



Gallery gazing

WORDS JUDITH MCGRATH

When Ron and Terrie Gomboc built their small home/studio on four-and-a-half hectares of gently rolling land in the Swan Valley twenty-eight years ago, it's doubtful they dreamed it would grow to become the celebrated international cultural hub that it is today. Gomboc Gallery and Sculpture Park is a creative and vibrant place situated less than thirty minutes from the centre of Perth and connected to the world.

Today the complex includes a two storey art gallery with five different exhibition rooms, the artist's own studio and foundry, a visiting artist's residence and workshop, and separate private residence. The Gombocs have promoted the art of sculpture in this state for over a quarter of a century, not just via their exhibition gallery and foundry but also through their annual Sculpture Survey Exhibition which sees art students from various tertiary art schools selecting a site on the grounds and creating an art piece specific to its character. Over the years this event has kick-started the career of many a successful Western Australian artist.

Besides taking the time to assist the local crop of future sculptors, Ron Gomboc's involvement in national sculpture events, and his growing international profile, hasn't impeded the development of his own work, consistently exhibiting locally and nationally. Ron has participated in all of WA's Sculpture by the Sea exhibitions at Cottesloe Beach, as exhibitor and as a host for visiting artists. The Gombocs open their home, workshop and foundry to national and international participants during their stay in Western Australia. Their hospitality during these events has led to invitations for Ron to exhibit overseas and participate in reciprocal cultural exchanges. During his exchange with Shanghai University, Ron was invited to represent Australia in the Steel Sculpture Symposium in Honour of Peace in Beijing, as a forerunner to the 2008 Olympic Games. His two-component large sculpture is now in the collection of the Peace Sculpture Park in that city.



It would seem the creative energy and hard work put into the Gombocs' labour of love has reaped many benefits for local, national and international artists and art students, as well as the art scene here in Australia and around the world.

Monumental sculptures grace the Gallery grounds. Some are by Gomboc himself while others are by both emerging and acclaimed artists from around Australia and the world. For instance, there are a number of works by Jean-Pierre Rives, a former French Rugby Captain turned sculptor, who was introduced to Ron and Terrie when he arrived in Perth as an invited artist for the 2007 Sculpture by the Sea - Cottesloe.

This last year has proven to be positive for Gomboc Gallery and Sculpture Park. In February Ron was commissioned by the Ledger family to mark the anniversary of their son Heath's untimely death. Ron designed and constructed a three-piece sculptural monument that was installed at Heathcote Park, Applecross. Gomboc's largest commission to date; the twelve metre tall steel sculpture Northern Spirits, commissioned by the Fortescue Metals Group and installed in South Hedland was formally dedicated in May. This impressive art work, possibly the largest sculpture currently installed in Western Australia, serves as a monument to all those who have lost their lives in the mining industry. It was designed, and its fabrication supervised, by R.M. Gomboc.

It would seem the creative energy and hard work put into the Gombocs' labour of love has reaped many benefits for local, national and international artists and art students, as well as the art scene here in Australia and around the world. And to think it's just a half an hour away!



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