

Isaac's View

A plan for conservation and acknowledgment of the public art work- Isaac's View by artist Elizabeth Presa- nee Klose



Presented By

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Isaac's View was unveiled by Governor Davis McCaughey in 1989 as part of several engagements he attended during his visit to the region.

Proposal

To conserve work by the only woman artist represented in the sculpture walk, made at a time when sculpture was typically regarded as a male-dominated preserve. It is an excellent example of Elizabeth's early work, clearly showcasing the way her art was to develop into her highly regarded current professional practice. It is important to conserve this artwork so it can continue to showcase women's role in Modernist art in Australia.

Isaac's view is an important example of her practice utilizing cement fondue, which urgently needs conservation and she is excited to be available to do that work, in keeping with her vision and aesthetic quality.

"Until after the mid-century, modernism itself remained a marginal part of art in this country. Despite the leadership displayed by women modernists, especially in Sydney, women struggled for recognition in other spheres of art. The institutional establishment remained a male domain for most of the century."

Conserving important work by a woman, making their mark at a time when sculpture was still thought of as a male pursuit aligns with the Victorian Government's Gender equality strategy ensuring visibility of woman in public places. It is also important to note that the idea for the sculpture walk was developed from an idea by Cr D.M. Klutke (one of the first female councillors for the shire

What will we do?

Work with the artist Elisabeth Presa to refurbish Isaac's View and to acknowledge other existing sculptures restore and/or reimagine as appropriate.

Why?

- Dr Elizabeth Presa is a highly regarded artist and academic.
- Isaac's View is an example of her early cement fondue work
- It is the only public work of a woman artist on the walk or in the shire-
- The Victorian Government's Gender equality strategy, recognises that the equal representation of women in public spaces is vital to achieving its vision for gender equality. Repairing the work is one act that increases the visibility of women's contributions and achievements and artworks in the Shire
- The work also enhances the entry to the Sculpture Park which includes the newly redeveloped pathway and BBQ facilities dedicated to Lions club of Colac Inc
- The artist is offering to provide her time as in kind to repair the work
- It demonstrates to other artists that the community is willing to care for public artwork in our region
- Builds on developing the cultural tourism strategy of Creative Colac Otways and adds enhancement to the Arts trail.
- Research on existing works has been created - Creative Otways has developed website links - just remaining is to create some permanent QR codes to acknowledge the artists

The Colac Sculpture Park Walk

City of Colac Victoria's 150th Anniversary Project. Developed from an idea by Cr D.M. Klutke (one of the first female councillors for the shire. Project Advisor: David Wilson Dip Art Nat Gallery School TTC.

The Barongarook Creek Reserve Sculpture Park was officially opened by Cr Winsome M McCaughey (City of Melbourne) on Sunday 26th May 1985.

The Sculpture Park walk is a beautiful link from the Princes Highway through to Lake Colac and the Botanic Gardens. The Sculpture Park Walk (which follows part of the Barongarook Creek) has a range of outdoor sculptures; most are a combination of metals in simple forms. The first sculpture at the Princes Highway end of the walk is Isaac's View made from cement fondu.

The area of the Sculpture Park has seen an increase in use following completion of the combined use path and relocation of the BBQs & Shelters to this part of Barongarook Creek. Foot traffic has further increased with the completion of the adjacent pedestrian & cycle bridge.

The walk with its 1.1km pathway is easy to access, whether walking, in a wheelchair or on a mobility scooter or for parents with prams and young children. The Park has become a popular place to meet, greet, play & relax. This has created an increased appreciation of Isaac's View and a wish by members of the community to see it and several others of the sculptures restored.

History

The Barongarook Creek Reserve Sculpture Park was developed from the thought by Cr D.M. Klutke that a rural provincial city could sponsor a sculpture park similar to the world famous sculpture gardens of Europe, particularly Antwerp and Louisiana Museum, Denmark, Wenkinpark, Switzerland and Milles Garde, Lake Cartan, Herserddsklippan Sweden.

The Sculpture Park was nominated as the Council's first priority and was successful in gaining a grant from the Local and regional Government committee of Victoria's 150th anniversary celebrations 1984-85

The project was also assisted by the Visual arts Board of the Australia Council, the Federal Government's art funding and advisory body.

Officially opened by Cr Winsome McCaughey, B.A of the City of Melbourne May 26th 1985

Project Advisor :Mr David Wilson Dip. Art (National Gallery School)

Sculptures on display 1984-85

1. "The 1st Universalist Sculpture" Clive Murray-White, 1983,
Steel and mixed media
2. "Libra" Lenton Parr, 1977
Welded steel
3. "Cycle" Paul Hopmeier*
mild steel, hot aluminium and paint
4. "Building" Bruce Armstrong, 1984*
redgum
5. "Torso" Elizabeth Klose, 1978
Black Cement
6. "Blanche" Lenton Parr 1965*
Welded Steel
7. "Matar" Lenton Parr 1981*
Welded steel
8. "It can be fun learning to play Lacrosse" Clive Murray-White 1976 steel
9. "Monument for peace" Brain Paulusz, stone
10. "Tristram" Paul Hopmeier, oiled steel
11. "Swimmer Entering the water" Guy Boyd 1983
Bronze life size
12. "Tower" David Wilson 1977, Steel *
13. "Sea Cat" Bruce Armstrong 1984, red gum
- 14 "Marker" David Wilson 1977, Steel
15. "T'Pieces" Clive Murray-White, Steel *
16. "Under Dusk" David Wilson 1983, forged and welded steel
17. "Wild World" Peter Randall, 1984, Steel, concrete and sandstone.

*on loan

"Issac's View" Elizabeth Klose was created and installed in 1989

It was unveiled by Governor David McCaughey in 1989 after the initial launch of the sculpture park by Cr Winsome McCaughey in 1985

About the Artist

Elizabeth Presa (born 1956)

Australian visual artist and academic based in Melbourne. She is Head of the interdisciplinary Victorian College of the Arts Centre for Ideas.[1][2]

Working with sculpture her work uses a range of materials and processes, including sericulture, apiculture and casting. Some of her installations use plaster as a forensic tool to examine traces of the psyche, biological life and the environment.[3] She is an academic, an author and has also worked as a curator and gallery director.[1][3]

Presa is the mother of Australian contemporary artist Anastasia Klose[4] with whom she occasionally collaborates.[3]

Academic career

Presa studied at the Victorian College of the Arts of the University of Melbourne, graduating with a Diploma of Sculpture in 1977. She studied at the Phillip Institute, Post Graduate Sculpture, 1980, University of Melbourne; 1978, 83-85. She has a Masters in Critical Theory and Comparative Literature and a PhD in Critical Theory and Comparative Literature both undertaken at Monash University.[1]

She tutored in art philosophy at Riverina College of Advanced Education during 1980-81, and as part of the Sculpture department of the Melbourne Centre for Adult Education from 1984-85, and following this in the Sculpture department of the Victoria College Prahran.[2]

From 1993 she taught in the School of Art at the Victorian College of the Arts, in 2003 she was appointed Head of the interdisciplinary Victorian College of the Arts Centre for Ideas, where she focussed on interdisciplinary curriculum and research design in the visual and performing arts.[1] Additionally, she has been a visiting artist and guest lecturer at a number of international universities and has undertaken multiple international artist residencies. A notable fellowship Presa undertook was entitled "Interior Castle: St Teresa of Avila, architectures of space", at the Five College's Women's Research Centre, Mt Holyoke, Massachusetts.[1]

Curation[edit]

Presa was Director of Wagga Wagga Regional Gallery in 1978-79.[2]

Her work as curator has involved three iterations of 'Do It' with Hans Ulrich Obrist, including a project with the Central Academy of Fine Arts, Beijing.

Her work on a series of beehive projects titled 'Apian Utopias: Small Architecture for Bees' involves projects and exhibitions in Tokyo, the USA, Beijing, New Zealand and Australia.[1] Her ongoing interest is in the interrelationship between philosophy and art.[1]

Selected exhibitions

Selected shows include

- Garden of small nuptials, sculpture installation for Aberrant Nuptials International Deleuze Studies conference, Orpheus Institute Ghent, Belgium, (2017)[5]
- Of Martyrium and Reliquary, with Mireille Eid, Articulate Project Space, Gallery, Sydney (2017)[6]
- Views for the Future Vol. 16 (bricolage), curator and master printer M. Matsumara, October, (2016) Gallery TEN, Tokyo-Yanaka[3]
- Art Space Mooni, Morioka, Japan (2016/17)[3]
- Animal/Human/Artist curated by Janine Burke, McClelland Gallery and Sculpture Park, Langwarrin, (2016)[7]
- Lorne Sculpture Biennale, curated by Julie Collins, Lorne, Victoria, (2014)[8]
- Gallery TEN, Tokyo-Yanaka; 2017 Art Space Mooni, Morioka, Japan, (2012)[3]
- Interior Castle, with architect Gregory Burgess, Linden Contemporary Arts Centre, Melbourne, (2010)[9]
- Dear Jean Jacques, Cite International des Arts, Paris (2007)[3]
- Milk River, Meru Art Gallery, Brooklyn, New York (2002)[3]
- The Four Horizons of the Page, Linden Gallery, Melbourne (2000)[3]

Selected reviews

- Eyeline Journal, Carol Schwarzman 'Presence and Non-Presence; Inside and Outside' (2017)[10]
- Art+Australia, Review: Animal/Human/Artist –Art inspired animals', by Lynn Mowson, (2017)[11]
- Human/Animals/Artist: Janine Burke's Exhibition Explores the Lines Between', Gabriella Coslovich, the Sydney Morning Herald, Nov.18, (2016)[7]
- Anne-Gaelle Saliot, The Drowned Muse, Oxford University Press, UK pp. 17-19, 326-328; (2015)[12]
- Lisa Harms, Duetto review, Art Link Vol 30, No3 (2010)[13]

Selected work

- The Heart of the Matter (2018)[14]
- Nothing (2018)[15]
- Translation as a material practice (2017)[16]
- Martyrium and Reliquary (2017)[17]
- Birth to sartorial presence (2017)[18]
- Garden of small nuptials (2017) [19]
- human/animal/artist (2016)[20]



About the Artwork

Isaac's View was installed in 1989 as part of Governor. Davis McCaughey's visit to the region. and a new addition to the Colac Sculpture Park.

Artist Dr Elizabeth Presa

Artist Statement

I made the sculpture 'Isaac's View' in 1989 in my studio in Melbourne. It was modelled in clay then cast into cement fondu and patinated with various colours.

At this time I was interested in how the human form can be represented in multiple configurations and gestures, so that the negative spaces become as important as the solid forms. Choosing a biblical theme - the sacrifice of Isaac by his father, Abraham, which was prevented by an angel at the last minute - allowed me to work with three figures – an angel, a child and an adult.

The theme speaks to the idea that older generations will often sacrifice the young even though they love them. This has been the case throughout history where the young are sent to war, and whenever their futures have been compromised or stolen. This is happening now with the catastrophic effects of climate change which threatens to steal childrens' futures.

Perhaps we can hope for another angel to come to stop the destruction and bring peace to the earth for all that inhabits the land, seas and sky.



WHAT A WONDERFUL RESOURCE THE COLAC HISTORICAL SOCIETY IS:

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The Sculpture Park Walk (which follows part of the Barongarook Creek) has a range of outdoor sculptures; most are a combination of metals in a simple form. The first sculpture at the Prince's Highway end of the walk is "Isaac's View" made from Cement Fondu.

The area of the Sculpture Park Walk has seen an increase in use following the relocation of the BBQs & Shelters to this part of Barongarook Creek. Foot traffic may further increase with completion of the adjacent pedestrian & cycle bridge over the creek.

The walk with its 1.1km pathway is easy to access, whether walking, in a wheelchair/on a mobility scooter or for parents with prams & young children. The Park has become a popular place to meet, greet, play & relax.

This has created an increased appreciation of 'Isaac's View' and a wish by members of the community to see it and the rest of the sculptures restored.

To find a Photo of Isaac's View in its original state was not an easy task. This would have been impossible if not for The Colac Historical Society's collection of Bela Bard-Brucker's original negatives. Once the slides for the appropriate month and year were located, the expertise of members was then needed – their dedication and persistence and *volla* here was Isaac.

Thank you to the Colac & District Historical Society.

Rosemary Richardson

Photo from Colac Herald - November 1989:

Victorian Governor Davis McCaughey unveiling the statue

'Isaac's View'



From: Elizabeth Presa <epresa@unimelb.edu.au>
Sent: Tuesday, 18 October 2022 6:50 PM
To: Rosemary Richardson <r.richardson@outlook.com.au>
Subject: Re: Isaac's View

Dear Rosemary,

My apologies for this long overdue response to your email. As the academic year is starting to wind down I can now shift my focus elsewhere!

I'm willing to repair the sculpture with materials compatible with the cement fondu cast. But I cannot guarantee that the repaired sculpture will survive acts of vandalism or extremities of weather. As mentioned previously cement fondu is not the most durable of materials for public sculptures.

I estimate a fee of approximately \$6000 which will include costs for an assistant to help me de-install and reinstall the sculpture; transport it to my studio in Melbourne and then back to Colac; costs of repair materials; welding an armature; and re-sealing of the sculpture against the weather. I won't charge for my labour.

Alternatively if the Colac council can deinstall the sculpture; transport it to and from my studio in Hampton , and reinstall it back in Colac, then I would only have to hire an assistant to help with the welding of an armature and moving the sculpture in my studio. With the cost of materials, and labour for an assistant, I would estimate costs at approximately \$2,500. Again my labour would be free.

Let me know what your thoughts are.

With warm wishes and thank you as always for your perseverance with restoring the sculptures in park!
Elizabeth



Soon to be moved to Station Place, Werribee
Acquired by: One Per Cent for Art, capital works
About the artwork:

Oasis is a bronze sculpture depicting a mother and a child waiting. The artwork reinforced that the Centre is a meeting place with the two figures apparently waiting, the mother seated on an ornate seat and the daughter standing behind her. The sculpture was cast at the Perrin Sculpture Foundry, Cheltenham, Victoria.

Friends of the Colac Sculpture Park

Spokesperson- Rosemary Richardson

Friends of the Sculpture Park in informal group of community members who are able to apply for grants through the auspice of Creative Otways Inc

The friends of the Colac Sculpture Park wish to support the repair of the damaged sculptures -restored and/or reimagined as appropriate, provide informative signage on existing works and in the future support the development of new works along the walk to the gardens

We believe that public art provides-

Activation - creating unique and vibrant places

Public art has a key role in connecting people and places. Artworks within the public realm can function as a type of connective tissue, generating awareness of our interdependence with the environment and the community. Public art has a recognised role to play in place activation and contributing to the enhancement of spaces in towns and cities. A vibrant and attractive place is also a welcoming place that people will want to spend time in.

Creativity – generating a 'creative milieu'

Art in the public realm involves practices of creativity and innovation in an environmental context. Creativity and innovation are also central to the notion of sustainability. For a place to be sustainable, it must be both resilient and flexible, having a deep sense of purpose in its design and robust in its construction, while being open to interpretation for a range of evolving uses and engagements. Sustainability is an ongoing 'cycle of success' which has social, cultural, economic and environmental dimensions.

Local government is in an ideal place to support and foster creative environments that will be conducive to creative endeavours such as public art in its many forms. Inherent in the notion of a "creative milieu" is a willingness to nurture activities that are at times unexpected, challenging and even confronting. Indeed a culture of experimentation and innovation requires a willingness to take risks and push boundaries.

Expression – giving voice to people, place and environment

Artists are creative thinkers, innovators, story-tellers and symbol makers. Through the process of public art, artists can be invited to think about and engage with a specific place, site, history, issue, community and the environment. The resulting public artwork can communicate not just an individual's private response but reflect wider significance, meanings held in common, and thereby enter into public discourse as well as interacting with physical public space.

Public art in its many forms, can play a vital role in providing a platform for both individual and community creative and cultural expression. Due to its highly public nature public art that is site specific and rich in local context can create a strong sense of place and communicate civic pride to visitors and residents alike. The involvement in creative processes has recognised community wellbeing and social cohesion outcomes.

Plan -

Short Term- repair Isaac's View

Long term - identify potential opportunities to place new sculptures along the trail to the lake;

-Consult with First Nation communities- the Gulidjan people of the Eastern Maar Nation

-Additions of new sculptures will require community engagement.

-Any planning of works will need consideration of the flood overlays.

Plan

What do we need?

- Council permission and /or assistance to remove work to refurbish and then replace once refurbished
- Council permission and /or assistance to ensure removal and replacement fits their policies & procedures
- Permission to place permanent QR code acknowledgements on agreed existing sculptures
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What can we do?

- Source and apply for appropriate grants
- Develop fundraising models/events to raise money for the project
- Plan to relaunch the new refurbished sculpture as part of the Arts Trail