

President's Report – 2017



Thankyou for having me as President for another year at the Gallery. While I often feel like I am far away from Swifts Creek (way down at Tambo Crossing!) I really appreciated the dynamic network of people keeping things alive and vibrant. The generosity of people in small communities is a precious thing. For me the benefits of being part of the Gallery are a connection to the wonderful artists and makers of this valley and many other amazing people tucked away in the hills. The fact that we are able to support and encourage each other in this fairly remote area is worth its weight in gold.

The highlights of the year have been our various exhibitions, which bring out the most fascinating work from our regular artists and encourage a wider range of people in the community to participate in the Gallery; the ever-changing interior of the Gallery (every time I come into the Gallery I am blown away at how great the Gallery looks, and the quality of the work on display), and the Great Alpine Arts Trail, which takes our artists out there to the wider community and region. It is also great to see our individual artists making new work and pursuing opportunities for exhibitions and development of their work – this is really the most exciting part and the coalface of what being an artist is about.

For a tiny artist-run Gallery with no ongoing funding we achieve an enormous amount. Here are some highlights from the year.

Art Projects and Exhibitions

- Swifts Creek Puppet Theatre display unearthed and curated by Lilli Antonoff
- Making of lanterns with the Great Alpine Basket Makers for Frouteville in February
- *Unearthed – Lost Things Found* – a truly remarkable exhibition in April
- *A Froute Breakfast* at the Gallery on a Sunday morning in conjunction with the opening of *Unearthed*
- *The Great Alpine Arts Trail* – this time in 2017 running from Bruthen to Omeo; in addition to the Open Studios now including other small galleries and creative business, a pop-up shop and local food producers (huge thanks to Helenka King for pulling this all together)
- W I N T E R photographic exhibition in July
- Successfully applied for an EGSC grant to support an artist residency, with a very successful residency by artist Sofie Dieu in August/September, with workshops at Benmabra, Swifts Creek School and the Gallery
- Silk Painting Workshop run by Ann Bingham
- Great Alpine Basketmakers going from strength to strength with monthly gatherings and now a section in the Omeo Show
- Lunch at the Gallery for our volunteers
- Morning Tea at the Gallery with Crystal Stubbs, Director of the East Gippsland Art Gallery
- Successfully applied for an EGSC grant to support the 2018 Great Alpine Arts Trail, which will be held on 5-6 May 2018.

Gallery Business

- Back wall plastered, rearrangement of Gallery with Gift Shop and more open space for artworks, floor painted, plinths re-painted
- New card system for artists
- Introduced direct credit payment for artists and EFTPOS payments in the Gallery
- Using MailChimp template and email for newsletters

Farewells and Thankyous

- Penny and Bob Carruthers, now in Cowarr – a huge loss to our arts community but their family's gain,
- Deirdre and Tom Jack who moved the Bairnsdale at the end of 2016 – although Deidre is very much “our woman in Bairnsdale”,
- Lenore Richardson is leaving us as Treasurer – although she will be still up for our many art adventures. Enormous thanks to Lenore for her commitment to this most unenviable of tasks.

Thanks to:

- All the Gallery volunteers who spend their days in the Gallery – our doors would not be open without you,
- All our committee members and supporters who come along to meetings and working bees as well as set up/take down exhibitions and events and do a hundred other things,
- John O'Neill for keeping our new website up to scratch,
- Rob Logie for his donation for the Gallery upgrade
- Lions Club Omeo for their generous donation
- Helenka King for taking our marketing and the Arts Trail to a whole new level
- Lenore Richardson for navigating the world of online finance, and Sally Doyle our wonderful bookkeeper who volunteers her time and amazing skills,
- Ann Bingham for juggling the monthly roster and being available to be the gallery at short notice,
- Carole Pepper for taking on the role of curator and adding her special touch to make everything look fabulous,
- Annie Richardson who is truly the glue who holds it all together. As well as being secretary and communicator between us and the wider community, Annie makes things happen, and is always there painting the floor or plinths or setting up openings – everything in fact, including keeping our Facebook page fresh and alive. And her stunning photos are such an asset to our Gallery, promoting what we do to the world.



Tracey Johnson

President

9/11/2017