

Vanessa Brown interviewing Don Hill on the 6<sup>th</sup> of August 2003 NOOSA COMMUNITY RADIO 101.3fm

Presenting a solo exhibition entitled Water and Light at the Brine Gallery in the Cooroy butter factory Don Hill a Brisbane based artist joins us this evening on the Arty Farty Show.

Welcome to the show Don how are you?

Hello Vanessa thank you for inviting me along I am very honored.

Yeah thank you very much for joining us now I came about hearing about your exhibition from Mandy McGuire Curator of the Cooroy Butter Factory.

That's right Vanessa.

Yeah just as a way of introduction how did you guys get in contact?

This year I set out to explore other possibilities through Regional Galleries throughout Queensland so Mandy was my first point of contact and she invited me to show at the Brine.

So sure she got in contact with you and the rest is history. That's why we are speaking today

Now as a means of introduction just backtracking how did your interest in art first develop?

I think it was as a child actually my brother used to paint and draw which he doesn't do any more.

Your older brother?

Yes that's right and I tried to emulate his style when I was about two.

What did he used to draw Don as a point of interest?

He used to draw butterflies.

Mmmh beautiful.

So you copied and copied.

I tried but the lines that I drew just came out squiggly and uneven.

So do you think that squiggly line has reflected in your current work Water and Light?

Possibly I still remember trying emulating his work.

That's great that your brother was there as a source of inspiration.

Yes I guess he was my first inspiration.

Well talking of inspiration who are your inspirations.

First I guess there are a couple of Australian artists the first is John Dahlsen and the second would be Anthony Lister. Both of these guys have a lot intestinal fortitude. Guts.

Oh yeah Anthony Lister is one of my artists inspirations as well. So I can only for another reason in the way in which he is so prolific in that you can just be sitting anywhere in Brisbane you just turn you head well my there is his work again.

Exactly

So he has a high traffic sort of thing and I think it is important as an artist to get your work out there

Its no good to sit in your room and go no body knows about my work.

That's true its very visual.

Sure that's great now

Anthony Lister like yourself is represented by Fox Galleries.

That's right

On Edward Street. How did you initially get in contact with Michael Fox the Director/

Initially I was looking for a gallery to show my work and I had made some contact with Verlie Just at the Verlie Just Gallery and I was going to ask her. It takes a bit of courage at first to ask people to show your work. She had a very established gallery.

So I take you had graduated from Uni before you asked the directors before you asked for critique

No

No? that's very ambitious Don

Anyway I went on holidays at Christmas and when I came back there was one day I was going up to Verlie Just's gallery and she had passed away at Christmas so that ended that.

Anyway eventually I built up enough courage to go and see Michael Fox and he accepted my work straight away.

Straight up?

Yes straight away.

Ah congratulations.

And it was a month or two later that I had my first exhibition.

Get out was it on Edward Street?

He was in Brunswick Street in the Valley then that's where the gallery was at that time.

How long ago was that if you don't mind me asking.

That was like only three years ago.

For sure so you've been represented by the gallery for three years and I understand that Michael Fox is opening your exhibition tonight.

Tonight yes

Oh good for you.

Thank you

Now umm I think we will go straight into a music break. Yeah just so we can breath

Your listening to the Arty Farty Show and Don Hill is our guest for this evening and we'll be straight back after we listen to the sounds of Saint Germaine.

Break

And we are back on Noosa Community radio 101.3fm Don Hill is our guest artist this afternoon or this evening rather welcome back Don.

Thank you Vanessa.

Now that we've had a glass of water we can sit back in and enjoy the ride.

Now with speaking on the break you mentioned that you had a few artists inspirations.

And people who have taught you in the past.

What is your education in art?

Basically I am self taught but I have been painting for some time and it goes back quite a long way.

Yeah for sure.

My main tutors then were two or three people Arthur Evan Reid who was Director of the South Australian Art Gallery and he also knew Sydney Nolan quite well.

Oh wow so you weren't actually trained at a TAFE or University?

That's right this going back quite some years to the early seventies although you could do formal training then. The other person was Frank De Silva he is now deceased.

I used to go on field trips with Frank he taught me a lot about composition and the way he used to draw and paint he would have a matt board with a square cut in the middle

Yeah?

And swing it around to different parts and pick out sections of the landscape and put these in his composition and that's the way he used to do his work.

Well that's strange that you say that I didn't actually tell you during the break but we're learning that process at the moment in drawing class not even magnify but take a piece not out of a landscape but a figure.

Figurative line drawing and putting it onto a canvas dividing it into panels almost an abstracted figure.

I use this method with digital photos and I pick our pieces compositions that I like and try to put them down on canvas.

Now Mandy said your work is almost magnified do you zoom in on a piece that you are creating.

It consists of two methods at the moment one of which is 'Plien Air" where I work directly from the landscape where you put it down directly onto canvas panels the other is a more contemporary approach.

This year I wanted to create larger canvasses but I am very limited by studio space so I am making composite pieces that actually fit together as one composition.

Oh yeah.

They can. I have also tried to make it so they can be rearranged in any order and also split that composition pattern.

Yeah now how many composite pieces are exhibited at the Brine Gallery at the moment?

At the moment I only have one but there is also one diptych which is basically a Plien Air Landscape and the other is this piece called Sunshine State which consists of twelve panels

Sunshine State? There you go luckily your exhibiting in Queensland the Sunshine State.

Yep not known as the smart state.

Now I was going to ask you about the conceptional intention of your artwork now that you have explained what it physically looks like.

Okay I guess there is a very strong connection in the show with the Noosa area

There are quite a few seascape landscape and also pieces which reflect this area.

On your travels here?

Mainly on my travels here.

Cause you said you were mainly based in Brisbane. Do you spend weekends here?

Yes and a lot of people think I live up here actually.

No Joke?

No Joke

You spend so much bloody time here?

That's right.

So I guess there's that strong community connection to the area and I guess it also has some environmental value as well as I try to show it as a beautiful thing and I

Do you include like man made objects within your landscapes or is it?

I try not to

Do you think that in the future or in the future that that will be harder to put out in your work?

There is man made objects they mainly consist of boats and things like that.

Oh okay yeah.

I was just speaking about development like the landscape  
It is entirely up to the artist to include things like that  
I guess it is something that could be avoided but wont be  
You can include buildings and things like that but its entirely up to you  
There's some really good subject matter here in Noosa there is heaps of natural landscapes to look at  
Cool now umm now speaking of regional areas do you think its confining for the artist to be based in a regional area as opposed to being in a city?  
Not really it just depends what you want to do  
Yeah  
Where you want to go whatever you want to do you can basically do it.  
That's right that now that there's a Uni here  
Regional areas are great and its good to actually do a show here and I am loving it.  
You mentioned that you want to spend the next two years working and exhibiting in Regional Areas  
Yes there is some great regional galleries around Queensland  
So what next is on the plate for Don Hill?  
There's a show coming up at Fox Galleries this year in November of course and  
This will be another solo exhibition?  
No this will be with a guy called Louis Riquard and yeah he does paintings where he actually works with sand as his medium so its pretty sort of interesting work and he is also a landscape painter as well  
And a mate of yours?  
Yes I guess so and early next year I will be organizing a show with the Boonah Regional Gallery  
Boonah? Where is that?  
Its just a little south of Ipswich.  
Staying within the sunshine state?  
Staying within the sunshine state  
There's a good connection there because of the field trips that I used to do with Frank De Silva was based in that area.  
There you go a blast from the past.  
Well cool we look forward to supporting you as well as the exhibition to be held at the Brine Gallery till the 24<sup>th</sup> of August.  
For further information contact the Cooroy Butter factory on 0000000000 and Don thank you for coming on the Arty Farty Show and I believe you wanted to thank a few of your sponsors before we came to an abrupt end.