

Wai Art column for MidWeek June

Several artists mentioned their feeling of nervousness as they delivered their art on receiving day for the Wai Art Awards 2008. One artist reluctantly handed her artwork to me and left sighing, "I feel like I've just left my child exposed on the mountainside." I'm not sure if it is the exposure to public criticism that artists are worried about or if it is the feeling of baring one's soul to the world through your art that makes us nervous.

Maybe the artist feels as though they are losing a sense of privacy. Personally I've never found this to be a huge issue; I write a column that details the more humiliating episodes of my life. However there have been a few moments when my limits of privacy have been somewhat stretched.

While waiting for our house to be built we lived in a tiny cottage that we unkindly nicknamed with tragic accuracy: "The rat infested shoebox".

The rat problem was particularly bad in the outside bathroom. One morning I was sitting on the lav' and not only is the Small watching me intently, but so is the cat. Suddenly the vanity door swings open with an ominous creak and an enormous rat chewing on the last of the soap was now watching me as well. "Rats mummy, rats!" yelled the Small excitedly. The Small then carefully explained to the seemingly quite interested rat "Mummys on the potty." It all became a bit much at that stage and I had the overwhelming urge to shriek, "It's been lovely, but I have to scream now."

I was somewhat aghast to find that when you have children you completely lose any semblance of privacy for a number of years. Nearly all mummies can relate to this I imagine. The whole "You'll never go to the bathroom by yourself again" scenario that our friends wryly informed us of once we were already pregnant. And like many mummies-to-be before us, we foolishly dismissed the idea, till we had a hysterical child wailing outside the bathroom door. Fortunately they eventually grow out of the need to be with you ALL the time. Unfortunately it's usually because they have discovered that when mummy is having a bath it's a great time to experiment with paint tubes and how easily the caps come off.

There is also the inevitable just settled yourself down to paint, you've extracted paint tray from the Tupperware container, got yourself all organised with a cup of tea to wash your brush in...carefully mixed the perfect colour, put just the right amount of paint on a frightfully expensive paintbrush. Then a wee voice says, "Can I have a drink of water, pleese." or the even more carefully planned, "Can I have some apple, pleese."

Arrrgh! The pressure! It's not like the Small just asked for a kilo of chocolate marshmallow Easter eggs and you can just utter the automatic "No." This is one of the few and far between opportunities to voluntarily get something healthy into the Small.

What's even worse though, is the suspicious silence. It creeps up on you, this growing realisation that you have been happily painting for three hours and have had not a peep out of the Small, (cue theme music from "Jaws").

Sometimes you get so engrossed in creating the latest magnificent artwork that you are not even aware that there was a suspicious silence to be suspicious about. Till Him Outdoors comes indoors and goes to the bedroom, "Big day painting was it dear?" he enquires politely. It's not quite so polite when three hours later he is still extracting lego from the bottom of the bed.

Wairarapa Art Scene

Carterton Exhibition Centre. The fantastic Wai Art Awards 2008 exhibition continues till 4pm Sunday June 29. Well worth a visit to view the amazing talent we have here in the Wairarapa. For your gold coin entry fee you receive a gold star for the peoples choice award. The winner gets \$500 so choose wisely. If in doubt of where to put your star, there is a lovely woolshed scene about three quarters of the way down the left hand side...

Katz Gallery is showing 'Exhibit 9', a group exhibition running till the end of August. Winter hours for Carol Banner's gorgeous Gallery are Saturdays and Sundays 10 - 2 pm.

Aratoi has an exhibition of Ans Westra Photographs which runs through to Sunday, 17 August. Check out www.aratoi.co.nz for upcoming exhibitions.

King Street students are having an exhibition at Aratoi that opens Friday 13th at 5.30pm.

Gallery 21

Now on, this exhibition features the King Street tutors. Gallery 21 is situated in King Street, has continual exhibitions and is well worth a visit.

Colours for Art

Jim Campbell's shop has moved to Kuripuni shopping center.