

ARTIST PROFILE – KATHRYN POWDERLY

I live and work on the edge of the Australian outback in a town called Wagga Wagga. Clay is my greatest love – through clay I have discovered aesthetic beauty, historical and contemporary links, tactile pleasure and a medium through which I have gained personal expression.

While possessing a comprehensive skills base in ceramic construction – wheel throwing, coil slab and slip casting, my professional studio ceramic work is primarily hand-building in coils and slabs. I work with a heavily grogged terracotta or a heavily grogged white earthenware clay to construct large scale pots and sculptures for gardens and architectural sites.

A versatile artist, I operate a studio where I make bread and butter products of garden pots, domestic plates, bowls and platters with a painted underglaze surface decoration. I am renowned for my prolific output of ceramic work as well as the professional finish to my work – in construction, glaze and firing.

With over 1000 firings of my 10 cubic foot electric kiln and 50 firings of my new 100 cubic foot electric trolley kiln I have extensive experience in the firing process to mid range temperatures.

In my exhibition work I have explored social and political issues such as consumerism, racism, sexism, feminism, environmentalism and parenting in the new millennium. These issues have been examined through small and large scale sculptural works. The small scale pieces have taken the form of 3D wall dioramas depicting slices of life. My larger free standing figurative sculptural works are more concerned with conveying the strong emotions linked to personal relationships – loneliness, despair, yearning, exhaustion, frustration, joy and exhilaration.

In some of my sculptures I have combined the figure and the landscape. Since childhood I have been absorbed by the wonders of the natural world wave patterns, the stories told by soil profiles, driftwood and detritus piled on a beach, the meandering of riverbeds across an inland plain. All these serve as references for my sculptural and functional work.

As well as operating a professional ceramic art studio for the past 8 years I have taught art and ceramic classes for adults and children. I held the position of acting head teacher of Art and Design at the Wagga Wagga Campus of Technical and Further Education College.

I am committed to a vision of incorporating art more completely in our lives. With this in mind I have set up an art studio in Wagga Wagga which caters for 60 adults and 60 children a week in on-going ceramic, mosaic, drawing, painting and figurative sculpture classes. This is having a flow-on effect of clay being included in local school curriculum and a heightened profile for ceramics and associated art works in our community.

My aim for the future is to continue to act as a catalyst for others' creativity. On a personal/professional artistic level I aim to explore other media so as to be able to competently integrate them (metal, glass, painting, fibre) into my ceramic work.