug 15 – Sept 30 2012



Image: Kylie Stillman
Banksia Serrata, 2012
Courtesy of the artist and Utopia Art Sydney

The Wyndham Art Gallery shows a variety of contemporary artwork by artists from across Australia and on occasions from the huge pool of international artists. We aim to do two things.

1. To bring high quality contemporary art to a local audience, developing their awareness of current national and international trends in art.
 2. To encourage a new audience to the locality from further afield, to expose them to our local artists and share our beautiful natural environment and diverse facilities.
- Already in our first year of being a curated exhibition space we have had several artists with considerable international reputations exhibiting in the gallery.

This year I travelled to one of the world's premier contemporary exhibitions of international art, *Documenta* in Kassel Germany. I also visited the 18th Sydney Biennale 'All our Relations' dubbed Australia's largest & most exciting international festival of contemporary art.

Visiting these large international shows gives me an overview of current contemporary art and a way to situate our relatively small boutique gallery. I have always said our gallery has ambitions beyond its size. Wyndham is a rapidly growing suburb, predicted to be the size of Canberra in eight years time. We need to create a large and generous context for our audiences and local artists, one that is big enough to deal with the growth to come. Growth in population signifies an expanding consciousness, a hunger for experiences and education. Art and culture are food for that hunger and provide new ways to learn and explore the world.



Richard Rowlands 'Dear me'
Antler horn wood and steel 1999



Richard Rowlands 'Luggage Labels'
wood stone and steel 2003

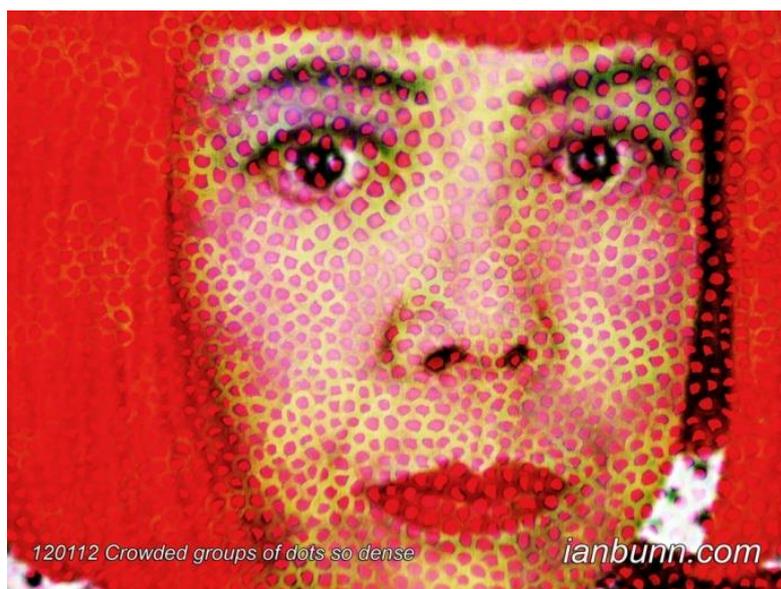
The work in LOCAL isn't necessarily about living here in Wyndham. Instead it is *by* the artists we have living here. Some of them, like Sue Anderson, are inspired by the surrounding environment and paint what is outside their door, and some are newcomers to the area, economic art refugees who could no longer afford to live in the inner city. They bring with them their genres from previous localities.

The exhibition includes painting, sculpture, glass work, gold and silver smithing, ceramics, photography, digital imagery and video, showcasing the breadth of work by our local professional artists.

Richard Rowlands is a long term local, having grown up in Werribee. He makes work from found objects, using a wry sense of humor to bring new meaning to his sculptures. The tradition of hunting trophies that can be seen in a historic context at the Werribee Mansion are transformed into a more domestic marker by the head of the deer being replaced by an old mix master. His humor is paramount in the work 'Suitcase' which looks like a normal school children's case, until you try to lift it up and discover it's made of lead. The companion to this piece are three oversized luggage tags made from wood and tin.

Kylie Stillman's work is as delicate as Richards is robust. Her beautifully crafted missing bonsai is the form of something that never was. Hand cut from a ream of bulky newsprint she creates the space where a miniature Banksia Serrata could be. Making something we usually wrap our fish and chips in, precious. I don't know if anyone has ever achieved a bonsai Banksia in real life but the delicacy of its absence makes one gasp.

According to Stillman the work's intention is to provide 'evidence of human culture's desire to manipulate and control the natural environment'. Perhaps it is our curbing of nature's wildness that has the banksia absent itself.



Ian Bunn, Detail from 'Spinning Pop 120816 Local', Laser print on card 2012

Ian Bunn's work is almost as covert as the imaginary bonsai. He creates artifacts from the virtual world of the internet. His practice consists of searching the news on a daily basis and selecting a story, digitally manipulating a portrait of a person involved in the story and making an artwork from their face then posting it on his website. He has been rigorously conducting this practice with the same commitment as someone who diligently stands in front of the canvas every day in the traditional studio. His studio is a large computer desk. Each month he makes an artifact in the form of a published book of the daily posts. The characters of his artistic attention are loosely categorized as artists, philosophers, politicians, environmentalists etc. The catalogue list is large.



Christine Menegazzo '*Italianate Pearls*' and '*Antique lace & pearls*' Oil on canvas, 2004

Christine Menegazzo is a painter who has the skills of the old masters of her Italian heritage; however she also makes work which references her contemporary Italian culture of crochet and embroidery. Born and bred in Werribee she lives on a vegetable farm with her husband who is also a Werribean. Her paintings take the faux lace tablecloths as stencils, creating beautiful patterns from the once plastic coverings. Her paintings are like her empty tables stacked against the wall.



Rose Reber '*Waiting around*' Oil on canvas 2004

Rose Reber is another painter. She is principally a colorist who works with abstract shapes that allude to landscapes and bodies. Incredibly prolific and multidisciplinary she also makes delightful and quite humorous ceramics such as 'Whoopsee daisee' a woman caught in the act of tumbling to the ground. She makes jewelry, embroidery and many other media but always with the same eye for colour.

Jamie Richmond is a local identity who runs the local art supply shop and is a font of knowledge on art materials. His is a committed painter with several aspects to his work from a surrealist bent to his local landscape work which you can see in this exhibition.



Jamie Richmond '*Irrigated*'
Acrylic on board 2012



Will Francis '*Vogue Swivel ring*'

Will Francis is a local gold and silver smith with over 40 years experience. He is a master craftsman who works largely on commission, however he is showing old and newly inspired work for this show. His main design preoccupation is a notion he calls 'circle touches square' which encourages an interest in when does a circle become a square, what does it take for something to transform from one thing into another.

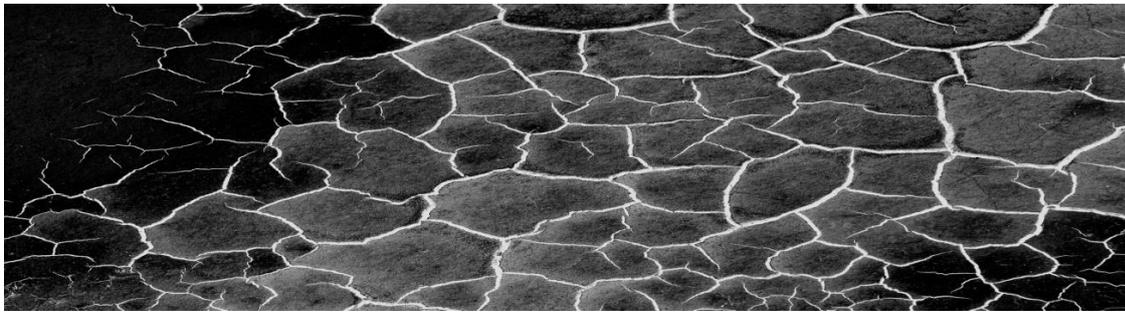


Susanne Jensen '*Sunlight Lace*'
Glass, 2012



Susanne Jensen '*Rivers*'
Glass, 2012

Susanne Jensen is another local craftsman who creates artwork in glass. There are three main bodies of work in the exhibition. Colour is the strongest theme in her work. Sometimes the medium for the strong splash of colour is a webbed design like a spider web dipped in glass. In other works the colour is caught in the elegant sweep of a bowl or a rectangular platter.



Wayne Quilliam, Drought, Digital print on duratrans 50 x 72cm, 2005

Wayne Quilliam is a prominent photographer whose work utilizes a layering of body and landscape to portray his Indigenous cultural heritage. With over 110 exhibitions and 1400 publications to his name he is our most highly represented local artist. Although he is rarely in town due to a punishing schedule, his work is always located in place, people and culture. His work is now part of Wyndham City Council's permanent collection. The Light boxes titled '*Drought*' and '*Flooding rains*' in the foyer of the cultural centre are his representation in this exhibition as he had 40 works in the previous exhibition called HOME.



Image: Sue Anderson '*Home Run*'
Lithograph, 2011
Image Courtesy of Australia Galleries

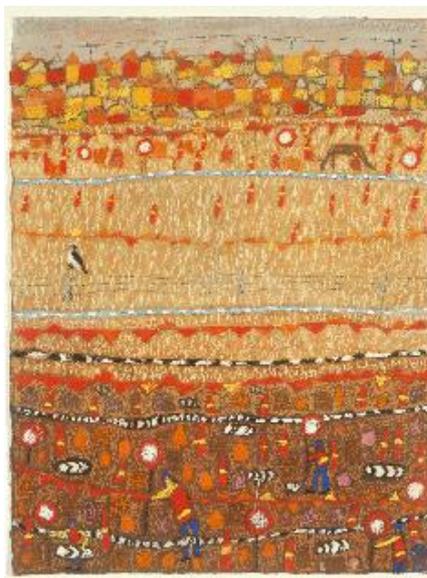


Image: Sue Anderson '*Dividing Lines*'
Pastel on paper, 2012
Image Courtesy of Australia Galleries

Sue Anderson has worked from Point Cook for over 25 years, painting the encroaching suburbs as they creep towards her house. She lived there when it was a farming community and her landscape paintings document, in her own unique style, the progression of urban living into a once rural environment. The rooftops of suburban developments provide a texture that replaces the tufts of indigenous grasses.

We are lucky to have these creative's in our midst. Some have always been here and some are part of a growing cultural movement in the west. We now have some fine art institutions in the western suburbs. The Footscray Community Arts Centre and Newport Substation have been tempting people across the Maribyrnong River. For too long the west has been identified with industry. It has inspired many artists for that very reason but it has struggled to be known for its culture. This is changing thanks to people such as those in this exhibition.