

## Wai Art Column

“Cough cough cough...” came from the Small’s bedroom.

“Are you okay Sweetie?” I enquired.

“No,” came the sad reply “I think I’ve got a hairball.”

My apologies for the lack of a Wai Art column last month. For technical reasons that are completely beyond my understanding Him Outdoors was inflicted with the Blue Screen of Death on the computer and after some time announced it was a “corrupt hard disk sector”. You would think in this technological age that loosing your email and writing capabilities would be totally incapacitating. But no, with a wee flick of my heels I skipped happily off into the canvas stack and had a delightful two weeks painting with absolutely no guilt.

Congratulations to the hugely talented Sandra Wong on her recent very successful opening at the Solo 29 exhibition at the Academy of Fine Arts. Wai Art descended on mass via the train, weaved our way round and round the fantastic exhibition, and then sloped off to a near by cafe for dinner. Apparently getting everyone back on the train with minutes to spare was a lot like herding lemmings.

The only slight poo to an otherwise delightful outing was the frustration caused by the labelling system used by what seems to be almost all galleries now. Maybe I’m getting more intolerant and grouchy as I approach the Big Four Oh, but I really do find it completely unhelpful to be left blinking at a number beside the artwork, rather than a usefully descriptive label.

What you get instead is a bunch of floppy A4 sheets of paper with a list of the artist’s works and prices. Great, so now I get to balance my wine glass, crumbly cheese on a bit of bread, the ever-increasing handbag, and floppy bits of papers.

You can hear a collective sigh from the exhibition attendees as they grapple an awkward catalogue. Eventually they just give up in resignation realising that flipping over bits of paper in the search for 250 individual artwork details while quietly spilling wine on one neighbour’s shoes and then losing the cheese into your other neighbour’s pocket just isn’t going to be practical.

“Oh but it looks so much more professional” I hear galleries say. Bollocks.

Can you imagine going into a boutique shop and having them hand you a floppy A4 catalogue to check out the prices with. Or even more annoyingly, you could rush backwards and forwards from a bit of paper stuck on the wall with the prices on. Why on earth would they expect you to be even remotely interested in coming back, let alone make a purchase.

I would have thought that basic marketing skills and a bit of thoughtful thinking about the all-important customer (they would be the ones with the wallets) would have got this sorted years ago.

## **Art in the Wairarapa**

Carterton Exhibition Center: The November exhibition features photography from Mark Telford and John Garrity, and artworks from Peter Scaife and Jo Roffe.

Katz Gallery has AJ. Hunter's photography exhibition showing till end of October.

River East Gallery has the "10 Photographers" exhibition continuing till 15 November. Exhibition features: John Casey, Stell Daniel, Debbie Dixon, Gabrielle Drummond, Paul Gummer, Helmut Hirler, Bill Kearns, Sally Moretta, Alistair Thom and Frank Wafer.

## **Congratulations**

Well done to Taren Wood for scooping the Supreme winner prize at the WAX awards in Gisborne for her gorgeous new artwork entitled "The Invitation". (Yes, I did get that right; the rest of the media world misreported it as "Life under Mum's feet".) Well done also to Mandy Emerson and Janie Nott for gaining highly commended awards for their fabulous artworks.

Congratulations to the incredibly talented Carol Banner who won a Merit Award at the National Pastel Exhibition in Auckland.

And finally a blatantly self-indulgent drum beating moment for moi, who was one of five finalists for the McAlister Award at the Anderson Park Gallery Spring Exhibition in Southland.