
Flight Recorder

A selection of journal articles from Flying Arts' artists working in the front line of artist development in regional and remote areas in 2011

FLYING ARTS
connecting artists and communities

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FEBRUARY

Botanical drawing in a historical art space 19 and 20 February 2011, Maryborough Journal entry: Julie McEnery (AoT Artist)

Someone must have let the cat out of the bag... you know... how fun, satisfying, relaxing, and thoroughly engrossing botanical drawing is, and it's big in Maryborough.

This was not only my biggest ever Flying Arts workshop, but I also had a wait list of six (which quickly grew to twelve) and we even had a male in our midst!

Not content with one masterpiece to show for the weekend, most of these dedicated drawers produced several works during the workshop. The works were stunning, worthy of exhibition in the 1880's built Gatakers Artspace annual workshop exhibition.

Our 'show off' table at the end of this marathon workshop was an exhibition in itself; presenting orchids, protea, grevillea, tuberose, pelargoniums, gumnuts, chillies, poinciana pods and flowers, thunbergia, carnivorous pitcher plants, a banana flower, a banksia nut, impatiens, and a stunning pair of dramatically different but equally impressive fig branches.

The workshop closed with smiles of satisfaction all 'round, a fitting finale to such a productive and enjoyable weekend.

Bravo Maryborough!



Image: a botanical drawing produced by one of the students during Julie McEnery's workshop

MARCH

Our Place exhibition launch

19 March 2011, Mundubbera

Journal entry: Gabriel Smith (Winner of the Queensland Regional Art Awards 2010)

What an exciting weekend it was in Mundubbera for the launch of *Our Place* – the touring exhibition of finalist works from the 2010 *Queensland Regional Art Awards*.

As the winner of a Wayne Kratzmann Award, I organised to travel with the exhibition to all five galleries to assist with installation and present artist talks - with the kind assistance of the wonderful Flying Arts team and thanks to grants provided by Arts Queensland and the Queensland Arts Council. The first stop on the tour was Mundubbera.

Installation day started early with an 8am call. I was amazed by the number of volunteers who gave up their time to come in and install the exhibition. All in all, there were about fifteen people, which I found out is about half the total number of volunteers at the gallery. They have all been trained in how to install an exhibition, so with only a brief introduction we got stuck in. Everyone worked well together and within no time at all we had the artwork up and the lights set. I even got to have the afternoon off!

The gallery itself is fairly new, having only opened in 2008. The facility is well designed with all the 'mod cons' to make installing an exhibition easy. There are two gallery rooms, which allows for ample wall space, without the space feeling too cluttered.

The launch was lovely. The volunteers organised a wonderful spread of all kinds of goodies. There were raffles, entertainment by the choir and a marvellous local musician. There was a large turnout of locals, which added a real sense of community. The speeches were held in an adjacent building, so it was quite an affair to enter the gallery and see the exhibition in its full splendour.

I must say, I felt a bit like a movie star with all the attention. Then I found out they were putting on fireworks! Well, that was actually part of the *Floods Charity Concert* that was also held that evening. Nevertheless, it was a fantastic end to a memorable day.



Image: Gabriel Smith with her winning artwork 'Urban Footprints' at Mundubbera Regional Art Gallery for the launch of 'Our Place', photographer David Licciardello

APRIL

Silversmithing workshop

9 and 10 April 2011, Hervey Bay

Journal entry: Madeleine Brown (AoT Artist)

I was pleased to be invited to head up to Hervey Bay recently to teach a class of eager silversmiths at the Wide Bay TAFE. A four-hour drive up in dreadful weather was luckily no precursor to what was a gorgeous sunny weekend.

The class was made up of more than just beginners, with a few old hands amongst us, as well as artists and teachers – which meant an amazing array of work was constructed in a short time.

The TAFE itself is extremely well set-up with jewellery tools, which makes visiting a pleasure. It's always difficult to get every steel tool that I'd like to take into the suitcase and it's wonderful to find some of the 'fun extras' already there waiting for me. The light and airy studios were perfect for ten eager students (plus me).

We started on the first morning with saw-piercing skills, using tapestry patterns as our inspiration to create delicate sterling silver pendants. The group quickly moved onto soldering with stone-set rings being made by the adventurous. It was hard to get people to stop for lunch, which is always a good sign! As usual, two days is never enough, and our efforts became frantic as everyone tried to get their pieces polished up before the end of the weekend!

I was so impressed with how quickly all the participants picked up the skills – those new to silversmithing and those who were coming back to it after a few years. The class were so welcoming and really eager to 'pick my brain', which makes me feel like it's worth making the trip!

Hopefully, I'll be back in a few months for the next instalment.



Image: Madeleine Brown with workshop participants in Hervey Bay

MAY

St Lawrence Wetlands Festival workshops

21 and 22 May 2011, St Lawrence

Journal entry: Casselle Mountford & Scott Maxwell (AoT Artists)

On a sunny Friday morning I flew to Mackay with two other Flying Arts artists, Scott and Anaheke. We then drove to the small coastal town of St Lawrence which has amazing Wetlands that birds from all around the world migrate to throughout the year.

We were all there to hold workshops celebrating these Wetlands at the annual festival in St Lawrence. Bird watchers and interested participants travelled from Mackay and Rockhampton to attend the weekend long event.

I had a wonderful group of eager participants creating Bird Sculptures out of natural materials. We hung the finished sculptures from some trees in the surrounding area and also created a beautiful Installation in the tent we were working in.

We were treated to hot damper throughout the day served straight from a camp oven and for lunch we had amazing mud crab and prawn sandwiches caught fresh locally.

On the Saturday night many of the participants and ourselves were invited to a barn dance at the local St Lawrence community hall. We again feasted on a baked dinner cooked in the camp oven and enjoyed music and much merriment.

The weekend was a great success and we have all been invited back for next year's festival, yippee!!



Image: Casselle Mountford, Scott Maxwell, and Anaheke Metua with workshop organisers from Isaac Regional Council in St Lawrence

MAY

**Digital Photography Workshop
21 and 22 May 2011, Normanton
Journal entry: Donna Robinson (AoT Artist)**

What a delight it was to be invited to teach a workshop in Normanton, a place I hadn't visited since I was a child.

The flight was a visual pleasure. To observe the Great Barrier Reef from the air was quite majestic, and then flying across the pointy part of Australia revealed a no longer 'wide brown land' but a rather green one after the recent flooding.

During the workshop, I met a very enthusiastic and eclectic group of photographers whose occupations included doctors, station owners, school administration staff and even the town's detective. Some had even travelled three hours by road to get there. Not all were beginners, but they were all very friendly and willing to learn more about their DSLR cameras, and the creative sides of photography.

On the second day, participants shared their homework (fun work) photography; it was brilliant to see each student displaying such wonderful creativity and skill. The class was so enthused, an excursion was planned for the afternoon to photograph some of the town's historical features and horse riding at the rodeo grounds.

Not wanting the weekend to end, four of us drove to Karumba to capture the sunset. What a delight it was to tour the beautiful wetlands with all its lilies and bird life – and watch the sun set over the ocean for a change – with all with our cameras on hand to record these spectacular moments. It was a wonderful way to end the workshop; it certainly gave me a new appreciation for this remote place and the wonderful photographers who reside here.



Image: workshop participants in Normanton

JUNE

Mural painting with Lockhart River State School

7 to 9 June 2011, Lockhart River

Journal entry: Pamela Denise (AoT Artist)

In June I travelled to the Lockhart River settlement on the Cape to paint a mural with teachers and students at the state school. Cairns is 575 kilometres south of Lockhart River, or eleven hours drive away, depending on the time of year and weather.

This workshop had two components: the design and drafting tutorial, using the school motto of 'respect – self, others and environment' as a focal point; and then painting up the 'respect' design as a mural during the next two days. The mural was 7 by 1.8 metres and painted with pre-mixed Solarguard paint to ensure durability at this tropical and coastal site.

The selected team was excellent to work with as co-artists. Even though these students had never been part of a design team as such, nor painted one major work on a large wall before, they quickly grasped the techniques and displayed considerable competence.

I was made to feel very welcome, comfortable and felt appreciated and valued during my time in Lockhart River. The experience of working in a remote community that has such a strong sense of culture was highly beneficial to my art practice. I visited the Lockhart River Art Gang gallery and workshop for a couple of afternoons after work. In the early mornings, with the air already warm, I would walk 2.5 kilometres to the coast – and while I was disappointed not to see a crocodile on the foreshore, I am also glad that I didn't.

I thoroughly enjoyed the week and will gladly leap at any chance to get back to the Cape to work on similar creative projects.



Image: final mural designed and painted during workshop with Lockhart River State School teachers and students

JULY

Digital Imaging, Stencil and Screen-printing with Carolyn Mckenzie Craig 15 to 19 July 2011, Barcaldine

Journal entry: Joanne Taylor (AoT Workshop Organiser)

Carolyn Mckenzie Craig visited Barcaldine during an extended weekend from 15 to 19 July 2011 to conduct two workshops and also to judge the Barcaldine Art Exhibition.

Carolyn's judging and explanation of her reasoning for the different winning artworks was very well-received by the artists and audience at the annual art exhibition and created an educational opportunity for the community in what is contemporary art and how this fits within the context of traditional works. This year saw a promising number of quality junior and student artworks that Carolyn specifically mentioned in her comments.

The Digital Imaging workshop was conducted in an informal setting with participants from different levels and was not structured and everyone got something different from the experience. The Stencil and Screen-printing workshop was a relaxed affair. Two of the participants brought along cutting boards from their kitchens instead of cutting mats, which created a lighter moment to the start of the day. The works that were produced were a credit to Carolyn's free and easy teaching style as everyone's work was quite different and obviously from their own inspiration. What a fantastic workshop, as everyone now has the ability to do screen-printing in their own studios.

The workshops were a huge success for the Barcaldine art community and this was in no small part a credit to the quality of artists that Flying Arts recruit as their workshop presenters/tutors. It was a fantastic opportunity to have Carolyn in our community for this weekend and everyone gained valuable experience and knowledge.

I have since had opportunity to informally discuss our workshops with Carolyn, after she returned home. She has confirmed that the Barcaldine experience was for her also very positive, in that our members here are so keen to put her teachings in to practice. We have plans for creation of screen-printed products, hopefully for display and sale at the upcoming triennial community show, the Westech Field Days at Barcaldine.

Thanks to Flying Arts for promoting and making these workshops possible.



Images: workshop participants Kylie and Emily during the stencil and screen-printing workshop in Barcaldine

AUGUST

Acrylic and aluminium - pendant making workshop 18 and 19 August 2011, Emerald Journal Entry: Dan Cox (AoT Artist)

Mid-August saw me flying out to Emerald to conduct a two-day Acrylic and Aluminium Pendant Making workshop at Emerald State High School.

The workshop was designed to introduce students in years 10 to 12 to some basic techniques in jewellery making, with a strong focus on recycling, which they could apply within their own arts practice.

After extensive explanation and demonstration as to what we would be doing, the students started designing their pendants with much enthusiasm. Most chose simple designs that they had developed themselves, allowing them to grasp the concept of the project without too much of a challenge regarding technical skill. My idea is always to make a workshop fun and for everyone to get a result that they are pleased with. However, it was not long before a competition started amongst us all as to who could break the least blades! A competition one of the teachers lost miserably, much to the delight of students.

The following day I worked with the same group of students. As they had completed their pendants on the first day, I challenged them further by getting them to make a ring with multiple layers of acrylic and aluminium. This proved to be much more of a challenge. Some of the students fully grasped the concept and ended up making two rings!

The teachers and students alike, made me feel very welcome, and although the trip was a whirlwind, I thoroughly enjoyed the experience of working with high school students and seeing firsthand that youthful enthusiasm for the arts is alive and strong in rural Queensland.



Images: workshop participant making a ring during Dan Cox's workshop in Emerald, Final piece by Antonia Mobbs.

SEPTEMBER

How to make a film or media product 3 and 4 September 2011, Roma Journal entry: Chris Bennie (AoT Artist)

It was a shaky start. The conductor couldn't guarantee the next train would arrive. Power down in the CBD apparently. But it came, and with time to spare.

I love those little regional planes - the ones with the propellers on the *outside*. The ascent is always a bit rocky, but if you try to not think about it, it becomes like a rollercoaster.

A motel with a couch!

10 o'clock starts are the way forward I believe, everyone is a little more ready it seems. After some discussion about video techniques and processes in the morning, I divided the workshop into two groups who then took Roma by storm. Video cameras, stills cameras and iPhones were capturing all the gold they could handle as each group acted out their prepared storyboard down local streets and in front of monuments and pubs. And before you knew it we had to pack up.

Day two and everyone is hunched over laptops figuring out editing while constructing their own version of the archetypal hero meets villain to save Roma scenario. There's barely a peep. Future Jane Campion's and John Carpenters wield editing magic through the practicalities of Windows Move Maker and iMovie. To top it all off, the afternoon heralds the premiere screening of each others work.

There are fanfare, and applause, recommendations and bashfulness, but overall smiles foreground the weekend of our new media immersion.

One last quiet night away from the hustle and bustle, then oh, terrific, back on the rollercoaster and another job well done, and another great experience.



Image: workshop participants during Chris Bennie's workshop in Roma

SEPTEMBER

Festival lantern making

13 to 16 September 2011, Tambo

Journal entry: Pamela Denise (AoT Artist)

An articulated, illuminated, nine-metre long Teddy Bear floated serenely on the Tambo Lake at the opening night of the 2011 Tambo Teddy Bear's Picnic weekend. Big Ted's image was mirrored in the glassy surface, adorned by 70 colourful tepee lanterns and studded with synchronised laser light show from the Polic Blue Light Disco. Held in the park on the shore of Tambo Lake, there was a good turn-out of locals and visitors to enjoy the lanterns the disco and a BBQ put on by the Tambo Pony Club.

It was a great result from an intensive week committed to making this spectacle. The teepees were made by 35 students from the Tambo State School during the day, whilst at evening workshops women from the community build Big Ted at the Grasslands Art Gallery workshop. By the end of the week up-skilled students and adults were masterfully building Teddy's legs, working on rafts and creating ballast and floats.

Resources across the community were combined with great effect where everything needed was found in this picturesque heritage town (population 430). There was a successful shout out for 144 two-litre milk bottles to use as floats for the rafts. A large flat top truck was procured to transport Big Ted lakeside where he was installed with the assistance of local SES members in a SES boat.

Unexpected additional benefits included ongoing assistance from creative Teddy Bear collector from Longreach and the timely arrival at the eleventh-hour of arts event organisers from South Australia attracted by an ABC radio interview the day before. Supported throughout by the brilliant Alison Shaw, in her capacity as Blackall-Tambo Council Community Facilitator, this was truly a memorable community art project.



Images: Floating the 'Big Ted' was a massive task, and 'Big Ted' the morning after the opening party!

OCTOBER

Mosaic Workshops for Splashing Back with Beverley Ridsdill-Kenny 29 and 30 October 2011, Toowoomba Journal entry: Beverley Ridsdill-Kenny (AoT Artist)

Having just returned from a weekend spent 'mosaicing' with participants from the Toowoomba Arts Society and having met the most inspiring and engaging group of artists I think I must have the best job in the world.

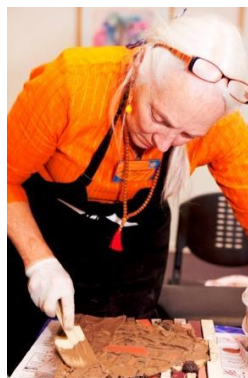
The project at hand was to develop mosaic skills within the Toowoomba community to enable the people of Toowoomba to express through art their experience in the devastating floods of Jan/Feb 2011. The workshop was filled to capacity not only with eager participants but with energy, enthusiasm and a need to express and be heard. The workshop was about creating visual art to demonstrate a resilience and community strength in the face of adversity. It was about 'putting lives and businesses back together' and what better way to express this than through the art of mosaic where pieces of 'tesserae' are assembled to recreate an image of beauty, meaning and significance, a work of art that withstands the tests and trials of time. This intensive two day workshop certainly created works of deep significance, meaning and outstanding beauty.

Day one was abuzz with discussion on mosaic technique and material information, design ideas, sharing 'stories' and getting started on each individual's mosaic. It soon became apparent to me that the narrative behind these works of art was as vital to the story as the artwork itself, these stories had to be told and these stories needed to be heard. It was suggested that each artist write their story to their own artwork. This idea developed further, with the suggestion that both the images and narratives be compiled into a book, an idea being considered for 2012.

During the course of the two days the artists shared their stories, their losses and their unity as a community. There was the occasional tear or we would share a 'goose bump' moment, but mainly what I got from this group of devoted artists was strength, resilience and pride. The silence that often enveloped the work studio was one of intention and absorption; these artists were deeply connected to their works.

It was the intention of the artists involved in this project to make a prototype 'sample mosaic' to illustrate to businesses around Toowoomba their desire to create a collaborative public artwork documenting the resilience shown by the community in the 2011 floods. The expression through mixed medium mosaic was engaging, meaningful and inspiring. The use of colour, texture, shape and form to illustrate meaning and intent was significant. Certainly the results of the workshop were telling and inspiring.

I will await with baited breath the creations and stories yet to unfold in this most worthy of artistic projects. It has been an absolute privilege to work with this strong and devoted group of artists; I thank them for sharing their stories.



Images: workshop participant hard at work, workshop participants with Beverley.

NOVEMBER

Antarctica Residency and Tell your story workshop

26 & 27 November 2011, Normanton

Journal entry: Judith Parrott (AoT Artist)

The small plane bounces into Normanton with the storm clouds curling on the horizon but the rain staying obstinately away. It is 37 degrees.

Sixteen of us start our day in the air-conditioned comfort of the school, discussing composition and design, the technicalities of the cameras, and where we will go for our photo shoot. The old jail, the train station, the rodeo grounds and the cemetery are the places of choice. Normanton spreads itself out in the ample flat space and we drive in our air-conditioned cars from one chosen spot to the next, cameras slung around our necks, and in my case, lots of sun cream and shawls to protect from the blazing heat. It is a hot little crowd that slinks back into the welcome cool of the school later in the day.

Sunday is a big day of show and tell and we enthuse over each other's work, and think about what we might try with composition or lighting to bring the beautiful images that everyone has captured even further into life.

The course is rounded off with sounds and images of Antarctica as I talk about community life at the stations where I spent my artist residency a few years ago. The cracking of the ice, the frozen white landscape brings a whole new world in to the steamy days of Normanton.



Image: Judith with a workshop participant.

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