



Tony Jones, 'Lighthouse', painted steel, 250 x 100 .8.5 cm



Jean-Marc Rivalland, 'Vehicle', metal, 180 x 200 x 300 cm

## Sculpture by the Sea, Cottesloe, Perth

1-19 March 2012, free admission and open around the clock

"SCULPTURE by the Sea" (or SxS as it is known in the trade) operates more like a franchise with separate exhibitions at Bondi (Sydney), Cottesloe (Perth) and Aarhus (Denmark), rather than as a travelling exhibition with three venues. Less than 20% of what was shown last year at Bondi in Sydney has made it to Cottesloe in Perth this year.

If the site at the Bondi was a spectacular two-kilometre strip of cliff face and sandy foreshore, at Cottesloe it is a scenic 400-metre expanse of beach. In this it is a much more concentrated event with 73 major sculptural installations brought together within this relatively small self-contained sculpture park. Above the beach, at the Cottesloe Surf Life Saving Club, there is a display

Lou Lambert, 'Red Herring', plated brass, wood and GRP steel, 180 x 175 x 282.5 cm



Tania Spencer

of about 100 smaller indoor sculptures. As in all SxS events, many artists apply for admission, with a smaller number selected by a selection committee and offered financial support. In 2012 about a quar-

ter of the applications at Cottesloe were accepted and they received a minimum of \$1250 towards the costs of making and installing their sculptures. While the Bondi event has been running for 15 years, this

is the eighth annual show in Perth. Owing to its bulky physical nature, sculpture is difficult and expensive to transport, hence the Bondi show had a predominance of work from NSW, while this show has a strong contingent of work by WA sculptors who make up approximately half of the exhibition. Cottesloe has in fact become the premier venue for the display of contemporary sculpture in Western Australia and each year a number of invitations are issued to sculptors in this State to exhibit at Bondi. It has also become a vital link in providing sculptors with exposure on the other side of the continent.

The outstanding piece at this show is Tony Jones's *Lighthouse*, an eight-and-a-half-metre high steel construction with a flashing solar light which sits out on the edge of the pier and combines a whimsical wit with a strong sense of design and presence. The use of brilliant colour and strong geometric elements gives the work a dramatic prominence. In contrast to the veteran Jones, who is one of Perth's best known sculptors, Thomas de Munk-Kerkmeier is a younger and emerging sculptor who, in pieces such as *It's a Bird!* combines wood and steel elements to successfully create a mobile-like construction which owes a debt to both Miró and Alexander Calder. He also has a number of very effective small-scale constructions in the indoors gallery.

Johannes Pannekoek is certainly one of the more popular participants in this year's sculptural event with his four-metre-long aluminium wave, titled *Convolution*. Clever, if not totally convincing, the highly reflective surface brings the sand and the sea into the big metal wave. The young Perth artist, Alexandra Rossi, who was awarded a prize in Bondi, here has devised another of her sandbag installations with their play on real and perceived comfort zones for Cottesloe. Another inter-

Tania Spencer, 'Thought Process', wire, 200 x 400 x 200 cm



Paul Caporn, 'Dump', foam mats, hi-density styrene, 300 x 240 x 420 cm



Johannes Pannekoek, 'Convolution', aluminium, 250 x 400 x 180 cm

esting emerging WA sculptor is Angela McHarrie, who plays with funky recognisable forms presented in unexpected juxtapositions. Her *Lookout*, the ladder with gaps, or the strange test tubes of DNA, present visually enticing elements that attract the viewer who tries to read the visual clues and make sense of the disparate elements.

Lou Lambert, another well known WA veteran sculptor, is represented with his *Red Herring*, a wonderful classic example of his art in which different materials are combined to create a new reality. Ron Gomboc, also a well known veteran WA artist who runs his own gallery and sculpture park, presents his signature pieces – strong metal totemic poles.

Paul Caporn, who was awarded the "NAB Western Australian Sculptor Scholarship" for 2012, has made a funky dump truck in a nice canary yellow; eye-catching and a definite crowd pleaser, but perhaps somewhat trite. Jean-Marc Rivalland, another WA sculptor, created a full-size panel van out of welded steel plates with a smooth rust-red veneer as a variation on the theme of Australia's obsession with the car. The father and son team, David and Aidan Carstairs, for this year's Cottesloe have made a very honest and simple steel structure on the theme of stairway to heaven, which has a convincing presence and a matter of fact unproblematic existence. Although not coming out of an art school milieu, they operate on a hit and miss basis, with this piece certainly a hit.

What this exhibition emphasises more than anything else is the existence of an engaging and vibrant sculpture scene in WA, one which is largely unknown on the east coast. There are a number of interesting emerging local sculptors. Tania Spencer, for example, weaves with wire forms which are deceptively simple, such as *Thought Process*, but which also possess a considerable

Angela McHarrie, 'Lookout' (detail), stainless steel, 500 x 38 x 6 cm



Holly Pepper, 'Crawling' (detail), cast cement, 200 x 680 x 20 cm



David and Aidan Carstairs, 'Sea to Shore', steel plate, 240 x 220 x 150 cm



beauty and sophistication. Kathy Allam, another emerging sculptor from the west, employs a wide range of materials to create organic, non-figurative, yet sensuous forms with a fascinating variety of surfaces. Her *Dream Cloud* has a simplicity combined with a subtle seductive appeal. Holly Pepper is another emerging artist who combines a strong sense of design with an environmental consciousness. Her crawling forms seem to disrupt the order and harmony of the natural spaces. Peter Zappa is an artist who enjoys drawing with steel in space, sometimes in a whimsical and quite figurative manner, as in his humorous *Beach House*, on other occasions, in more abstracted geometric constructions which endlessly play with ideas of sight and perception – and the gap which can form between them.

Over the past eight years Cottesloe has formed a bridge between the Western Australian sculpture scene and the rest of Australia. Attracting crowds of over 200,000 visitors for the two-and-a-half weeks of the event and generating sales for about 40% of the sculptures on show, it is now playing a crucial role in the Australian visual arts scene.

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