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EVENT SUMMARY

The 20th Anniversary 2023 Southern Art & Craft Trail (SACT) showcased 600 artist's works in 74 venues across the greater southern region during the September/October school holidays (23rd September - 8th Oct 2022). This year

the geographical coverage encompassed Shire of Manjimup, Denmark, Albany, Plantagenet, Kojonup, Dumbleyung, Gnowangerup and Lake Grace.

This annual arts event is the largest in the region and has now been running for 20 years. Galleries, museums, wineries, cafes, shops, town halls and unused public spaces have become venues offering both a unique cultural experience and economic spin off for local businesses.

The official opening was held at the Albany Town Hall on Saturday 16th September. An invitation only event, attendees included Jane Kelsbie MLA, City of Albany Mayor Dennis Wellington, City of Albany Executive Director Nathan Watson and Lester Coyne who provided a Welcome to Country. ArtSouthWA was represented by Chairperson Merry Robertson and the Board members and over 80 ArtSouthWA members and artists. A series of prestigious awards were presented to people who have had an outstanding contribution to this event over the past 20 years including the following:



Figure 1 Jane Kelsbie MLA providing the official opening

- 1. Torbay Glass Studio Mark Hewson for participating in all 20 years of the Art Trail
- 2. Brian Davis for participating in 19 years of the Art Trail
- 3. June Smith for participating in 18 years of the Art Trail
- 4. The City of Albany for the longest continual sponsor
- 5. Annette Grant for the longest serving Chairperson and Coordinator

According to recorded data over 11 626 people visited the SACT exhibitions, workshops and events. This doesn't include the passer-by traffic at public venues and businesses who may not have been recorded by Exhibition venues. 52% of visitation came from outside the Albany area with many staying for a week in the region in paid accommodation and having meals out in local restaurants. It is noted that people appeared to spend less on accommodation this year. This is a mixture of shorter stays and staying in cheaper accommodation. Even so, this is an increase of 1% or an extra 100 people on the previous year. Considering



Figure 2 Albany Mayor Dennis Wellington in one of his final official engagements

increased interest rates, food and fuel costs, we feel this is a great result. We estimate the SACT contributed greatly to over \$5.2 million visitor spend in the region.



Over 16 days, a diverse and exciting range of art exhibitions were on offer including open studios, hands-on workshops in Mt Barker and Albany, demonstrations, artist's talks and public art displays. Works included painting,

sculpture, textiles, ceramics, antique assemblages, printmaking, woodwork, jewellery, photography, resin and glass art. Visitors were able to view artwork in studios and meet with the artist.

16 schools from across the region participated with art displays of students works in retail businesses, cafes and public places.

Inclusivity has been one priority for Art South WA in recent years and collaborations with the Community Living Association resulted in a fabulous exhibit with over 10 clients participating in their exhibition. A new collaboration for 2023 included the Eclectic Unity Group utilising the Albany Aboriginal Heritage Community Centre as a venue. This collective of both indigenous and wadjela women were open for 14 days and had a very successful Art Trail.

15,000 copies of the program that included exhibitions, workshops, maps and acknowledgements were distributed across the region from the west coast from Perth downwards. This Art Trail booklet is also online and is the largest acknowledged source of information for Art Trail visitors.

SPONSORS & SUPPORTERS

ArtSouthWA would like to acknowledge the support of the following organisations for financial and/or in-kind assistance to deliver this event.

Great Southern Couriers

City of Albany Southern Ports

Regional Arts WA Strikepoint Design

TourismWA Adrenaline Marketing

Regional Development Group Australia: Great

Southern

7 Media / Albany Advertiser Busy Blue Bus ALBANY TOURS

Southerly Magazine West Cape Howe Wines

WA Museum of the Great Southern Albany Historic Whaling Station

Find Albany Designer Dirt

Great Southern Development Commission Hilton Garden Inn Albany

PRIZE AND AWARD WINNERS

BEST EXHIBITOR - VOTED BY THE PUBLIC

The Best Exhibitor experience, as voted by the public was venue 68: Ron Baker and Marjan Bakhtiarikish. Their Lower King studio, Arcadia Dreams, was newly completed in time for the Art Trail. Works exhibited created using skills developed over many years of arduous training in the classical techniques of drawing and painting in Florence, Italy. This award is sponsored by the Regional Development Australia: Great Southern.

VISITOR SURVEY – SPONSORED BY ALBANY TOURS AND HILTON GARDEN INN ALBANY

Winner of the visitor prize for completing the survey was Helen Roberts

VENUE SURVEY WINNER – SPONSORED BY DESIGNER DIRT

Winners of the exhibitor survey Designer Dirt prizes were Rachel Doring Art and Gail Guthrie from Majestic Merino



3 Winners of the Best Exhibitor Experience Award: venue 68: Ron Baker and Marjan Bakhtiarikish.

SCHOOLS AWARD – SPONSORED BY ALBANY'S HISTORIC WHALING STATION

A 'basket draw' saw the following schools each win one of the Family Passes to contribute towards their school's fundraising programs:

- Dumbleyung Primary School
- Flinders Park Primary School
- Lake Grace District High School

SPOT PRIZES

Sponsors, Designer Dirt, Provided 3 vouchers in three mystery venue bags. Only one was identified. Albany Art Group were the recipients.



Figure 4 Albany Art Group spot prize winners of a Designer Dirt voucher.

EVENT GOALS

GOAL 1: RECOVERY AND REBUILDING CONFIDENCE IN ARTS FROM COVID19 IMPACT.

This was achieved, seeing 74 venues representing 600 artists participating (making it a financially viable event). This is a 34.5% increase on 55 venue participation rate in 2022. This fantastic result is in contrast to the 12 venues who applied to take part in the 2020 SACT (which was cancelled). Recovery from the pandemic looks promising in the regional art sector though there is still some artist hesitancy but increased levels of confidence and enthusiasm of artists to exhibit in the post-covid event space is evident.

GOAL 2: BRING VISITORS AND INCOME BACK TO REGIONAL ARTISTS.

The table below will show the financial impact on both the region and its artists. The results are based on data from our feedback surveys received from visitors and locals in addition to Art Trail Exhibitor's feedback. The Board will review the data and incorporate comments into 2024 planning.

Number of sites visited	Visitor totals	%	Separate visits to each site	Assumption: ave number sites visited/person	Unique Visitors	2023 vs 2022 Visitors
1-5	154	56%	28,073	3	9,358	-6%
6-10	75	27%	13,672	8	1,709	39%
11-15	22	8%	4,010	13	308	98%
15+	22	8%	4,010	16	251	47%
TOTAL	273	100%	49,767	6.23	11,626	1%

GOAL 3: HIGHLIGHT THE REGION AS AN ARTS DESTINATION

Surveys indicate that visitors came from a wide area, with many returning to visit the art destinations. Of note are the comments from regional residents taking their visitors to exhibits and showcasing our local artists.

- I love the art vibe that is happening in Mount Barker and I want to be part of it so I'll be booking in to join Art trail next year!
- The Art Trail is my favourite time of the year as it showcases the amazing talent we have in the area. Albany feels alive and pumping
- Loved to see the amazing creativity displayed by so many passionate, clever people who love what they do. Thank you for making it possible for myself & my family to enjoy so much.
- I was really impressed by the quality and variety of work on show. I also really enjoy getting to hear from the artists about their techniques
- Sisters of Eve was the most amazing experience. I am now a collector of Carols work. To meet and chat with artists is such a great opportunity. This is my 4th Art Trail visit and it gets better each year. So friendly!! We will all be back next year

- We travelled 6 hrs by car to attend the trail. My nominated exhibitor number 68 was worth every effort we made to get here. Albany is privileged to have such exceptional artists.
- The standards of this year's exhibitions were extremely high. Incredibly hard to choose a favourite venue!
- We took our two teenaged daughters to have a look at the venues we chose. They were expecting to be really bored, but they were both very engaged by the variety and quality of the artwork.
 Congratulations to all involved.
- Absolutely fantastic venues. Venue 13 was a highlight; Bronte was so welcoming with a beautiful range and display of artwork. We loved it so much we went home with 2 pieces of art.
- This year's exhibitions were outstanding and the range of arts and crafts was wide and interesting. I loved the accessibility of the artists/artisans, their friendly welcome and their enthusiasm for their chosen art or craft. Congratulations to all.
- We come down to the southwest every couple of years for a combined wildflower and art trail holiday. Loverly countryside and we see some fantastic art and stay in some interesting B&Bs.
- I'm part of the trail myself, just as a creator in Coastal Creations. It's a great way to show our creations but the trail is exciting, gives the opportunity to see how many amazing artists live in our Great Southern and also the dedication to get extra works completed for this special event. We'll done to everyone involved.



Figure 5 Artist Bev Doig demonstrating a printing technique at the Lower Kalgan Hall venue

WHAT WAS NEW FOR 2023?

INTERACTIVE YOUTH ART SPACE

Hosted by the City of Albany, The Town Hall on the main street of Albany became home to an interactive art space for young people and their parents during the school holidays. A wide range of art activities were provided for kids to explore and create away form a school environment. 125 participants enjoyed the interaction with the creative arts team from the City of Albany.

ARTSOUTHWA MEMBER LOGO

In the lead up to the Art Trail we provided members with a new digital membership logo for use on their social, web and printed media. Accompanying phrase text was also provided to create external link opportunities for the ASWA web site form member websites if they had one. We believe this contributed to the 310% increased visitation rate to the ASWA website.

STREET BANNERS

Funding provided by the Great Southern Development Commission provided capacity to develop nine street pole banners for the first time to be displayed down York Street Albany for the first time. The banners should last for many years to come. A half circle Town Hall entrance cover was also developed for multi-year usage.

Artwork was provided by Bronte Wilkes from Mt Barker and design by Merry Robertson.



Figure 6 New Street pole banners on York Street Albany

PRODUCTION OF PROMOTIONAL VIDEO

Greenman Media was engaged to produce a 5min 30 secs promotional video for future use based on the 2023 SACT exhibitions, personalities and locations. It is designed to have validity for a number of years and highlights both the professionalism and diversity that visitors can expect from SACT. It will be placed onto the ASWA website, and extracts used across various promotional platforms in 2024.

REGIONAL VISITOR CENTRE INVOLVEMENT

For the first time Denmark Visitor Centre and Mt Barker Visitor centre were fully involved, providing exhibition gallery space for local artists in their communities and the surrounding region. City of Albany also provided a venue through its Library. It is anticipated that this support will continue.

ECONOMIC RETURN FOR THE REGION

Surveys were undertaken with both visitors and venues to present the following data and results. 91% of the 74 venues returned their results. 273 visitors completed online surveys. At an individual level, 600 local and regional artists are engaged in this event. For some, the SACT represents the 85% or more of their annual sales.

At a regional level, The SACT generated an estimated \$415 842 sales in artwork alone. 29% of those sales were buyers from outside the region. Additionally, it is estimated that and estimated \$5.2 million dollars is spent in the region on accommodation, eating out, fuel, personal items and other experiences.

Group	Location	%	Unqiue Visitors	2023 vs 2022 Visitors	\$ Total Art Sales	2023 vs 2022 Sales
0	Albany	48%	5,616	2%	\$200,871	43%
1	Great Southern	23%	2,643	Z 70	\$94,527	4370
2	Perth	19%	2,184	-10%	\$78,106	26%
3	Interstate	8%	974	14%	\$34,846	59%
4	Overseas	2%	209	1%	\$7,492	41%
TOTAL		100%	11,626	1%	\$415,842	41%

^{\$} Total Art Sales calculated by taking total sales from all exhibitor surveys and uplifted for all venues

Estimated spend by visitors from outside the region						
Accommodation - assume	Food - assume 3,367 Fuel - assume 3,367 visitors in		Art Sales			
3,367 visitors in Groups 2, 3 &	visitors in Groups 2, 3 &	Groups 2, 3 & 4 use two tanks of fuel at \$100 each	from			
4 spend \$220 per night for 5	4 spend \$42 per person		Exhinitors			
days	per day for 5 days	or luer at \$100 each	Survey Data			
\$3,704,082	\$707,143	\$673,469	\$120,444			
Total estimated spend by visitors from outside the region \$5,205,138						

SOCIAL RETURN FOR THE REGION

The SACT is a major School holiday activity for visitors to the region and a highlight on the regional event calendar providing opportunity for social benefits in many ways including:-

- A time for artists to collaborate and get together under a common project
- A time for over 11 626 visitors to mingle and meet with 600 regional artists



Figure 7 Albany Art Group portrait drawing workshop at the VAC

- Based on feedback data a time for locals to showcase the region's talent to visitors. Feedback received
 indicates the SACT is a drawcard for locals to take their visitor out to SACT sites on day trips with
 lunches/dinners out
- time for community to participate in 21 venue-led hands-on workshops and demonstrations plus 3 event sponsored workshops, that were supported by Southern Ports, summarised below:

WORKSHOP 1 THE ANCIENT ART OF PAPER-MAKING WITH FIONA GLEN

This paper-making workshop proved to be a fun, hands on experiential event. Participants were gently guided through the process, resulting in everyone producing high-quantity, unique papers and paper bowls. Facilitator Fiona Glen demonstrated her in-depth knowledge of this ancient process and shared techniques to ensure participants were confident to create impressive papers and by exploring their new skills, they quickly developed the process with outstanding results.

Fiona was calm and welcoming – all the participants commented on how relaxed yet productive the workshop was. Her facilitation skills shone through and her ability to unite a group was evident. Laughter and chatter resounded around The Art Shed and everyone left with a stack of papers, bowls and a smile on their faces.



Figure 8 Fiona Glen (in blue on the right) with paper making workshop participants

WORKSHOP 2 TRACING GONDWANA PRINT WORKSHOP SERIES WITH NIKKI GREEN AT THE GREAT SOUTHERN MUSEUM

This series of printing workshops was held over 4 days and included the following activities

- i. Planting the seeds drawing: mark making and the monoprint
- ii. Cultivating new growth cutting stencils / gelli plate prints
- iii. Botanical relief prints from leaf frottage to lino block / hand coloured prints
- iv. Mixed-media collage combining monoprints, relief prints, drawing and painting

Nikki Green is a practicing artist, printmaker and educator. With 30 years of creative community collaborations, she is currently lecturing in Visual Arts at South Regional TAFE (Denmark). Her love for the local biodiversity here in the Great Southern is what fuels her art practice and her interest to share her inspiration with others - building

awareness and an appreciation of our threatened natural environment.

WORKSHOP 3 WATERCOLOUR MARINE WITH HELEN HEEREY

Helen Heerey resides in Albany WA and has been capturing the local scenery in her delicate water colours for 11 years. In this workshop Helen provided opportunity for participants to explore the under-water world and to capture dolphins breaching the waves. By providing two demonstration pieces for participants to follow, everyone went away with new water colour skills and their own artistic version of our underwater world.



Figure 9 Watercolour Marine workshop participants

PROMOTIONS

The SACT promotions program and media exposure is widespread, as the Southern Art + Craft Trail is culturally significant and a recognisable brand with the unique pulling power to attract many thousands of visitors. See appendix 1 for examples of media in publications.

ONLINE

The ArtSouthWA website hosts a Member directory and Art Trail venue directory, digital copies of the Art Trail booklet including a flipbook and workshop information in addition to administration documents including Membership forms and Art Trail entries. In the lead up to and including the Art Trail, the website was visited 14000 times ,up by 311% from 2022. 2900 web visits accessed Art Trail information specifically.

A digital advertising program was run for 4 weeks on 7West media on all regional mastheads

Each Art Trail venue creates their own media and marketing campaign which adds value to the overall SACT, meaning there is potentially 74 other sites of promotion

Copies of the Art Trail booklet are located on the website at this link: https://artsouthwa.com.au/booklet/

Sponsor logos are displayed on our website all year at www.artsouthwa.com.au

A newly developed membership logo was designed and promoted to venues for use on their own websites

The SACT was featured on a total of six (known) regional event and tourism websites including

City of Albany Regional Arts WA ATDW (TourismWA) Find Albany Southerly Magazine 7West Media/Albany Advertiser

7West Media

This campaign achieved the following:

- 84163 impressions
- a CTR of 0.17% Higher than the industry standard benchmark for display activity (0.05%)
- Mobile devices outperformed desktop, delivering 87% of total impressions and 89% of total clicks

PRINTED

Editorials and advertisements with logos have been run in the Albany Advertiser, Aurora, Southerly Magazine, South West Times and other regional publications. This includes 2 editions of multipage spread in the Southerly Magazine (sponsorship arrangement) featuring advertorials and Art Trail venues in addition to the full page advertisements. Stories and images appeared in regional press from August to November.

Distribution total 927 000. Breakdown of figures listed below:

- Southerly 10 000 copies
- Aurora 10 000 copies
- Albany Advertiser 30 000 copies
- West Australian 858 000 copies
- South West Times 19 000 copies

A4 promotional posters (with logos) - 120 x distributed around southern region locations plus additional 74 in all venues

A4 Posters (with logos) for Venue ID x 74 in all venues on Art Trail

Anniversary
Art+ Craft Trail

Anniversary
Art+ Craft Trail

Event 2023

16 days to
discover the
artistic talent of the
Southern Regions

Regions

Saturday 23RD September - Sunday 8th October 2023

Connect
Ulbraries and Art Trail venues
Connect
Ulbraries and Art Trail

Www.artouthwa.com.au

Western
Albarry

ArtsouthWa and the Southern Art and Craft Trail
Www.artouthwa.com.au

Western

Albarry

15 000 copies of the 44 page SACT booklet were printed and distributed as far north as Perth and across the west coast and Great Southern region. See link for a copy of the flip-booklet. https://artsouthwa.com.au/booklet/

TELEVISION

There was 4 weeks of sponsored 15 second 7 TV commercials – 98 x 15 secs, on 7 and 7 Mate. This exposure delivered an advert to 50 071 devices (12.17% Mobiles/App, 83.36% TV, 4.47% web)

BANNERS

4 large canvas street banners were displayed in high profile public places for 16 days in Albany, Mt Barker and Denmark. They carried the event sponsor logos

9 Pole banners placed along York Street, Albany were displayed for 16 days

A large sign was attached to the Albany Town Hall for 16 days

SOFTENIA SOF

Figure 10 Canvas banner at the North Rd roundabout, Albany

SOCIAL MEDIA

ArtSouthWA Southern Art & Craft Trail has its own Facebook and

Instagram sites. Our performance in social media achieved exponential growth this year. The event reached 28 000+ people through paid ad campaigns and organic reach. This is down on last years result of 65 000. In 2022 the Art Trail was promoted for free on many Perth pages. These pages required a Fee for service this year which was not budgeted for. This potentially resulted in 10% drop in visitation from Perth region.

We continued social media strategies from 2022

- developing a tagging and sponsor acknowledgment protocol with artists and
- 2. developing an Art Trail venue video promotion strategy
- 3. Plus added a membership logo for venues to use in their promotions.

Facebook and Instagram:

https://www.facebook.com/SouthernArtCraftTrail

Followed by over 2700 people and with a reach of 8000 for some posts during the lead up and during the time of the exhibitions.

https://www.instagram.com/southernartcrafttrail/

Followed by 1450 people with a reach of 2310 accounts.

For the 2023 Art Trail we delivered

- 3 video promos pre-opening
- 6 countdown to opening posts
- 1 boosted video promo
- 17+ Sponsor logos that thanked and acknowledged (3 x COA)
- 2 x Venue opening night promo (new in 2022 and was 2nd highest popular post)
- 1 All sponsors and supporters post (pinned)
- 28 x Venue video and reel promos (new)
- 6 x Visitor survey promos
- 4 x Busy Blue Bus tours promo (1 x boosted)
- 5 event posts (2 workshops, SACT, Busy Blue Bus Tours)
- 2 x Workshop posts boosted



Figure 11 Artist Bronte Wilkes with her art on the Albany Town Hall signage

- Numerous sponsor and venue promos/shares
- Close of event and thank you posts
- 3 prize posts/videos for winners of exhibitor and venue surveys and best exhibitor as voted by the people.

This is in addition to all year round welcome of new and returning member posts, and promotions for artists or venues electing to provide images and information. Our posts are also shared by followers, sponsors and participating artists. It is to be noted that the majority of hours and expertise that went into achieving these results was due to ASWA Board volunteers and a paid consult to cover the last 3 weeks of Instagram programming through the Art Trail.

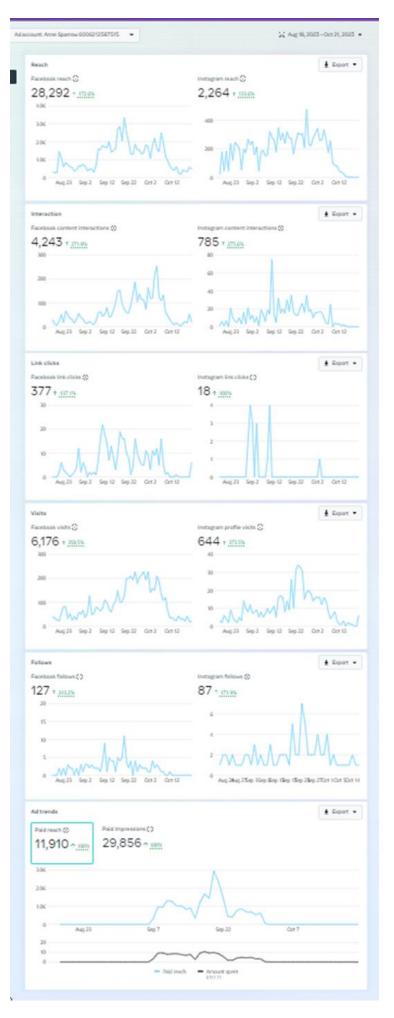
2024

It is planned that the 21st Southern Art and Craft Trail is offered again over 16 days from Saturday 21st September to Sunday 5th October 2024.

The SACT is seen as a vitally important event in a greater southern region's artists' calendar. It provides a goal for artists and venues for the year and encourages new entries each time. The event provides a valued and well attended activity during this popular visitor time, with anecdotal evidence showing that many visitors have it on their annual calendar of 'must see' events in the region. The inclusion of schools, disability groups plus the inclusion of multi-cultural venues in 2023 has increased our exposure to participants previously not engaged in hands-on displays and activities.

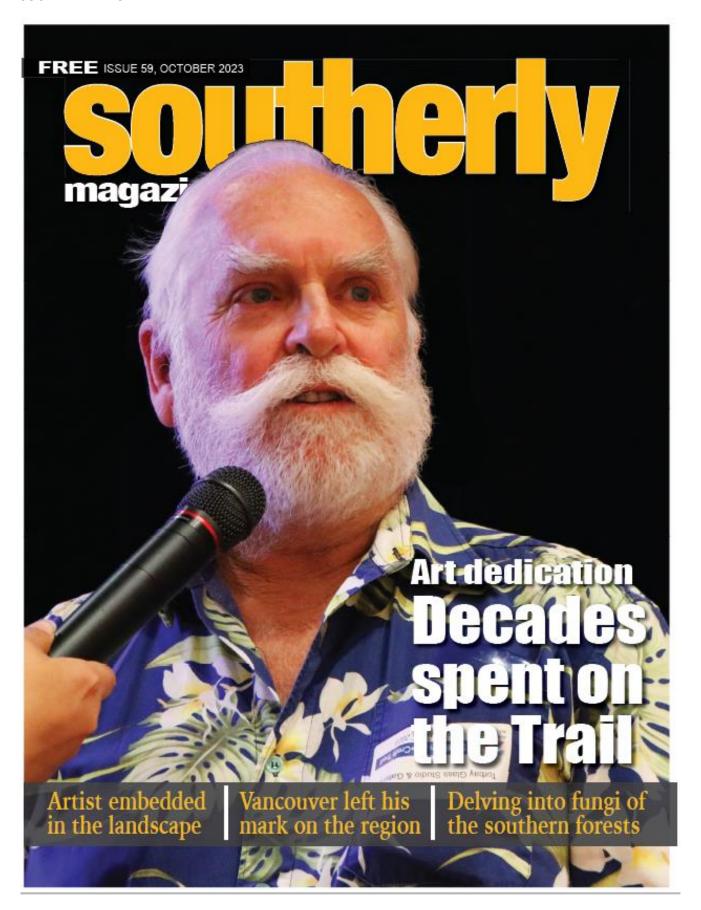
LONG TERM

The longer-term goals for ArtSouthWA are to continue to provide a reliable and professionally run destination tourism event that encourages an increasingly diverse range of visual artists to present the very best of their work. Each year over the past 20 years, the Southern Art and Craft Trail has moved progressively forward, bringing income and exposure to regional established and emerging visual artists and craftspeople. This in turn has led to the development of a reputation that sees visitors returning regularly to the region.



APPENDIX 1

SOUTHERLY MAGAZINE



COVERSIONY

Following in footstep of the Old Masters

WAYNE HARRINGTON speaks to Ron Baker and Marjan Bakhtiarikish on the eve of the 2023 Southern Art+Craft Trail about their new studio and gallery plus life, love music and art.



THE annals of history are rich with stories of artistic brilliance that have shaped outlures, challenged norms and left an indelible mark on the world.

Behind many of these transformative works stand not singular geniuses, but dynamic duce who have harnessed the power of their shared passion, creativity and connection to create masterpieces that transcend time and place.

From the world of painting to literature, music to film, artistic couples have consistently demonstrated how love and collaboration can amplify artistic expression to heights unattainable on one's own.

Often though, it has been an underlying tension which has brought out the best—and worst—of artistic partnerships. Simone de Beauvoir and Jean-Paul Sartne, Mary Wollstoneoraft Shelley and Percy Bysshe Shelley, Frida Kahlo and Diego Rivera, Lennon and McCartney. The list goes on.

However, for Albany artists Ron Baker and Marjan Bakhtiankish, life is all about creativity without volatility.

Their amazing new studio and exhibition space in Lower King is a case in point. On any given day, these partners and painters will stand sideby-side while creating their latest works with only the quiet cadence of classical music to fill the space in between.

This space is a world away from

where the couple met and fell in love, but the combination of art and music brings a little taste of Europe to the south coast of Western Australia.

The excéc and mysterious title of "Persian" sits well with Marjan because, as she puts it, "we like to refer back to the better parts of our history rather than what's going on today".

Marjan was born in the south of Iran, but moved to Tehran when she was accepted into university.

"The whole family moved because we were living in a more industrial kind of town when I was born," she said.

There were not a lot of opportunities there. So we went to the capital city. We had more opportunities because my mum was a biology teacher, and our education was very important for her.

"My dad is an electronic engineer, so it was good for him, but we didn't have a lot of apportunities there.

"My mum took me to all kinds of classes from early childhood, from celligraphy to drawing, peinting, and even music. So I used to play keyboards and things like that.

"We were actually fortunate because in our schools they would leach drawing and painting, which was good. So I always had that in school, but I would always go to extra classes cutside. And because in Iran, we have amazing realist painters, I was very lucky to study with some of those."
With her MA in English Literature
completed, Marjan focused on her
art and love of Western classical and
Renaissance art. This then led her
to travel to Florence in Italy to study
in various academies to develop her
artistic skills. This included Accademia
di belle arti di Firenze, Charles H. Cecil
Studios and Florence Classical Arts

Academy.

"It became very serious, because I knew this is my passion," she said. "So I wanted to go back to that. And just to go back a bit to my childhood. We were kind of brought up on listening to classical music and opera. So I really developed a taste for, you might say, all things classical."

It has only been in more recent years that Marjan has truly come to appreciate her childhood.

"We had a beautiful library of books, stories of operas and all of that. "Because you don't always appreciate it when you're young," she said. "You don't think that way. You think it's all just haphazard."

Marjan has also reflected upon the good fortune of being able to learn the artistic styles of the Old Masters which could so easily have been lost to the world.

"I found a very, very good teacher in Tehran. And I spent about four years studying with him and he was an amazing draftsman. So he gave me the love of drawing, which I think is the foundation to Western classical art.

"So I had a very thorough education almost before I went to Florence, So I really had a good time studying with them – studying from the busts, life drawings and almost every type of

"I found out online about these schools in Florence and they were teaching the Old Masters way of





learning the techniques that had been lost for over 100 years.

"There were these Americans who had gone to Florence and they had started to visit schools to bring back these techniques that had been lost.

"We were very fortunate that they felt responsible. Charles Ceoil, his motto was one that his teacher told him: It is more important that you pass on this learning, this training, rather than be the greatest artist who lives".

"And he really did that. His school was more specialised in portraits, which again is one of my passions – doing portraits."

And there were other art schools which Marjan attended, gleaning from each of them another piece in the artistic puzzle.

"I also started with the Russian Academy. Their professors were linked to one of the best schools in the world today in St Petersburg and I really learned so much from them.

"At the same time, of course, you are living in Florence, which is like the ideal city if you love Old Masters and soulpture. It is the city of the Renaissance obviously.
"So you just walk in the streets of

"So you just walk in the streets of Michelangelo and Leonardo and you can see these soulptures, so I was constantly drawing from all of those.

"You'd go to museums and sit there any time of day or night, just studying them. There was a cabinet of drawings in a museum in Florence. In this room is there are albums of the prints of Old Master drawings – like, there are thousands of them.

"So you just take an album of Raphael's drawings and you can just go through them. I was always sitting there drawing from them. Sometimes you could ask to see the originals and it was quite a moving experience, looking at it. Wearing gloves and looking at a



"The Philosopher" won an international classical figurative competition in Norway for Marjan Bakhtiarikish. Below, Ron Baker's "Still Life with Peaches and Grapes".



drawing that could be 500 years old. "What a privilege it was."

On the other side of the world, Ron Baker's childhood took a vastly different path.

His family moved to Albarry from Esperance in the early 1950s and settled on 160 acres at King River. Later, in 1959, his parents opened a little shop at the junction of Chester Pass Road and South Coast Highway which would become Baker's Junction.

"I grew up and went to school here until the late 1970s when we moved to my mother's hometown of Melbourne which allowed me to have some sime with her side of the family.

"And I went to art school there."

Before he left Albany the first time,
Ron had already begun to forge a
career in art.

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"We always help each other and what's happened is that gradually we found our separate paths in the different genres. So Ron specialises more in still life painting, while mine is more figurative portraits."

Marjan says a busy day working on a portait will leave her tired but highly satisfied.

"The challenge is one of those things that I find highly exhibitating because I think it's the human presence sitting there. And in the faces, you see all the experience of life, the sufferings and the happiness.

"The more you look, or the more you talk to them, all of that comes through. So I find it very moving. But as someone who is also a traditional kind of classical painter, the challenge of doing it is always there because the human skull is the same on there. The structure is the same, but every face is different.

"So it's almost like every time you do it, it's like you're doing it for the first time."

Marjan has been a finalist and winner of numerous national and international awards. In 2020 she won the major 2D Award in Du Rietz Art Awards, QLD with her peinting "Hope", and became a finalist in the prestigious Jacaranda Drawing Award.

Ron and Marjan are very pleased to have their studio and gallery completed to coincide with the 20th anniversary of ArtSouthWA's Southern Art+Craft Trail.

"The Art+Craft Trail is really a very, very significant event for local artisans," Ron says.

"And what we've noticed over the last eight years is that Albarry is growing and, particularly because of COVID, it has became a favourable destination as people realise what a hidden secret Albarry is.

"People are selling up from Perth, they've had the careers and moved down to Albany and now's the chance for them



to do their art.

"We've done a lot of work for the Albarry Art Group and you find a lot of new members coming in who finally have a chance, now that the family's grown up, to get some time for themselves. They come down to Alberry and start pursuing their passions.

"So there's new studios opening up more and more. There's a very wide, creative artistic community in Albany.

"Food, art and wine should be Albany's 'go'."

Construction of the studio and gallery was completed with Ron and Marjan's discerning, artistic eye.

"What people like to see is what goes on behind the scenes too, so this is a chance to see the work in the studio and then they can come and see the gallery," Ron says.

"Proper lighting is so critical, and so that's what we have

"We have built the gallery and bought proper lighting for it, so everything is beautifully lit. And that way our work is seen at it best, which makes a huge difference," Marjan says.

And all the while there is the constant of classical music which helps put both artists in the right frame of mind.

Given the range within



classical music styles, it is necessary to find some common ground when selecting the day's playfist.

"We go the middle path," Marian says.

"It's always classical and that's because it is just serene

and beautiful. We don't go for

the loud classical even though, as I said, I like my Wagner operas and things like that, but we don't go there.

"We stay with maybe sonatas and soft Vivaldi. They're very beautiful."

And the notion of beauty is often in Marjan's thoughts as she works.

"I think what we forget to mention is that the word 'beauty' is also very important in our art," she says.

"It is not a word that is used a lot these days, but we think that it is one of those archetypal things that people can always relate to. I mean, as long as what I have done is beautiful, people will relate to it anyway.

"So it's not based on an artist statement, or a conceptual thing. So if you come to our studio, we think that everyone will enjoy it, ultimately, because it is beautiful.

"It taps into this universal quality that everyone can connect with.

"That's what I personally like about classical art. It's about life. It's about death. It's about suffering. It's about beauty. And these things never age, you know. It's forever."

Q SEE the ArtSouthWA Southern Art+Craft Trail Feature on Pages 36-46. For more information on the Art+Craft Trail go to www.artsouthwa.com.au

ATMODTISCHOUT

The Cook Labor Government has made record investments to strengthen and improve our health system for regional WA

In Albany, we have delivered:



New radiation oncology services at the Albany Health Campus Funding to build a new Albany Dental Clinic that will double its capacity



A trial of a new face to face public neurology service at Albany Health Campus

d 100

100 additional parking bays at Albany Health Campus

0

A permanent BreastScreen clinic at the corner of North Road and Barnesby Drive

Rebecca Stephens MLA



MEMBER FOR ALBANY

Rebecca.Stephens@mp.wa.gov.au

Authorised by R Stephens, 348 Middleton Loop, Alberty WA 6330





Marjan Bakhtiarikish honed her classical art skills in Tehran and Florence.

"The funny thing about being a home carer is that it's bittersweet because you are a kind of prisoner as a fulltime carer. But what it also did for me it actually gave me a chance to 'stay young'.

It also taught Ron about routines. One of his routines was getting the morning's tasks completed and then looking online to see what was happening in the rest of the world.

"I saw in some of these new academies - private academies these guys had gone back and you could see that there was this classical training available," he said.

"And the analogy I've got here was that I always wanted to get back to art but I'm like this guy struggling through the bush and then suddenly coming across a highway.

Ron and Marjan's highways crossed

when both were enrolled in an evening course in portraiture in a Russian academy in Florence.

"Ron had been there in Florence a couple of years before me and we had this introduction session," Marjan recalls. "And he was one of the more

september 2023

experienced guys who was helping other students - where to go, where to buy papers and things like that. So that's how we first met.

But then we spent about six months together going through that portrait course. And we would see each other every evening. And then that's how the relationship developed.

"And I felt like we both shared that passion in a more deeper way than I felt with other students there. And we would be having long talks about art and all the rest of it."

And what a place to fall in love. "Absolutely," she says, laughing. "Florence is the city of romance, and then you can travel to Venice, which is even more romantic. So absolutely, if you want to fall in love, that is the place

Fast forward to their life together here in Albany, and the couple are enjoying working together while maintaining their own individual styles.

"It's a double-edged sword, though, because having two careers together is not an easy thing, especially in a small town," Marjan says.

"There are not enough opportunities, you might say, for both people. But what's happened is that it is a huge advantage to live together and work with someone who is also trained in the same way as you because what happens in schools is that most of the graduates, when they leave, the quality of the works actually goes down because they don't have those ocleagues around them, or the teachers to give them critical advice.

HILLMAN STREET

Spencer Park \$499,000

continued page 10











This stunning threebedroom, two-bathroom home that was built in 2010 is now available for sale. Located in a highly soughtafter neighbourhood, this property offers a comfortable and convenient lifestyle for its lucky new owners.

As you step inside, you'll immediately notice the spacious and well-designed layout of this home. The open-plan living and dining area create a welcoming

RayWhite

and versatile space for entertaining friends and family, with the added formal lounge providing more room for relaxation. The modern kitchen is equipped with high-quality appliances, ample storage space, and a breakfast ber for casual dining.

The three generous-sized bedrooms provide a peaceful retreat for everyone in the household. The master bedroom, located upstairs, boasts an ensurist bathroom, ensuring privacy and convenience. The additional two bedrooms share a well-appointed bathroom, perfect for accommodating guests or a growing family.

accommodating guests or a growing tarnity.

Outside, the property offers a low-maintenance yard, allowing you to spend more time enjoying your new home and less time on upkeep. The covered outdoor patio is ideal for alfresco diring. BBQs, or simply relaxing with a book on a sunny afternoon. The views from the outdoor area at night are something to immerse yourself in.

Conveniently located, this property is within close proximity to schools, parks, shops and public transport options.

The price guide for this property is \$499,000, presenting an excellent opportunity to secure a fantastic home at an affordable price. Don't miss out on this chance to make 75A. Hillman Street Spencer Park your own.

Emma Collins - 0428 872 261 Julie Hetherington - 0421 823 283

RAY WHITE RURAL ALBANY KOJONUP





■ Jen Lonsdale and Deputy Mayor Cr Sandie Smith.







■ Jo Sharp, Lyn Lutley and Claudia Maw.

■ Karen Whitney and Sally Marshall.





Kathryn and Steve MacNeil.

■ Robyn Altus, Annette Grant and Vicki Brown.

for that period of time, because we can see the effect the investment has in the region – not only in terms of attracting people to a wonderful part of the world to have a look at our rich, creative community.

*In my time here, I've seen the visual arts grow immensely. I think we see a

lot more art across our community now, and it's evidenced by the growth and participation in the Trail as well.

"Over 450 individual artists are represented in the Trail this year and 74 different venues. I just think that speaks volumes of the impact that it has – that so many people embrace and contribute to it."

Mr Watson said the event had paved the way for a new generation.

"We've seen this afternoon some of the people who have been involved along the way, and there's lots of very established artists who have been with the Trail and doing the artwork for a long time," he said.

"But the big impact that it has is supporting those emerging artists. The number of students who are engaged in the Trail this year is just fantastic because they really are the future generation, not only of our community, centimud page 48

48 southerly october 2023

from page 47

but of the arts.

"When you add programs involved in the Trail that support development and encourage them to grow and be part of their community, it's just a fantastic outcome."

ArtSouthWA Chair Merry Robertson said it was an incorporated not-for-profit organisation run by a board of volunteers and contractors.

"We promote a diverse range of arts and crafts for our members within the southern region of WA," she said.

"Our members include regional-based art galleries, artists, oraftspeople and arts organisations. We operate all year round, with the biggest undertaking being running of the annual Southern Art+Craft Trail.

"I would like to give a big thank you to our ArtSouth board and contractors for their work throughout the year. They have spent many hours every week not only on the Art Trail, but on a number of other special projects to benefit our members."

Warren-Blackwood MLA Jane Kelsbie officially opened the 2023 Art Trail, saying her background gave her a particular passion for the arts.

"I'm passionate about the arts and culture. In a previous life, I was an arts and entertainment editor when I was in my 20s in the UK and I'm especially passionate about arts and culture in the regions," she said.

"Our diversity and creativity, our excellence in the arts, our innovation, our collaboration and the dedication of all of you to building social connection, through artistry of all different types.

"It's absolutely outstanding that events like this bring people together. When you think about arts and outure, you actually think about community and you think about people coming together to share stories and visions.

"It's an amazing thing that you bring to our communities and it's an absolute honour to be here to help celebrate that."

Ms Kelsbie congratulated ArtSouthWA for its longevity and achievements over the past two decades.

"This being the 20th anniversary is an incredible achievement and hats off to the board and every single volunteer who has been a part of pulling it together," she said.

"Over the 16 days, the Art Trail will celebrate the unique and fun, vibrant creative cultures of the Great Southern and further afield, as I say, going to the Manjimup, Lake Grace, Albany, Denmark, Mount Barker, Walpole and further.

"Congratulations again to ArtSouthWA on the 20th anniversary of this incredibly important Trail. And I look forward to visiting and immersing myself in the creative space across our region."



■ Andrus Budrikis, Ingrid Fuhrman, Karen Timmins and Eden Sheperd.



June Smith being interviewed by ArtSouthWA board member Bev Doig.



ArtSouthWA board member Jonathan Hook asks Brian Davis about his many years on the Art Trail.



■ Peter Fall, Susan McCabe and Collette Knowlden.



■ Bronte Wilkes, Olivia Hannig (5 months) and Rowena Wilkes



ArtSouthWA board member Diana Henderson speaks to the Art Trail's most consistent exhibitor, Mark Hewson.





■ Ros Jenke and Julie Fletcher.





■ The City of Albany's Nathan Watson spoke about the Art+Craft Trail's development of future generations of regional artists.





Hitting the

The opening of the 20th edition of the popular Southern Art & Craft Trail attracted more than 50 people at Albany Town Hall on Saturday.

The trail will begin on Saturday and run until October 8, featuring 74 exhibitions and open studios.

ArtSouthWA was formed in 2000 by a committed team led by Angus McKenzie, experiencing a halt due to COVID in 2020.

rom artists to board members and sponsors.
Menang Noongar elder Lester Coyne conducted a welcome to country and Albany mayor Dennis Wellington congratulated the trail on its longevity and contribution it has brought the Great Southern version.

region.

Denmark artist June Smith was recognised for her commitment and participation to the trail for

on Lyas, Warren-Blackwood MLA Jane Kelsbie and Lyn Lutley









Cheryl Dowell and Lyn Lutley

PRESCRIBED BURNING IS UNDERWAY



"We are keeping the community and firefighters safe from bushfires."

- Fire Manager

The final decision to carry out any burn is made on the day, to take advantage of the safest possible conditions. Smoke may be visible and you may be affected. Visit dbca.wa.gov.au/todaysburns





Altern L. Altertiorr Thursday, September 21, 2023

NEWS 15





Jane Michael and Jason Goff.

trail of fine art

the past 17 years. Ms Smith is a self-taught artist taking inspiration from and following the traditional teaching of old masters of European art.

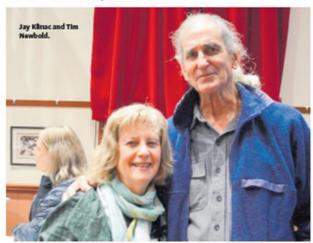
The trail was previously awarded 220,000 by the City of Albany, Regional Arts WA and Tourism WA The annual eventis an opportunity to promote and showcase the work of Grant Southern artists, drawing tourists and the local community alike.



Karen Whitney and Jonathon Hook



Melanie Mackenzie and Merry Robertson







Southern Art+Craft Trail Event 2023



Figure 13 Poster



Figure 12 Sponsor page form the booklet

Sponsor social media acknowledgements from Facebook and Instagram

















