



Grey Day 2013 oil on canvas 91 x 91 cm Barbara Innes-Hilder

***bush creek river***

The exhibition highlight of the summer was Barbara Innes-Hilder's "bush creek river" exhibition held at the Shoalhaven City Arts Centre. The artist notes that "while these paintings were inspired by the Shoalhaven River and environs between the source and the sea, they are first and foremost paintings. They are about the creative and expressive possibilities of paint."

This commitment to paint could be seen through big bold gestures applied with strength and consummate ability plus a subtle use of a limited palette of colour and textures achieved through scratching and other mark making. However the inspiration was pervasive, these paintings evoked the bush and water and generated an atmosphere in the main gallery redolent of the river. Innes-Hilder can be counted among the top artists who are currently working in the Shoalhaven.



River Bend 2013 122x122cm

## A new art gallery for Milton.

Stephanie Burns Fine Art, in the new set of shops recently built in Wason Street Milton, looks to be off to a popular start judging by the number of people visiting while I was there, and this was not a one off, Stephanie has assured me that the whole of summer since they opened has been similar. The concept for the gallery is not the usual changing solo exhibitions of various artists plus the occasional themed group show. Nor is it a mixed bag of various artists jumbled in with assorted decorative and tourist memorabilia. The owner says that “ It conforms more to an open studio style where I paint, hang my work and invite my family and a couple of artists I've shown in the past to exhibit work in a salon hang.”

Over my two visits, the hang in the Gallery had changed significantly as works that had sold, had been replaced and new work finished and hung or delivered. The works on display included small sculptures by Peter O'Brian painted in slabs of colour with jaunty dividing lines plus paintings by Heidi Yardley, Tiffany Titshall and Stephanie Burns. Heidi Yardley, a realist painter has been a Doug Moran Portrait Prize finalist a number of times as well as being accepted in the 2013 Art Gallery of NSW Archibald portrait prize. Her work *Promise of Water*, currently on display at Stephanie Burns Fine Art, is visually intriguing, moody and sets a scene of human interaction (or in this case non interaction) that seems perfectly in tune with the brooding landscape they occupy.



Stephanie Burn's art has elements evocative of the best naïve painters, though her work really is not of that school since she has studied at Claremont School of Art as well as a number of art institutions in the UK. In normal circumstances naïve art applies to the work of an artist



who has not received formal education in an art school or university, and who does not usually comply to the “rules “ of perspective nor is able to understand that simplicity does not have much to do with subtlety. So 'faux naïve' is probably a better label, though still not totally correct, for the current style, especially the series of humpback whale paintings (though I must confess that being from Hervey Bay, the Queensland town, that appears to be infested with Humpback whales along with kitsch tourist tack and bad “art” featuring the whale, I have become immune to any appreciation of the whale as art. Back into the water with them I say.) Paintings such as *The Lookout* are much better paintings, seductive, bright, immersive worlds. There is a sense of humour, a giddy perspective and the relaxed

feeling of lazy days on the beach.

## Rolling Stone : The Covers 1972 -2010

Until 19 March the main gallery at the Shoalhaven City Arts Centre features 150 cover images from the Australian edition of the magazine Rolling Stone, these chronicle nearly forty years of musicians, politicians, cultural icons and the designers and the photographers who produced the distinctive look of this iconic magazine. Founded by Jan Wenner in the



USA in the late 1960's, with the first edition published in November 1969, the intent was to produce a magazine that focused on music and musicians, this later expanded somewhat to cover "the things and attitudes that music embraces". The name itself was either after the Muddy Waters song 'Rolling Stone (Catfish Blues)' or Bob Dylan's 'Like a Rolling Stone' or the UK band 'The Rolling Stones' who are named after the Muddy Waters song or maybe all three.

The Australian edition was launched in 1972, graced with a cover image of Jerry Garcia of the Grateful Dead, taken by Annie Leibovitz. Other major photographic talents have included Baron Wolman, Richard Avedon, Herb Ritts and later from 1976 when the first local band, Skyhooks, made the cover and local content increased, the work of photographers Steve Baccon, Tony Mott,

George Chin and Kane Hibberd plus illustrators including Craig Phillips, Michael Mucci and Ron Monnier featured in its pages.

The Australian issue of Rolling Stone is the longest surviving overseas edition and many of its covers define the period in which they appeared. From INXS, Michael Hutchence, through Paul Keating, Jimmy Barnes, Andrew Denton, Kylie (of course), Miranda Kerr to Powderfinger plus brilliant design, illustration and photography. Seeing the Janis Joplin cover made me want to play the *Cheap Thrills* and *Pearl* albums, and seeing the photo of Billy Idol made me blush with embarrassment remembering that I had adored *White Wedding* when I only knew the singer by the ripped and jagged voice, until I first seen a photo of a peroxide blonde young man wearing cast-offs from the Rocky Horror Show and who can forget dancing to AC/DC..... this exhibition opens a wormhole, a Einstein-Rosen bridge if you want to be technical, that allows us to time travel through our cultural history.

### Postcards of the Shoalhaven

During January the Alley Gallery at the Dunn Lewis Centre hosted an exhibition of photography, by Milton Ulladulla District Camera Club. While there was some competent photography on display, it also suffered from a sameness, in that, what seemed like the majority, were colour prints of sea/beach/landscapes, mostly taken at sunrise or sunset. This seemed to be an outcome of the postcard theme, though I would have thought there is more to the Shoalhaven than this.

Marilyn Townsend and Annette Potter had two of the best photographs, with Marilyn Townsend being awarded 'Theme picture of the year'. While Annette Potter's "Along the highway", a black and white of a gnarly old eucalypt, was very well done and one of the best images in the exhibition, her other two images rejoined the crowd of coloured sunrise/beachscape postcards. Two Ulladulla Public School students, Damon Macri and Molly Dedden were represented in the exhibition and showed a unique way of looking at the common place, and were a highlight of the show. To quote Picasso: "Every child is an artist. The problem is how to remain an artist once they grow up."

## **Food as Art ?**

With all the hype about cooking and food, I came across this in the book, *The Table comes First* by Adam Gopnik, a quote that puts art firmly in its place.

“The truth is that we have a hard time treating cooking as an art because it is so easy for us to experience it as a miracle.....We have trouble thinking that food is art, but no trouble at all imagining that it might be divine.....Our difficulty with the idea of food as a fine art is not that we have trouble elevating it that high; it is that we have difficulty in making it descend that low.”

### **Max Dingle**

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