

March 2008
A monthly Wai Art column
By Anna-Marie Kingsley

I've been spurned like a rabid dog from yet another art exhibition. This time it was the Wairarapa Review. That makes 14 exhibition rejection letters (including emails) and one phone call in my very short art career. The kindest letter came from Wheeler Campbell, a Wellington recruitment company that holds an annual art competition. Their letter makes you feel positively loved in the midst of your despair. The most abrupt is from a big national exhibition held in Waikanae. (Him Outdoors suggested I didn't publicly name it.) Your rejected artwork couriered back to you with a yellow dot on the swing tag... no letter, no "ta very much for your non-refundable \$30, we're off to Tahiti for the summer hols" - just a yellow stick on dot. For first timers you have to call a more experienced artist to find out what on earth is going on. Not good for us artists who make a point to collect the pile of rejection letters... a yellow dot just doesn't cut it!

To counteract the intense disappointment of being constantly rejected, we frequently spurned artists tend to wear it like a badge. "I have personally been spurned from some of the finest art institutions in New Zealand" one can be heard to boast and as the empty wine bottles gather you start swapping rejection stories and how long the resulting depressive slump lasted, "Couldn't climb out from under the duvet for days Darling, just days!"

To add to the emotional pain, in some exhibitions you have to fill in your own rejection/selection card that is sent back to you in a clear window envelope – there is something intrinsically unpleasant about receiving a note in your own handwriting informing you that your art is not worthy.

The sickening apprehension I use to get while peering desperately into the dark cobwebbed regions of the mailbox has petered out till all I get is now is a somewhat resigned feeling. I fear that three years of being callously spurned has turned my once sensitive artist soul into something resembling a rubberised paua steak.

To my surprise I was finally accepted to the Fine Arts Academy in Wellington in early 2007. I suspect they were starting to feel sorry for me constantly being rejected. Either that or they got tired of cleaning the smudges off the window where my nose was constantly pressed up against it. Admittedly it was a very small painting, of a lopsided teapot that looked like it had been fashioned out of a cow pat and straw, and it was hung behind a pillar, round a corner, down the way and you need to take a cut lunch so you didn't starve to death if you wanted to set out to search for it. But I tell myself it still counts!!

I often ponder the integrity of an industry that makes a point of so obviously dividing between those that are worthy and those that aren't. It's no wonder that an estimated 40% of artists are snorgling up anti-depressants. (I got that particular figure from a poet friend with bipolar seasonal affective disorder, on the slightly downward side of a manic phrase, so it is completely unreliable and totally unsubstantiated).

I secretly suspect the art industry is in cahoots with the pharmaceutical industry, or maybe it's the duvet makers.

I would have thought that the brutal pass/fail system would have been out of vogue in the enlightened time of 2008. Given the determined implementation of NZCA I must say I'm looking forward to my "Certificate of Achievement" for applying paint to brush and then brush to canvas in the correct order. Although since paint has managed to smudge itself onto nearly all my clothing, and I use our dinner plates for paint pallets, I might not even get an achieved... with a few more rejection letters, maybe I could hold out hope for a Certificate of Attendance.

Congratulations to Paulette Harris, Faye Portman, and Alison Hudson for getting their artworks accepted into the Academy of Fine Arts Summer exhibition. It was the first time they had submitted work to the Academy, which makes the achievement even greater, and we are very proud of them. (No time wasted sulking under the duvet for them!)

Congratulations also to Jan Eagle and Taren Wood for having their fantastic self-portraits selected for the Adamson Portraiture Awards. We went down to view the Awards and were absolutely blown away by the quality of artwork.

What's On at the Carterton Exhibition Centre

The Wai Art Group meets in the Carterton Exhibition Centre the first Monday of every month from 10am – noon.

The March art exhibition features Caitlin Bauer, Liz Chalmers, Jim Campbell, and Amanda Harris. Steve's Vision Photography exhibition also continues in the exhibition hall.

The April exhibition features the Wairarapa Review winner Annette Dunnage-Roy in a solo retrospective exhibition.

The May exhibition features Denise Cameron's new collection of artworks, as well as a display of jewellery from Victoria Te Tau's students.

The Life drawing classes are being turned into a seasonal series of block courses. Phone Jane Giles on 06 379 6559 or Viv Walker on 06 379 9327 for more information or to register an interest.

Project based art classes are being run by Anna-Marie Kingsley, catering from complete beginners to more advanced artists. Cost is \$10 per session and the classes are held on Monday nights in the Carterton Exhibition Centre from 6 to 9pm. Phone Anna-Marie on 379 9177 for more information.

A beading workshop providing a fun and casual way to learn basic necklace techniques are also held on Monday nights from 7 to 9pm. Phone Victoria Te Tau on 379 5505 for more information.

The Carterton Exhibition Centre and adjoining Information Centre is open from 10am to 4pm Tuesday to Sunday.

Keep up the painting on the masterpiece for the Wai Art Awards in June. Once again there is big prize money up for grabs; a total prize pool of \$6000, with \$3000 for the first prize. An entry form can be downloaded from the Wai Art website at <http://www.waiart.co.nz> If you are an artist and would like to be featured (or linked to) on the website then email Anna-Marie Kingsley at info@waiart.co.nz or call Anna-Marie on 06 379 9177

Art in Carterton

Main Artery has a very enjoyable artist get together evening every third Thursday of the month.

Katz Gallery is showing an exhibition entitled "Pawtraits with Purrsonality" featuring felines of all shapes, sizes and colours is on display through to 30 March. Katz Gallery is open Friday, Saturday and Sunday 10am to 3pm.

The following exhibition at Katz Gallery is "Bizartisanz". An eclectic collection of paintings, masks and handbags by Jen Tarring and Deb Barker. Their exhibition is open from April 4 - June 1.

Concerts in the Park are free open-air concerts at Carrington Park Carterton feature on Sunday 9th March Brass in Concert, the Trust Porirua City Brass Band. The concerts are sponsored by Trust House; and organised by Carterton Rotary. There will be a collection taken at half time for donations towards community projects.

Caption for photo1: Paulette Harris with her painting " Derelict row" at the Academy exhibition.

Caption for photo 2: Faye Portman with her painting "Onion fields in Greytown" at the Academy exhibition.