

Melbourne Sojourn

January 2023



Tuesday 10th January 2023

I begin the day with Ada Limón. Her poetry sizzles! Today's highlight was "Wonder Woman"!

But by 8.00am, we had packed our car, had had our breakfast, and were driving south. First stop was Appin, where we duly filled up only to discover that our "cheap" place was no longer the cheapest on the journey. Oh well, it was still cheaper than that in Engadine.

Traffic was heavy and it was obvious that many Victorians were heading back home after their beach holidays. It was also obvious that many drivers were impatient, driving up tight behind, even when right on the speed limit. One even flashed his lights for me to either move over (I was passing) or to break the speed limit.



A landscape Streeton would enjoy and one that could create a grass fire!



Mural

We carried our own morning tea (Marulan) and lunch (Jugiong) and then headed to our motel, the Albury City Motel at \$117 per night via Booking.com. The room is basic but surprisingly well-stocked and it did have air-conditioning. Given that it was 35 degrees outside that was a relief. After a short rest and a cup of tea, Faye and I then walked into town and to MAMA (Murray Art Museum Albury). The round trip was just over 3km.



Colourful 60s-style motel rooms (not ours) and another mural



Downtown Albury



Part of “Minor Truths”, a glass and audio installation by Spence Messih

Works by Tracey Moffatt (Something More exhibition) also attracted, naturally. Her photography is amazing. But there was much more within the gallery to enjoy.



Gillian Kayrooz (*Five Ways to Say I'm Home*) took photos of the interiors of local grocery stores, printed them on these flimsy materials and hung them fluttering. In another room, there were photos of those old stores. In a significant way, this art work demonstrated the ephemeral nature of what we probably took as eternal.



Tairem Claire Jeon has used Korean patchwork to link with her past



Dear Ursula – There is Love and Hate
A collaborative intergenerational work between mother (Maria Ling Qing Huang) and daughter (Amy Suo Wu). Ghost-writing or story-telling to heal the gaps



Mikala Dwyer – Chromakinda







The Anglican Church



The library





Old, rich Albury



And not so rich

Wednesday 11th January 2023

When I came home last night I wondered about that mother-daughter collaboration and mused on the daughter. Her name looked familiar. Her artwork did too. And I looked her up, found her email, wrote.... Not expecting much! Lo and behold, my musings were right! Amy Suo Wu of Rotterdam was indeed the wonderful Amy Wu I taught and she had replied excitedly. Her email was there for me the first thing this morning. She was thrilled I had found her; told me she had actually visited BGHS last year when she was in Sydney and had asked after me. We are back in touch!!!!

After that excitement, Faye and I went for another walk in Albury this morning. In the cool and before breakfast, we walked along a creek that had been turned into a concrete drain but that also created a walkway/cycleway for locals.



That large house had hints of the influence of Frank Lloyd Wright.

Now this walk was also rich in birds but perhaps the best sightings were of Blue-faced Honeyeaters and a Gang Gang Cockatoo.

Equally of interest was the wonderful skateboarding park built for the youngsters of this town.



On our return, they were in use!



Gutters need attention





We were approached by a middle-aged woman who was driving slowly. She told us she had had bad news. Her mother had had a heart attack and she needed to get back to Sydney but she didn't have any money for petrol. Her story just didn't stack up. It was very curious.

Anyhow, we headed off, out towards Healesville, and the journey was uneventful. At morning tea, in a small park, we were entertained by a flock of corellas in a panic over a Whistling Kite.

And at lunch, at the Forestry Park in Toolangi, we were saddened about how the facility had not been maintained.







But now we are in the Secret Cottage (had fun finding the message about the password to get the key but finally found it). It's tiny and lacks hanging space. Faye also thinks it's dirty but actually it is not that bad. Just some dishes and the front of the cupboards needed washing. Otherwise, it's OK.

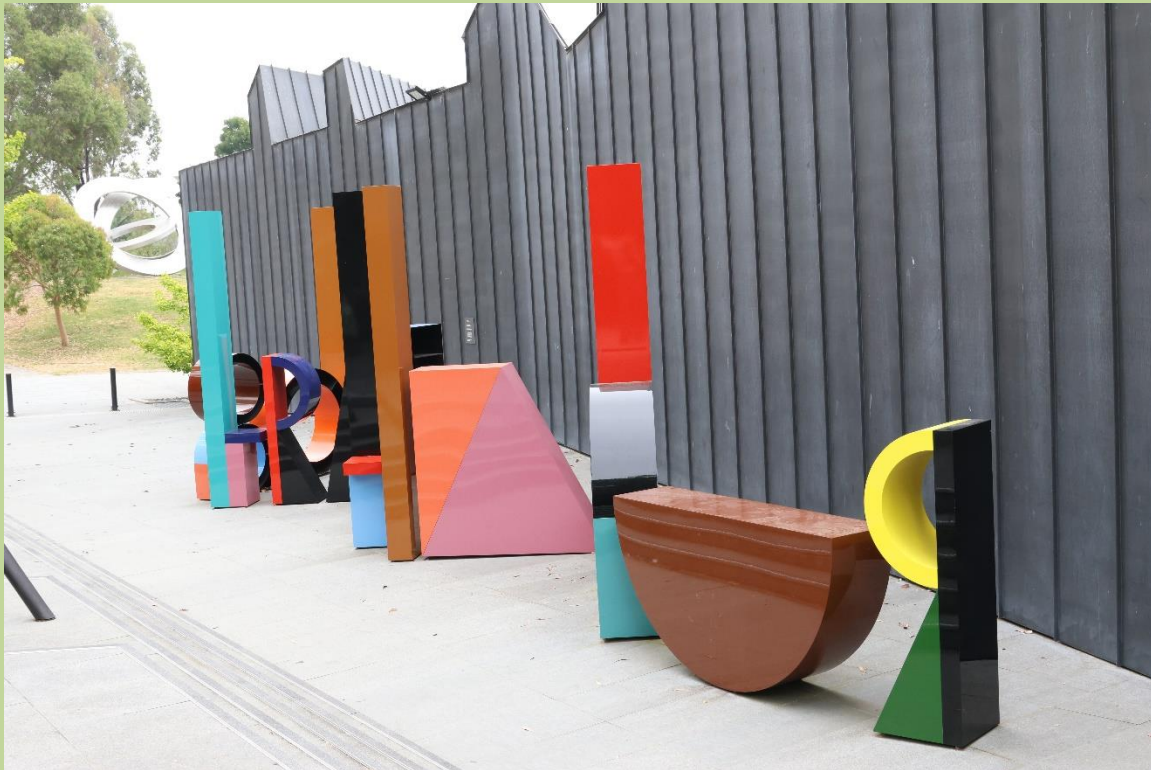


Thursday 12th January 2023

On a day when I turn “17”, when I have been flooded with birthday messages, and when I shared birthday messages with my birthday buddies, Ritika, Aianh and Kim, our day was spent at the Heide Art Gallery, wallowing in the art of Barbara Hepworth.

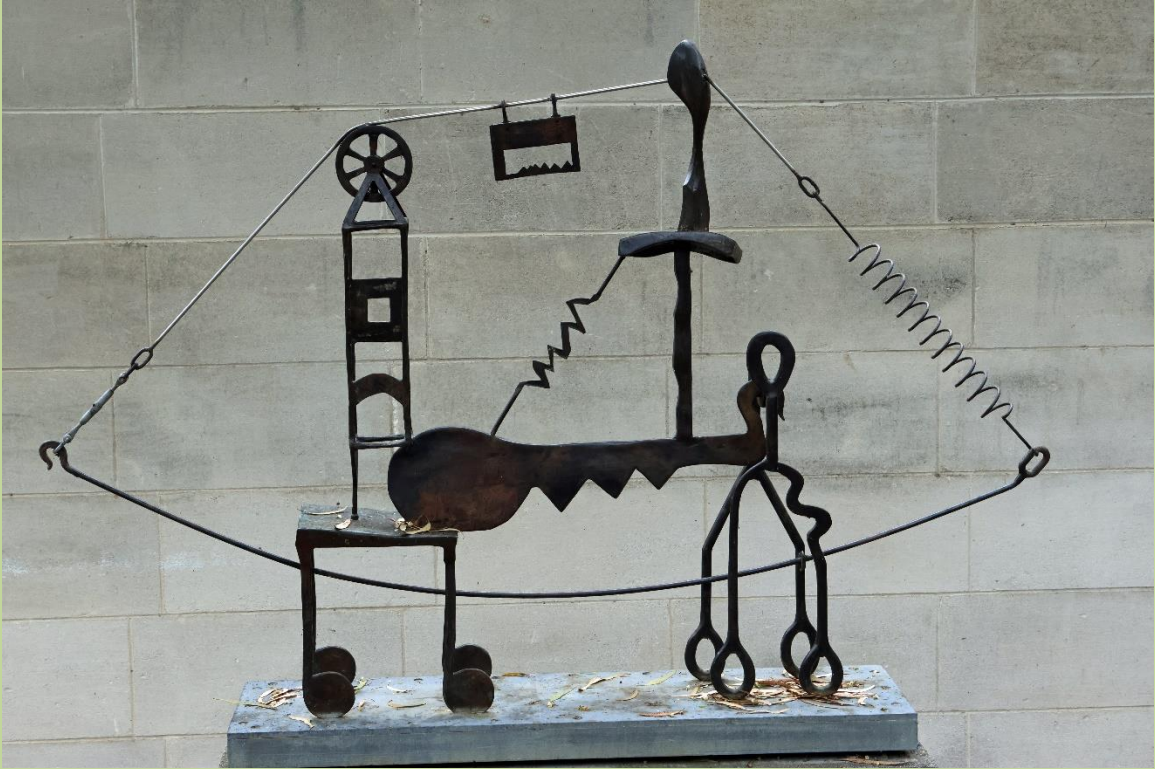
Back when we woke, I spent some time soaking in the calls of the Blackbirds before thinking of an early morning coffee and it is worth mentioning just how many feral birds are in this part of the world: Common Myna, Common Starling, Blackbird and Spotted Turtle-dove! In numbers!

Google maps took us on a circuitous and very scenic route to Heide today. I don't think I could repeat it without its guidance but it did avoid all but one spot of heavy traffic and that was due to a short section of roadworks. It was a fascinating journey through Templestowe and Eltham areas into Heide's back car park.

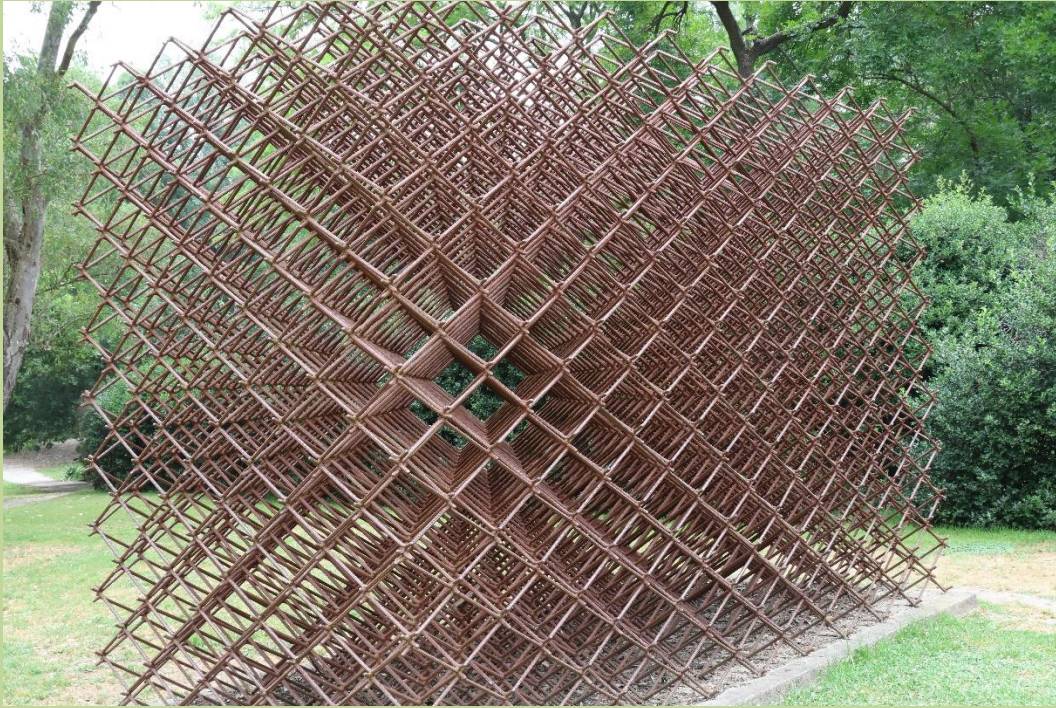


We arrived prior to the gallery opening but already lots of people were there. Many were there just to visit the gardens and/or (especially) the coffee shop/breakfast bar.

We walked some of that outdoor sculpture park too, prior to going in to see the exhibition of Barbara Hepworth.





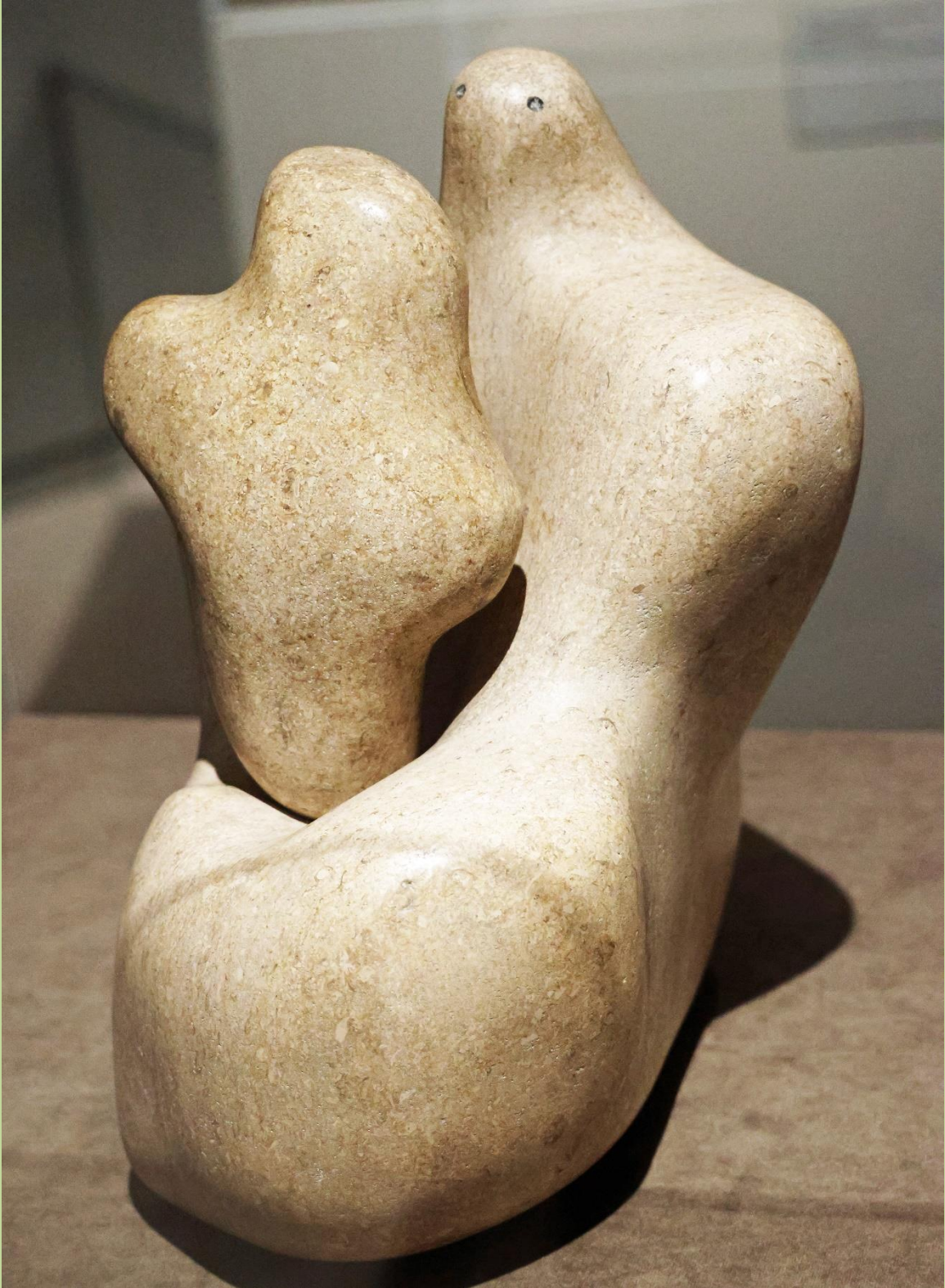




Thankfully, the Hepworth Exhibition was not crowded this morning and we had a lot of time to soak her work in, helped by a superb 18-minute film that showed her connection of her art to the landscape of Cornwall!



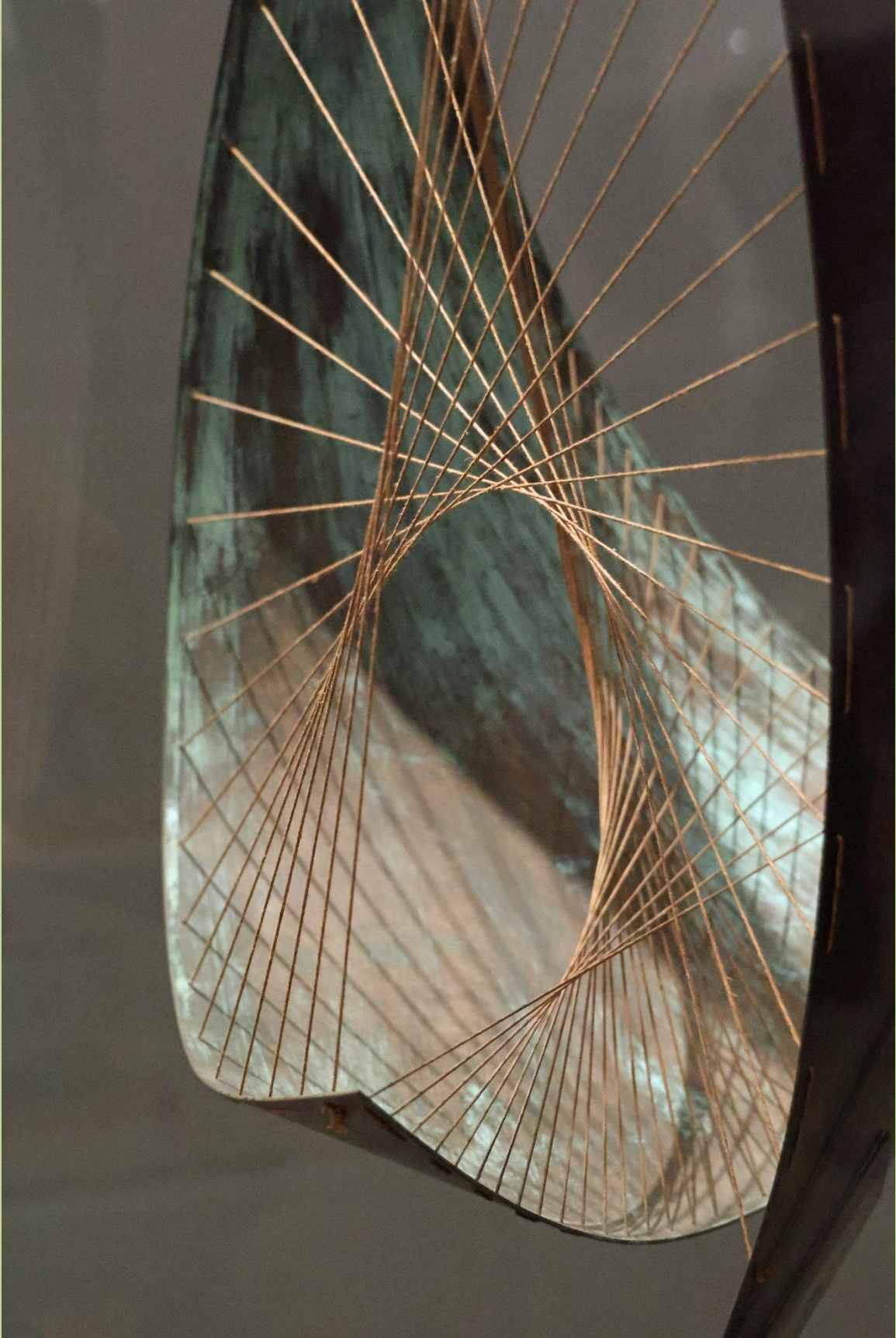


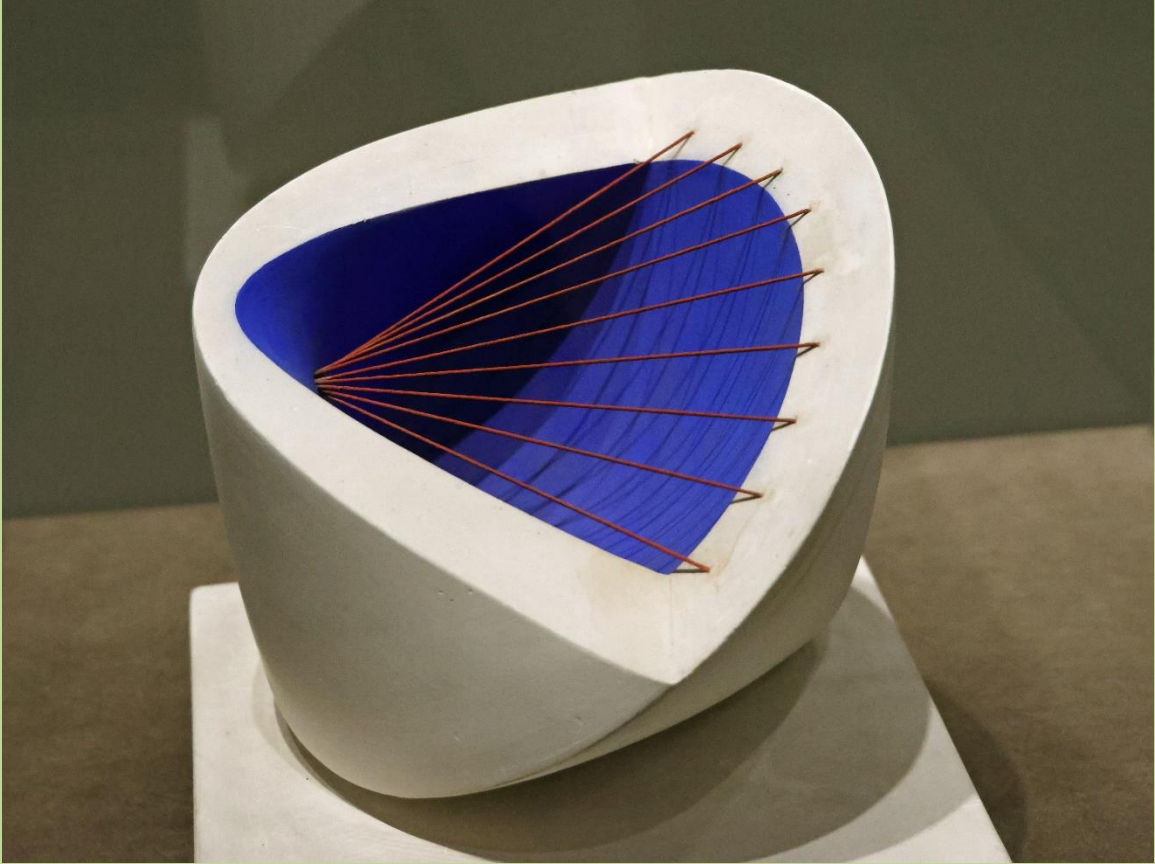


Mother and child



On Duty





After looking at some more of the art, we ended up having a snack at that bush coffee shop. They forgot to bring our coffee and by recompense, only \$7.00 was charged. That was a cheap morning tea.



Lindy Lee





And so, to home. Google Maps took us on another route back but it was equally scenic and even better at avoiding heavy traffic congestion. This time I had the chance to witness, via the camera, the hay bales and the yellow fields! It's been a feature of the visit.



Friday 13th January 2023

I am abuzz! After fifty years of not seeing Teresa and Jennie, it was just like yesterday.





Jennie looks tired!



And Teresa is still suffering the aftereffects of Covid but did a wonderful job.



Teresa's husband, Eng Gan. We had not seen him since their wedding either!





Teresa is beaming!

- Newcastle University Alumni Get Together Luncheon at Teresa May Tong Gan's Residence with Terasa Gan & Dr Eng Tong Gan, Brian & Faye Everingham, Jennie Tang & Frank Webb, Stephen and Koni Ngau



That was a four-hour chat over food that ranged mostly over current times and didn't dwell on the past and it was as though we had seen each other every day of our lives. That's how easily we reconnected. I am so glad I found them again.

Before we went in to the luncheon, Faye and I dropped into the Maroondah Reservoir Park. We found quite a few birds, enjoyed the trees, was somewhat disappointed by the state of management and came away with wet shoes. It was a heavy fog and it was also drizzling.



Common Bronzewing



White-browed Scrubwren





Lomatia sp









And this afternoon, back at the Secret Cottage

Saturday 14th January 2023

We had our special luncheon at the Balgownie Estate as our joint birthday meal. It is a great location.



The view from our table and my entree





OK, I have started



Faye's dessert



Our on-the-house birthday wine



And my additional tippie

Earlier this morning, we visited the Don Road recreational reserve. It's where locals take their dogs but there is a walking loop around a pond and that attracted us.





Australian Reed Warbler taking off



And one with breakfast

We then spent the next three hours inside the Healesville Sanctuary (the old Coranderrk settlement).

















After lunch, and because we were going right past the door on the way home, we also visited TarraWarra. I am glad we did, except that on the way up the hill I dropped my tiny Canon camera onto the pavement and, yes, the camera is busted.



Oh, and the exhibition was a retrospective of the art of Peter Booth!!!!¹



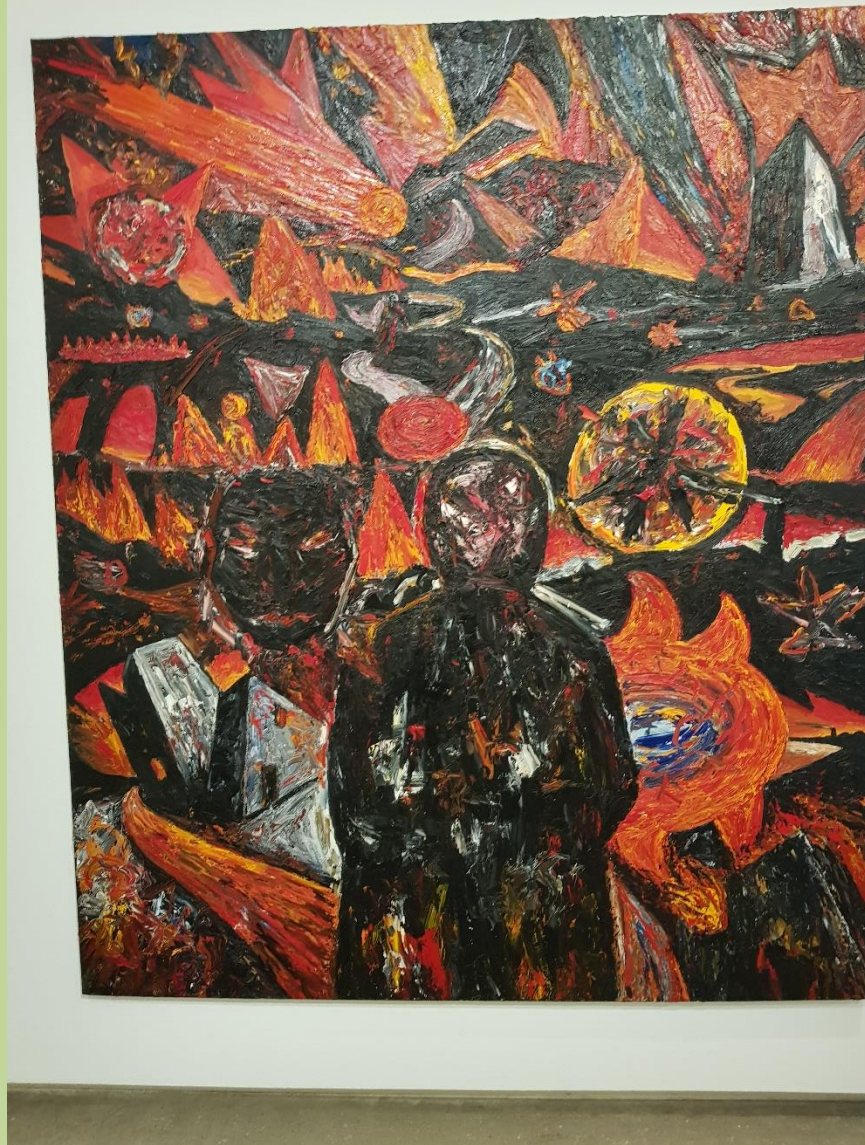
¹ With a remarkable career spanning several decades, Melbourne-based Booth is a unique voice in Australian art. This new survey of paintings and works on paper is the first major public gallery exhibition of Peter Booth's work since the NGV retrospective in 2003 and features a number of the artist's most significant works from the 1970s to 1990s, alongside important recent works from the past two decades.

The exhibition is presented thematically, honing in on and highlighting particular motifs, subjects and moods which have become hallmarks of Booth's expansive oeuvre: stillness and turbulence, alterity and alienation, mutation and hybridity, the absurd and the grotesque, the road and the ruin, and the despoliation and the resilience of nature.

A small group of abstract paintings from the mid-1970s at the start of the exhibition provide a prelude to an important series of gestural paintings which mark the beginning of the artist's journey into the highly expressive landscape and figure subjects which have characterised his practice since that time.

The exhibition progresses through Booth's vivid imaginings of an apocalyptic world characterised by grotesque, unsettling, and at times absurd scenes of human and hybrid figures in varying states of apprehension, aggression and conflict. These works will be accompanied by a small selection of prints by William Blake, James Ensor, Francisco Goya, and Samuel Palmer, visionary artists who have been important touchstones for Booth and with whom he shares a number of affinities.

This survey also brings together important works from the past three decades to convey humanity's often fraught and ambiguous relationship to the natural world, revealing Booth's extraordinary capacity to transmute his intensely personal perceptions of the mysteries and forces of nature and the folly and hubris of human endeavours, into exceptional and deeply compelling paintings and drawings.







Sunday 15th January 2023

We left Healesville at 6.15am and with a number of stops en route (Euroa, Holbrook, Jugiong and Marulan), we managed the entire journey before 5.00pm! The traffic was heavy but flowing and the only tricky bit was when we were sent via Goulburn town because a grass fire had blocked the northbound freeway. But, given we knew the short cuts, that caused us little bother.





The light was magical





And in summing up, let me say a few words about Healesville. It still has a “main street”. Even the Coles supermarket complex opens onto that main street, albeit, with a wraparound car park. It is not quite a “mall”. Mind you, that main street differs from many in that there are a number of breweries and distilleries, Bars and facilities for eating/tasting cheeses. Most of the eateries here, too, are lunchtime operations (“breakfast served until 3.00pm) and no doubt are catering for the Melburnian day-tripper.

But behind that main street, there are “country style” provision of sporting facilities, a community garden, a complex of support for the local Aboriginal community (I wonder how many are connected to Coranderrk?) and environmental programs such as creek rehabilitation to protect platypus habitat. Yes, there is a community spirit beyond the support of visitors.

As far as the actual holiday is concerned, it centered around the enjoyment of art. Three galleries! All with pleasures: at Albury, the rediscovery of Amy Wu; at Heide, the deeper understanding of Barbara Hepworth; at TarraWarra, the retrospective of Peter Booth. That really made his work mean so much more to me.

But, one highlight above all others for me was in reconnecting with Teresa and Jennie! Both meant so much to me once. Both still do!

Brian Everingham