

Interview with Brendan Hackett

Featured MAS Member

Brendan Hackett is an unusual member for MAS. Unlike most of us, he is a sculptor working in bronze and other metals. He has also worked with First Nations artists. I hope you find his unique creative story as interesting as I did.

When did you get started working as a sculptor?

From a very early age I just loved making things whether it was billy carts, cubby houses or fixing things like bikes. I was hands-on from the start. I recall making a pinch pot at around the age of eight.

Mum was into theatre; Dad was an art teacher and into theatre and set design often painting sets. I have a brother who's an artist. So yeah, an artistic environment. I remember in High School we were only allowed one semester of pottery which I loved. Dad spoke to the Principal and suddenly I was allowed to do it for another semester. So, creativity was supported and encouraged at home.



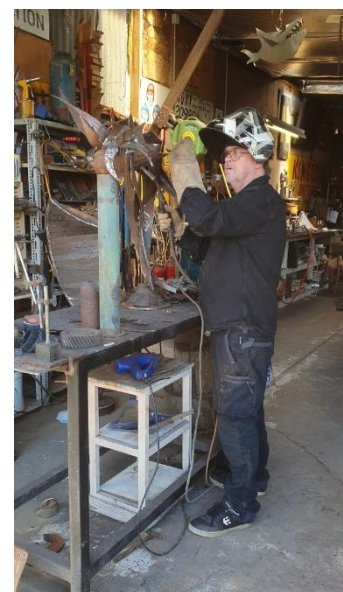
I started working in clay at 16 and then in the 1980's progressed to Art School in Canberra majoring in ceramics. I was an apprentice to my mentor Barry Jackson in NSW. He produced high fired porcelain, domestic and decorative, and large sculptural pieces.

After moving to Melbourne, I worked for twenty years at the Meridian Sculpture Foundry Fitzroy, learning the fine art of bronze casting under Peter Morley, the founder of this establishment. I'm so lucky to have had a job in the industry of the art I create.

Now I have my own foundry and metal fabrication studio. You know, you've got to make a living, so my personal creative work has taken a back seat to creating works for other artists. Their work arrives sculpted in clay or wood or whatever, and I mould it. Or they create their work in wax which I cast using the traditional lost wax method. I'm so excited about creating a body of work for my first solo exhibition in December this year.

Favourite tool?

Two really, my MIG welder gives me freedom and spontaneity to create ideas quickly, Welding is immediate. Second would be the melting furnace for casting bronze, a complicated process but very satisfying



What inspires your work?

Landscape, bird life and the human figure. I'm also inspired by other practicing sculptors. Found objects are also a source of inspiration.



If you could collaborate with any artist past or present, who would it be?

Oh, it would have to be the renowned Australian sculptor, Robert Klippel. He used lots of found objects in his early works which is my area of interest as a construction medium.

What is your favourite artwork?



I would have to say 'Apollo and Daphne' by Gian Lorenzo Bernini. The way he captures skin is just amazing in this sensuous work.

Any disaster stories with your work?

Plenty! Usually, it's broken pieces in the kiln firing or bad castings in the casting process. Although, it's deeply satisfying to apply my metalcraft skills to bring back the essence of a piece the artist requires when the casting has gone awry.

Tell us about your work with First Nations students.

I started working with First Nations people twenty-five years ago and since then I've done several masterclass workshops in remote communities showing artists low tech and metal fabrication techniques. I've worked in places like Patjarr W.A, Tiwi Islands, Gunbalanya West in Arnhem Land, Fitzroy Crossing, Kimberley and Beswick in Arnhem Land, NT.

I've also done bronze casting for several First Nations artists in Melbourne and on country, transforming their amazing wood carvings and artefacts into bronze along with providing scrap metal workshops for remote community artists. Some of these works have been acquired by public museums and galleries. Recently I spent three weeks in the Beswick community in a collaboration with three First Nations artists making a buffalo for the Katherine Junk Festival.

Thank you, Brendan for telling us about you and your work. What Brendan was too humble to say was that last work was awarded first prize at the festival. If you would like to see a video where this last work was developed and other works created by Brendan, click the following Instagram link to his page,

<https://www.instagram.com/blueprintsculpture/> .

