

Art Works at Myall Park Botanic Garden

Apart from the Myall Park Gallery's permanent collection of Dorothy Gordon's botanical paintings, the Garden is home to a number of exciting art works:

1994 Leadlight panel – beside the front door of the Myall Park Gallery



Local artists and craftsmen responded enthusiastically to Nita C. Lester's suggestion to incorporate a leadlight panel into the Gallery design. In 1993 during discussions with the Gallery architect, Brian Donovan, it was decided that the theme should be the three hybrid grevilleas: Robyn, Sandra and Merinda Gordon. Interested artists met to discuss the possible designs. At this meeting, Jane Bridle, Diane Hill, Nita C. Lester, Pat Mitchell, Carol McCormack and Joan Schwennesen contributed to a design. The final design was inspired by the context – Gordon grevilleas, lake and frog, and the blue-faced honeyeater. Look closely, the honeyeaters are cleverly woven into the overall design.

Grants were applied for and received from the Queensland Arts Council and the Regional Arts Development Fund. The grants provided funding for the employment of the stained glass craftsman and tutor, Dermot Clifford of Toowoomba who ran workshops for all those who took part in the panel construction. Ken Green, Diane Hill, Sue Hughes, Nita C. Lester, Carol McCormack and Barry Mitchell took part in these workshops. The Sandra Gordon panel was finished by Dermot during the workshop sessions, and the two other panels were cut and partly constructed. The Merinda Gordon panel was taken home and completed by Barry Mitchell, and the Robyn Gordon panel was completed by Nita C. Lester. Ken Green assisted with the final soldering of the panels. The panels were installed in February 1995 by Ron Brown, Ken Green and Barry Mitchell.

The panel has continued to surprise and stimulate the imaginations of all visitors and volunteers alike.

1999 Thongaphone – between the Myall Park Gallery and the carpark.



To celebrate Mr Gordon's 100th birthday in 1999, it was suggested we hold a Festival with music as the theme. We chanced upon the names of Steve McLeish and Stephen Langton; contacted them and yes they were free at that time and they would build us a thongaphone. 'What was a thongaphone?' we asked.

Festival funding was sought and received, so wheels were set in motion. The '2 Steves' as we called them, came out in their truck from Maleny for a week, laden with an array of the strangest of instruments. Over a weekend workshop we made a variety of instruments including a hybrid 'xylophone'

fashioned from the cylindrical pipe used earlier on in Garden history for protection of aluminium plant name tags. A wind chime was created from tynes suspended on increasing lengths of wire from a plough disc, reflecting the part played by farming in development of the district.

The 2 Steves had Lorraine Barnes, Carol McCormack, Pat Mitchell and Dorinda Schwennesen cutting PVC pipe and moulding it into shape over heat. A metal collar was attached at one end of the PVC and they then lashed the curved lengths together. Gradually this weird 'instrument' grew, suspended from the rafters of the saw mill and at last we could see what it was.

We likened it to an organ with curved pipes and, instead of having a keyboard with notes, paddles made from solid foam rubber were used to thump the open metal ends to create the sound. Thongs were used originally instead of paddles; hence the name 'thongaphone'.

During the week the 2 Steves attended local schools and created poly dripper hose instruments with the children. There was music and fun wherever they went. Late afternoons and evenings found the musicians slaving over the 'apparition', adjusting, changing the angle of bend, and fine tuning with a digital tuning device until eventually the strange looking machine was put in position the evening before the big Festival Day.

There was a grand unveiling of the instrument with the 2 Steves performing the Thongaphone Thongata duet. How wonderful it was to hear them produce such music... Their bubbling enthusiasm was contagious. What fun everyone had in their Sound Playground with such a variety of instruments made from...well.....made from whatever! Stephen Langton had the presence and conducting skills to have young and old alike following his commands; now loud, now soft, now silent.....and yes it happened just like that!

The thongaphone remains in the Garden, a musical sculpture testament to the Festival and the magnificent skills of the 2 Steves.

Enjoy belting out a tune!

1999-2003 Cyberflora Project – on the east wall of the Myall Park Gallery



Four years in the making, the project known as Cyberflora was initiated by the Glenmorgan Art Group as a way of involving former members and invited artists in the creation of a mural for the outside wall of the art gallery at Myall Park Botanic Garden. Artists living as far apart as Germany and Brisbane

used an email network to join current Glenmorgan artists in contributing to the design of the four metre high mural.

'It is a significant work of art for the region, and it has shown how isolated cultural communities can be part of a global environment,' said one of the artists involved. 'It is art on a grand scale, and will certainly be another attraction to bring people to the area' (Sally Cripps - Freelance Journalist)

Tree trunks and the sun's rays are the 'bones' upon which botanical artists, a photographer, graphic designer and visual artists have unleashed their creativity. Pollen, weather, and birds which are attracted to the region, are some of the design elements meshed together to generate a stunning image.

The invited artists who took part in the project included Victoria Cooper, Sally L'Estrange, Gillian Scott, Adrienne Williams and the late Janis Somerville. Artists living in the Glenmorgan district were represented in the mural as well, with local art group members contributing to one whole design area, using the bark patterns of the Leopardwood tree to give them a giant jigsaw layout. They were also responsible for gridding the design template onto the gallery wall and transferring the images from the digital form to paint on the walls.

Funding for the project came from Arts Queensland and the Australia Council and was used to buy computer hardware and software, the setting up of a website, artist payments, and paint and scaffolding equipment. Chroma Australia also donated \$150 worth of paint. Major partners in the project were Flying Arts Inc, which provided administrative assistance, and INDELTA, the technology department at the University of Southern Queensland in Toowoomba, which played a key role in assisting with the technological aspects.

2003 Imprints, Journeys and Connections – edge of the escarpment opposite the Myall Park Gallery



Site specific artwork by Pamela Croft and Stephen Newton, with generous collaboration from artist, Cheryl Moodai Robinson.

Created in July, as an artist-in-residence programme, through Flying Arts Inc. and made possible with generous assistance from the Regional Arts Fund, a Commonwealth Government initiative supporting the arts in regional and remote Australia

The artists have used wood and stone-carving, ochre application and the natural environment.

Journeys and Connections

'The tree is an ancestral being and a symbol of life in many cultures'

This site uses wood from the park, the angophora which the site looks out onto.

The pieces have been carved with the symbols of journey and meeting place. Like large message sticks, the six elements draw attention to the second site above the

waterfall. Visitors are invited into a contemplative site.

Imprints

This site is inspired by the flat rock shelf which becomes a waterfall after rain, leaving small waterholes afterwards. The artists have used the aboriginal symbols of waterhole and connections to reflect on the sustenance of the area. This site embodies a place where people come to hunt, gather and meet. The site also contains the meeting place symbol, and all the markings have been treated with ochres from the area - the grinding pits are still visible.

We have explored a bothways dialogue in this work, which includes aboriginal and western relationships to land, a sense of place and connections to each other. Like the natural environment these artworks will change slowly over time.

2004 Myall Balance – at the entrance to the Myall Park Gallery, beside the leadlight panel



Sculptural ceramic work by Victoria Arthur

The garden inspired in me a feeling of excitement in response to its astonishing array of colours, textures and forms. An even stronger feeling was an impression of 'balance', of contrasts harmonised within the garden and the surrounding bush; and particularly, of balance between decay and growth, and between natural element and human endeavour.

In designing and making this piece, I had in mind the nature of the place, the history of the place and the spirit of the place. I was influenced by the balance of exuberance and elegance in the artworks displayed here, also inspired by this place. My aim has been to reflect this sense of balance.

Specifically:

In my mind, the bursting growth of the gumnut is balanced by the decaying wood, the piled rock is intended as a sort of modest monument to the voluntary human effort, the plaque-like feature stands for the Gordon family.

All elements are grounded in the earth-rich colours of the termite mounds.

More specifically still:

Medium: clay

Clay body: mixture terracotta / grogged raku / fireclay

Earthenware fired variously 1080° or 1100°

Surface: dry, slip and gloss glazes. (Dry surfaces double-coated with waterproofing seal)

2008 Wedge-tailed Eagle – at the Gallery Complex



Brisbane sculptor Ben Somerville was artist in residence at Myall Park Botanic Garden in September 2008. During the week he spent with us, he conducted three workshops and created a magnificent Wedge-tailed Eagle from corrugated iron, his preferred material. The life-sized bird now perches on the edge of a large hollow log in the Myall Park Gallery gardens, keeping an eagle eye on proceedings.

Ben spent his early years in our district, and his late mother Janis Somerville was a member of the Glenmorgan Art Group and helped with the Cyberflora mural from Germany where she lived at the time.

Ben works full-time on his sculptures and sells work all over Australia. In 2005 he won a Memento Award with his tiny 'Rusty Jobs' kangaroos and koalas flat packed in their own attractive envelopes for easy carrying or posting. They are on sale at the Myall Park Gallery Shop or by mail order.

2009 Flora of Myall Park Botanic Garden – inside the Gallery



Sculptor: Gary K. Horne

On my last visit to the Garden with the Society for Growing Australian Plants, I was impressed with all. I decided to make something that epitomised the flora of Myall Park Botanic Garden and would help promote the park itself.

I chose the central iron post to represent the heart of Australia but changed to stainless steel for its lasting qualities and beauty. Steel also has longevity as compared with much of the throw-away society of today. It holds its

polish and was more suited to the intricacy of grevillea flowers. The flora of the Garden is representative of the wide variety of flora across our great country. I chose the sandstone for the base as it also represents Australia.

In the process of making this piece, I had to call on my blacksmithing and welding skills and my metal turning lathe ability. I am very pleased with the end result.

2009 Sense of Arrival – Garden entrance



Artists Jenny and Andy Cameron have played a major role in providing the attractive 'Sense of Arrival' panels for Myall Park Botanic Garden. Two metal, powder coated decorative panels grace the grid. The grevilleas, Jenny said were a fitting motif for the Garden. As you drive over the grid, it is clear that you have arrived as the new name sign welcomes you. Jenny Cameron is the granddaughter of Dorothy and Dave, while Andy and his parents are old friends of the family. The Garden

Directors are very grateful and appreciate all their efforts in completing this project and providing our Garden entrance with a sense of style.

The grid, donated and installed by the Western Downs Regional Council, is a raised structure to allow ease of access for visitors while greatly reducing the likelihood of cattle and macropod entrance. One can now imagine grevilleas growing on each side of the grid, peeping through the panels with slashes of red and green. Further grevilleas are planted behind the welcome sign.

2009 Sandstone Eagle – inside the Gallery



Sandstone Eagle

The Garden impresses with rare beauty

A truly natural setting

That hides its charm

You have to search

You have to make effort

For the greater reward

This precious place provides.

This sandstone eagle

A gift in appreciation

Wishing it will add

For those serious seekers

Another magical moment



John and Rosemary Anderson

August 2009

2011 Grevillea Panels – Grevillea Walk



Caboolture Society for Growing Australian Plants Day Time Branch installed the three panels at the Grevillea Walk during their autumn working bee 2011. The negatives were from the 'Sense of Arrival' panels located at the entrance grid. The panels were welded to uprights for stability and concreted into place.

A picnic table was positioned nearby so all can relax and enjoy not only the wonderful shapes and shadows created by the panels, but also the surrounding grevilleas.

The Caboolture volunteers visit the Garden twice each year and spend valuable time progressing our Garden collections. Without their assistance, our Garden would not be as beautiful and as an inspiration to others.
