

Leslie Thornton

Painter, sculptor, humourist

b. 1950 Brisbane

'Many artists use humour to express and explore emotions and ideas. Behind the fun is, of course, the serious business of understanding our natural world, communicating to our fellow beings, attempting to fully occupy the imaginative process, and asking why we love, laugh, cry or philosophise.'

EDUCATION

1964 - Accepted into Brisbane Art School at age 14, but declined and joined the Army Cadets

1967 - Graduated Wynnum High and Intermediate School

1968 - Studied Civil Engineering, Queensland Institute of Technology (QIT)

1969 - Enrolled at QIT to study Architecture but the course was not run

EMPLOYMENT

1968 - Cadet Draftsman, Main Roads Department Brisbane (designed coaster for annual Ball, used for many years)

1968 - Account Clerk, Federal Department of Housing

1968-69 - Private business as ticket writer / signwriter

1969 - Wedman's Department Store (sold to Sportsgirl that year) Window Prop Designer

1969 - Commenced production of artworks

1970 - The World of IN, Melbourne, ticket writer and window dresser

1971 - Federal Department of the Navy, Albert Park, Accounts Clerk

1972 - Edgell's Beetroot Factory, Brisbane, production worker

1973 - Castlemaine Woollen Mill, nightshift worker

1974 - 1980 Self Employed / Business – Thornton and Swanton (in current Togs building)

Painting, Paper Hanging, Signwriting and Interior Design

1980-99 - Manager: film programming, projectionist, publicity – Theatre Royal, Castlemaine

2000 - 2015 Projectionist, Theatre Royal, Castlemaine

2015 - 2018 Stage Lighting, Theatre Royal, Castlemaine

OTHER WORK - LIGHTING, EVENTS AND ROCK 'N ROLL

LIGHTING: Some examples:

1970 - present Outdoor landscape lighting (parties, festivals, natural environments)

1973 - Outdoor lighting installation, Nimbin Festival

1975 - Gough Whitlam re-election fundraiser, Barkers Creek

1994 - Fire Tree, Yapeen

2005 - The Rainbow, Wesley Hill cliff face

2007, 09, 11 - Castlemaine State Festival

2021 - Castlemaine State Festival – The Brickworks Gallery

MICELLANEOUS ACTIVITY AND EVENTS:

1965 - 1970 - Attendance at anti-war moratoriums
1968 - Founding member FOCO Club Brisbane
1973 - Installation of a 2-acre dayglow nylon cord spider web - Campbell's Creek
1973 - Nimbin Festival, NSW - produced one off screen print on site
1973 - Built own house - Golden Point, Chewton (still occupied)
1975 - Hot Dog Stand - Wesley Hill market
1993 - Relocated permanently to Castlemaine (after Brisbane, St Kilda)
1998 - Producer of short film 'Re-Drawing Australia'
2000 - present - Published cartoons, Castlemaine Mail and Sam's Gash
2021 - Writer / Producer - Sir Leslie's Kitchen Capers Edition 1-Improving the Iced Vo-Vo

ROCK AND ROLL:

1974 - present - Bass Guitar and Vocalist
Performed in 800 live musical performances with Castlemaine bands including:

Booze and Blues Band
And Many More
Byron Bay
James Ferry
Transport
Not Tonight Darling, I've Got a Headache Blues Band
X-cell
Animal Farm
Space Junk
The Cool Cats
Jazz Band
Ryk's Blue Planet
Solroborous

SPECIAL EVENTS:

1968 - 2017 Annual Harold Holt Memorial Parties - December 17th, annually
1970 - Melbourne Arts Cooperative - T F Much More Ballroom, Cathedral Hall, Fitzroy
1980 - 1984 The Rockhoppers Opera, Barkers Creek slate quarry and Harcourt Oak Forest
1990 - Self-Knighted - for Services to the Banking Sector (keeping the Theatre Royal going for 20 years)
2008 - Theatre Royal 150th Anniversary - purchased a commemorative mug

EXHIBITIONS

Leslie Thornton has held over forty solo exhibitions and participated in numerous group shows. Leslie runs a private gallery, 10 Rowe Street, in Castlemaine with an annual solo exhibition since for Arts Open (from 2010) and the Castlemaine State Arts Festival Open Studios (from 1982).

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

1970 - First exhibition, Neil Street Gallery Melbourne
1971 - First exhibition in Brisbane, Private Theatre
1971 - First art commission, private collector, large painting, Melbourne client
1998 - Re-Making Australia - a collection of maps and drawings and humorous work -
Theatre Royal Video Shop Gallery (now run Rabbit Run)
1999 - 2021 - 10 Rowe Street, Castlemaine – annual solo shows
2013 and 2014 - Woolloongabba Art Gallery, Brisbane
2013 - Brisbane River Series – Life Art Worldwide, Sunshine Coast Institute of TAFE
Mooloolaba Campus
2016 - Bag Exhibition – CASPA, Castlemaine
2017 - A Mountain of Mountains – CASPA, Castlemaine
2018 - Clocktober: 100 clocks – CASPA, Castlemaine
2018 - B-List Heritage series – ARTLANDS Victoria, Dudley House, Bendigo

GROUP EXHIBITIONS

1990 onwards - Rotary Arts Shows Castlemaine
1992 - Downstairs to the Left – Castlemaine Artists Inc. State Festival Exhibition,
Basement of Castlemaine Art Gallery
2004 -18 - Lot 19 Sculpture Prize – Lot 19, Castlemaine
2008 - 09 - Anti-Football League Annual Exhibitions, Brunswick Street Nursery
2011 – present - Summer and Winter Market Exhibitions Castlemaine
2012-21 - Ceramic Break Sculpture Park, Warialda NSW
2014, 15 - Life Art Worldwide Expo, Brisbane
2017 - Three Artists, Three Worlds, Three Walls – CASPA
2018 - Manly Art Show, Brisbane
2021 - Cut 'n Paste Newstead Arts Hub

REPRESENTATION & COLLECTIONS

Work is held in private collections and galleries throughout Australia and globally including Italy, UK, Japan, Korea

1990s - represented by Lyttleton Gallery, Melbourne (until death of Proprietor Jan Martin in 2008)

1998 - Australia image acquired by Latvian National Gallery

1998 - Castlemaine Art Gallery and Historical Museum (archives)

AWARDS

Leslie has won numerous art awards, including:

1974 – Unsuccessful grant applicant – Australia Council Visual Arts Board

Date unknown - Castlemaine Artists Inc. Postcard Competition – 2nd prize

2007 – Highly Commended – Castlemaine Rotary Art Show

2018 - First Prize Painting – Manly Art Show, Qld

2019 - Fringe Hall of Fame Award – Art Guy of the Decade

2019 – Best Other Medium - Castlemaine Rotary Art Show

2022 – Best 3D work – 33rd annual art exhibition

RESIDENCIES

2001 - Harcourt Valley School

2018 - Art Garden Row – Chaoyang District, Beijing, China

THEATRE

1975 - 77 - Painting scenery and set design for Castlemaine Drama Group

1998 - Producer, scenery, lighting - Dick Whittington Pantomime Theatre Royal

1990s - Comedy Production - series of live comedy shows bought to Theatre Royal stage

1990 - present - Performed stand up gigs, launches, school fetes, cooking competition etc.
as character Sir Leslie

COMMUNITY WORK

2001 - Year of the Volunteer – Certificate of Appreciation signed by John Howard Prime Minister

1998 - 2010 - Served on Castlemaine Fringe Committee

1999 – present - Member and Guest Speaker - Historical Society, Castlemaine

1996 – 2010 - Board Member, Midland Personnel – disability support services

1992 - member – Castlemaine Artists Inc. (Brickworks)

1985 - Foundation Member of Goldfields Railway (formerly Castlemaine and Maldon Railway Preservation Society)

1972-74 - member – Castlemaine Artists Co-Operative '50' Hargraves St, Castlemaine

CONTACTS

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