sculpture by the sea

bondi 2002 | 31 OCT –17 NOV | CATALOGUE & SITE MAP $7 INC GST

DIRECTOR'S NOTE >>>

Welcome to the sixth annual sculpture by the sea and the work of over 100 sculptors!

This year's exhibition has a number of new developments intended to expand the experience for visitors and sculptors alike. What I see as key to the growth of the exhibition is running it for an extra week, while new dimensions have been added with our Primary School education program complete with workshops; and sculpture inside, an exhibition of small, wall, floor and more affordable sculptures in the Bondi Pavilion Art Gallery.

This year's exhibiting sculptors have been selected from over 500 submissions. Thank you to Laura Back and Ron Robertson-Swann OAM for giving up 3 days earlier in the year to sift through the proposals. So many good proposals get knocked back I wish someone would approach us about staging a Park de Refuse. Laura and Ron are joined by Professor Glynn Williams, our first overseas judge, to consider the works for the Sydney Water Sculpture Prize, which has increased to $20,000, with the award winning work to be the fifth gifted to the Campbelltown City Bicentennial Art Gallery by Sydney Water.

This year's JBWere Distinguished Invited artists are Fiona Hall and Michael Le Grand, who coming from Adelaide and Canberra respectively, are like nearly half of the exhibiting artists who come to Sydney to exhibit from all over Australia and the world. Of the overseas artists we have an especially large contingent from Britain exhibiting as a showcase of British sculpture supported by the British Council.

The flip side of all the good news is that we still are not breaking through and getting enough sponsorship to fund the exhibition ... and this is hurting, indeed if sculpture sales were not so strong we would have had to consider closing down. So I would like to invite (get down on my knees and beg) everyone to spread the news about becoming a 'Friend or Patron of Sculpture by the Sea' and to ask one of our volunteers from the AGNSW Society Taskforce (a big thank you to Taskforce!) at our information marquees about how to join or to call our office.

I would like to thank everyone who has made the exhibition possible, particularly the sculptors; my core staff of Rebecca, Susie and Axel; our sponsors, patrons and friends; and our hosts Waverley Council who, as always, are extremely accommodating. Lastly, I would like to dedicate this year's exhibition to the memory of Matthew Taleb, a very close family friend whose strength as he battled cancer was inspirational and quite extraordinary.

Enjoy

David Handley

Director

a bondi productions

COVER: *SOOTH*, LISA SOLOMAN. PHOTOGRAPH BY JACK BETT.

THE FAIRFAX CORPORATE COLLECTION
OF AUSTRALIAN PAINTINGS

Lloyd Frederic Rees (1895-1988) *Sydney Opera House (From Dawes Point)*, Oil on Canvas, Est: $100,000-$150,000

Sydney Auction
Sunday 17 November 2002, 6.30pm
Paddington Town Hall, Cnr Oxford St & Oatley Rd, Paddington NSW

Viewing
Thursday 14 November - Saturday 16 November, 11.00am - 6.00pm
Sunday 17 November, 11.00am - 2.00pm
Sotheby's Gallery, 118-122 Queen St, Woollahra NSW

Auction & Catalogue Enquiries
Tel: (02) 9362 1000 Fax: (02) 9362 1100
Email: australia@sothebys.com

Sotheby's EST. 1744

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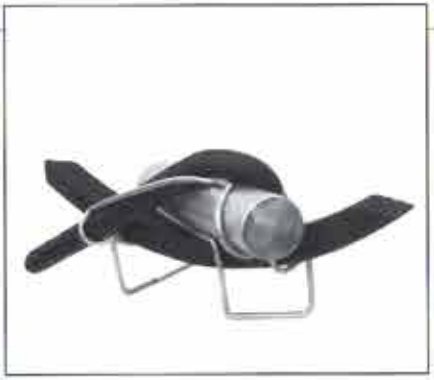
represented by Defiance Gallery, Sydney



Nigel Harrison
autonomy

materials stainless steel, mild steel, cement

dimensions 400 x 180 x 130 cm

price $35,000

statement Exploration of the interplay of volumetric shapes harnessed to illuminate the mechanical dynamics of the forces of forms.

biography Lecturer NAS (part-time). Artist in residence OMI New York. Recipient Sydney Water Sculpture Prize, SXS 2001.

43

supported by

Günther Uecker Germany
gestrandet

materials wood (Bluegum)

dimensions 300 x 120 x 150 cm

price Gifted to the Sydney College of the Arts

statement Günther Uecker explores man's inhumanity, focusing on the violence perpetrated on those who are perceived as different.

biography Presented in co-operation with the Goethe-Institut Inter Nationes and Sydney College of the Arts.This sculpture has been fabricated by Miklos Varadi-Beothy, sculpture student SCA.

44

represented by Dianne Tanzer Gallery, Melbourne

Sebastian Di Mauro QLD
astroflirt

materials 55 mm astro turf, galvanised steel

dimensions 253 x 180 x 105 cm

price $22,000

statement The fake 'grass' offers a dialogue between the real and the artificial, our desire to replicate and improve nature.

biography Senior lecturer at Queensland College of Art, Griffith University, Brisbane. Exhibited Australia and overseas. Selected National Sculpture Prize, NGA 2001. Recipient Woollahra Sculpture Prize.

BRITISH COUNCIL Australia

Geoff Harvey
the geoff harvey band

materials found objects cast in metal (aluminium and bronze)

dimensions various sizes, all 90cm high (approx)

price $7,000 each

statement While my guitar gently weeps for George Harrison.

biography In October 2002 I celebrated 25 years as a professional artist – my new band was made as part of this celebration.

45

represented by Robin Gibson Gallery, Sydney

supported by

CENTRAL FOUNDRY

James Rogers
on vocation

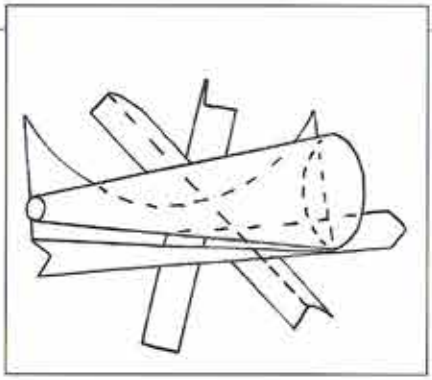
materials steel

dimensions 350 x 200 x 250 cm (approx)

price $20,000

statement The attendant at the welding supplier knows all the lyrics to the songs on the radio. The chords were built staying a while, and the silent space was my own undoing.

biography Exhibited in Sydney since 1981 Art / Empire / Industry, Sussex St, Sydney and Legge Gallery.



46

represented by Legge Gallery, Sydney

supported by

SELL AND PARKER

SCRAP METAL MERCHANTS TO THE STARS

Phillip Spelman ACT
sojourn

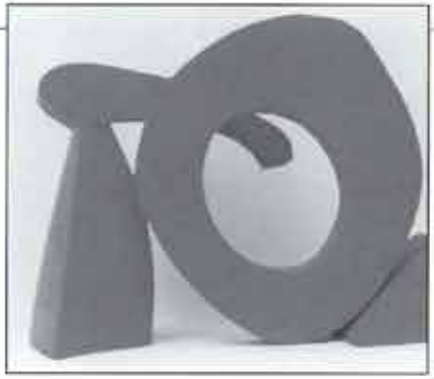
materials welded mild steel, automotive paint

dimensions 230 x 160 x 120 cm

price $20,000

statement This work explores the machine and its movement.

biography Exhibits Sydney and Canberra. Represented public, corporate and private collections Sydney, Melbourne and Canberra.



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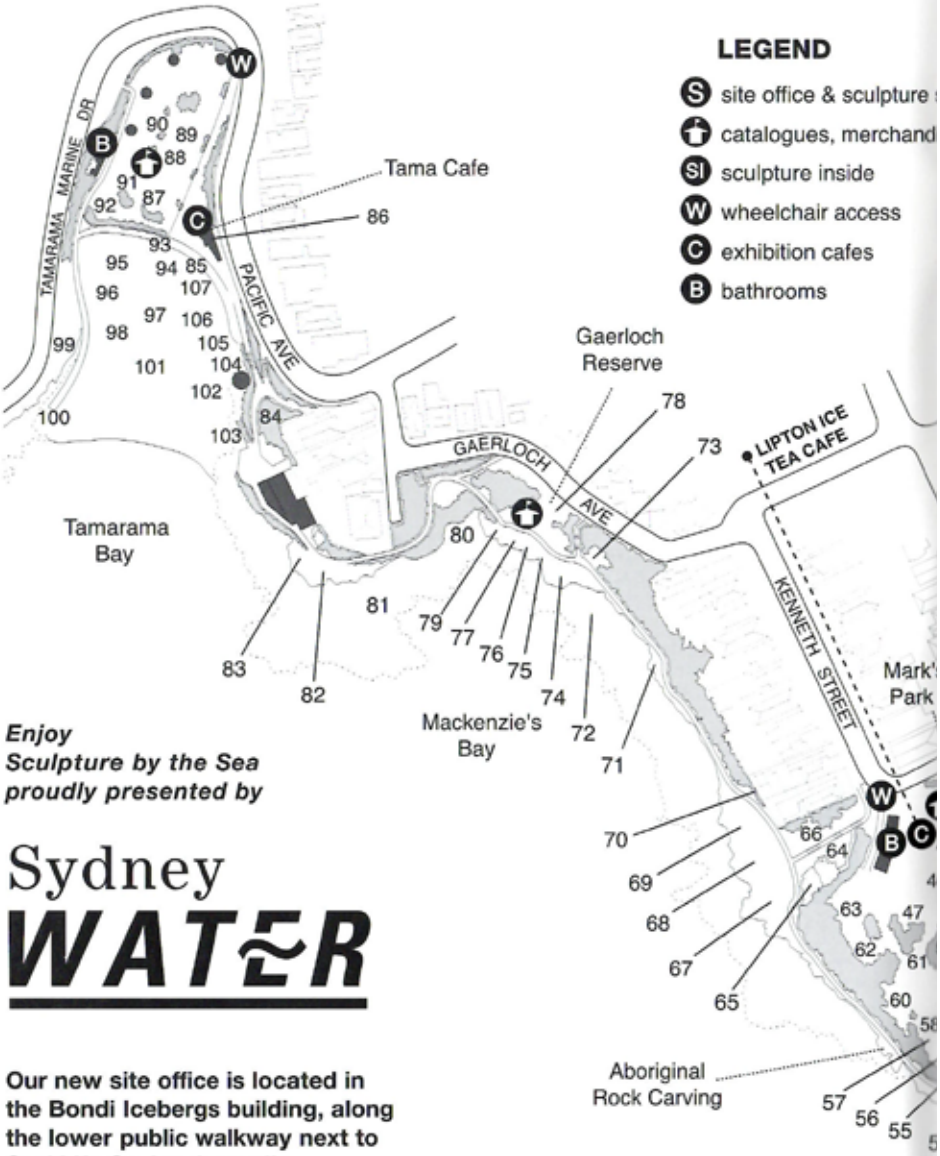
represented by Defiance Gallery, Sydney

JBWere
Quality Investment Advice

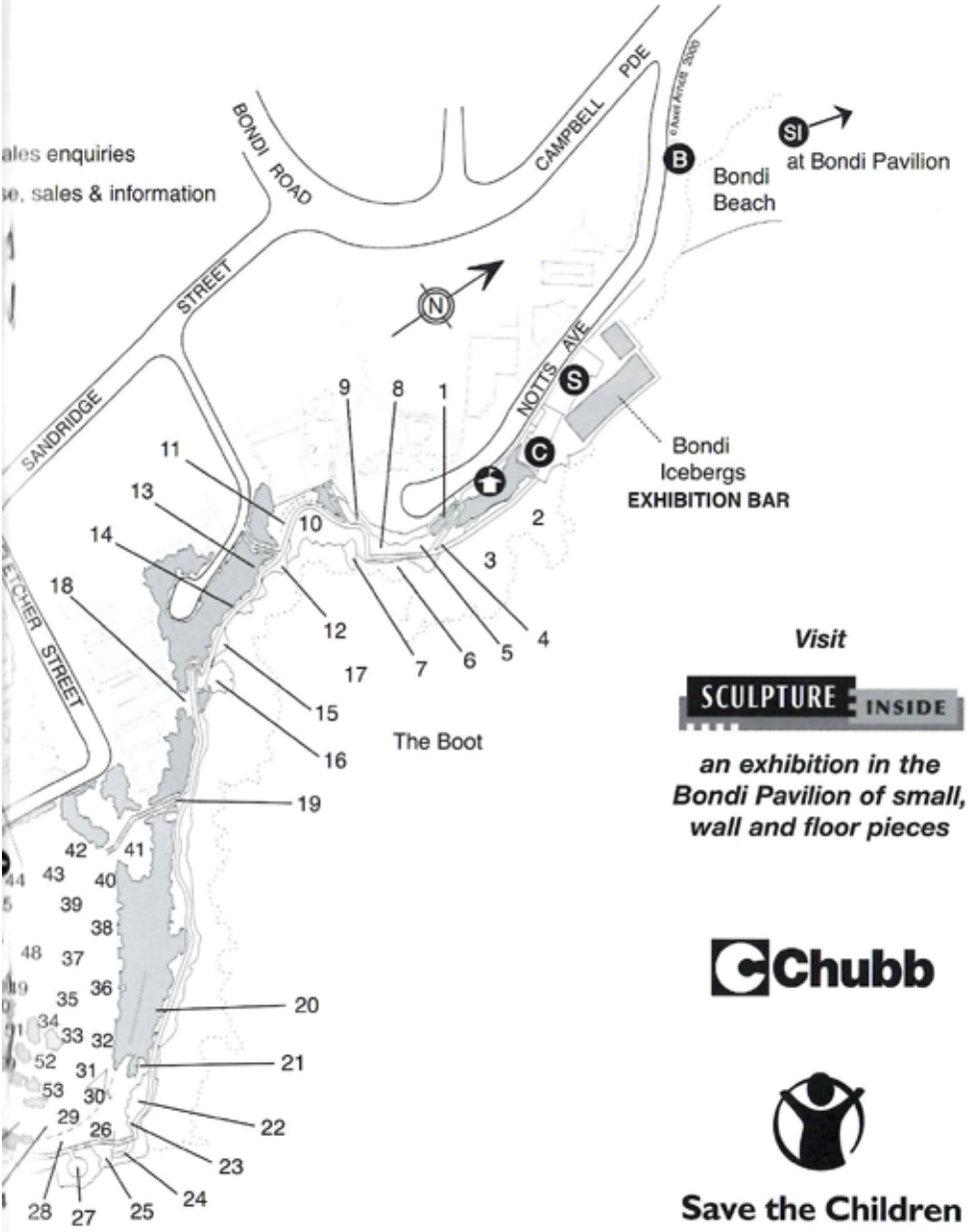
SITE MAP



Enjoy
Sculpture by the Sea
proudly presented by

Sydney WATER

Our new site office is located in the Bondi Icebergs building, along the lower public walkway next to Surf Life Saving Australia



Visit

SCULPTURE INSIDE

an exhibition in the Bondi Pavilion of small, wall and floor pieces

Chubb

Save the Children

BY THE SEA: A HISTORY OF HUMAN ENGAGEMENT

An essay for **sculpture by the sea** 2002

It was by the sea that they did it. Along the edges of great oceans, on the beach and in the water, human ancestors travelled on a quest to explore and conquer the world. By the water they met, shared experience, ideas and each other. Undoubtedly, many places were mapped, marked and mythologised in the process. Lines were drawn in the sand, boulders were carved with aesthetic arrangements of long-lasting designs and temporary shelters were erected. But those landscapes are now well and truly gone, having been drowned by the rising sea levels released by the death throes of the last great Ice Age, many thousands of years ago. That great period of global warming shaped and marked the land on an unprecedented scale for early humans, challenging and changing our ancestors in profound and permanent ways.

Humans also have an incredible capacity to mark, shape and transform land. It is almost as if the first humans were born artists whose purpose it was and always has been to mark, make and immortalise special places. The urge to come to terms with new landscapes must have been enormous, as recent research has shown that as soon as people reached new areas they began to change them, to mark and make them places charged with meaning. Some of those marks, those special places, have survived in the form of rock-paintings, rock-engravings, stone arrangements and other sorts of early sculpture. Countless thousands have not but we can well imagine that at any given moment of history humanity's artists were hard at work bonding with, reconciling and transforming the land. Today, ancient rock-art and sculpture gives us glimpses into those past ages, as well as the early artists themselves.

Australia is home to one of the largest bodies of rock-art in the world, with over 100,000 sites and millions of images. New sites are found each year, usually in some of the more remote, rugged parts of the continent. Invariably, these significant, elaborately adorned places are close to water. Often the more impressive galleries also have commanding views of their surrounds. It is as if the raw aesthetic power of nature inspired both ancient and recent Australians to create an aesthetic of their own.

Some of the earliest surviving marks, both in Australia and in many other parts of the world, consist of stencilled hands, rudimentary prints, carved or abraded grooves and cup-like engravings, the latter pecked or ground into the rock surface. Indeed, these sorts of designs are among the oldest forms of rock-art in most countries but they continued to be made in recent times. These marks of the individual, marks of contemplation, appear to reflect a bonding process, a coming to terms with landscapes, places and spaces. They say 'I was here', 'this is a place important to me' but also contribute to the immortalisation of place. The memorialising of place has manifest itself in many ways since the earliest semi-permanent marks were made 30,000, 40,000 or more years ago in Australia and possibly as much as over 200,000 years ago elsewhere. But more recent marks also include images and symbols of group identity, as well as scenes depicting daily life, ritual, belief, experience and history.

We continue the process in both old and new ways, from graffiti 'tags' or sculpted material of the individual to buildings, monuments and edifices of the group. We stamp our identity, experience and history on the land wherever we venture to. For better or worse, we bond with the land, commemorating past good fortunes and mistakes, expressing some form of reality in the present or advertising bold new visions of the future. We change the land; the land changes us. Artists, the world over, are good at this but all of us engage in this activity, sometimes without fully realising it. It is events like Sculpture by the Sea that both remind us of our marking obsession and express new relationships to place in meaningful ways. They bring past traditions together with present experience, unite individual with community and reaffirm relationships with both land and sea.

Importantly, the sculptures placed so carefully along the ocean's edge each year, as part of an annual event all of Sydney can participate in, are not the first marks to highlight Bondi's sand-stone-water

boundary. For instance, there are Aboriginal depictions of marine creatures delicately carved into sandstone platforms near the water's edge and other images of humans and animals can be found on rocky outcrops near water throughout Sydney. But there are also more enigmatic marks that tell of human relationships to place in Bondi. For instance, at the end of the Notts Avenue cul de sac there are numerous long, straight lines carved deep into the rock. They were pecked and abraded in a manner similar to the carved marine animals nearby but do not define a recognisable image. Elsewhere in greater Sydney such lines were sometimes pecked into platforms to divert water into natural hollows or to places suitable for sharpening stone axes but this does not appear to be the case here. But certainly time and trouble went into their production so they surely once had purpose.

Close to the pecked lines is a large boulder with vertical, horizontal and sloping grooves carved into one side and along its back. The grooves are reminiscent of those found at many Aboriginal sites across Australia and the boulder is carved in a similar way to others in NSW and beyond. For instance, they resemble axe-grinding grooves found in outcrops of sandstone throughout the Sydney region. However, axe-grinding grooves are usually on flat or slightly sloping surfaces, and are somewhat wider. But elsewhere in Australia, boulders were often adorned with deep, narrow grooves. This resulted from a range of activities, including initiation and commemoration, invariably signifying the boulder and/or larger place as especially significant. It is thus likely that the Bondi grooves are of Aboriginal origin or are at least Aboriginal-inspired but the pecked and abraded lines are more of a mystery. It is not known when or why they were made and what cultural influence led to their production. Perhaps they were made by Aboriginal people or are a recent, non-Aboriginal reminder of human interaction with place, a precursor to the more elaborate sculptures that now dot the coastline as a rite of spring passage.

Rites of passage are implicated in many past human marking activities and continue to underlie much of the present. Gravestones and memorials to the dead are obvious marks about ultimate passage but others, from foundation stones to gardens to temporary sculpture commemorate changing lives and seasons. From the dawn of modern humans people have been marking time and space with expressions of experience, their relationship to the environment, other creatures and to each other. These long-standing human practices celebrate life, love, land and longing. They illustrate the very human need to mark change, bond with place and initiate new beginnings. People have been arriving in Australia by sea for many tens of thousands of years. Each new wave has sculpted the land in its own way. But the land has also changed the people, imprinting itself on their most basic of traditions.

Traditions are never static but they do anchor us in past and present group experience and identity, in culturally meaningful ways. This helps to alleviate stress by reassuring people of group acceptance, providing an outlet for self-expression and giving hope or plans of action for the future. This is especially important in changing times, times of uncertainty, and can take place at any meaningful location. But it is at certain places, such as mountains, hilltops, waterfalls or by the sea, places of dynamism and change, that inspiration and revelation about who we really are and where we might be going may best be encountered. Many people consider water to be the essence of life, stone to be the essence of land and air, through respiration, to be the essence of being. Together, water, stone and air make sand, clay and earth, the soils that support terrestrial and even marine life. Thus liminal zones where water, stone and air dramatically intersect, where minerals are released and ultimately life is nourished or born, will always be some of our most special places. Throughout the world, these places are marked with art and architecture, often with an aspect of sacredness. But the natural beauty and power of such places is also important, as it is what inspired human creativity in the first place. Natural place thus has deep roots in our psychology, it has and continues to significantly shape who we are. Our paintings, engravings, sculptures and architecture are merely extensions of a place's natural significance. Something to contemplate when next visiting a spectacular waterfall, mountain or rocky outcrop by the sea.

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