

CALL FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST
to participate in the
TENTH PALMER SCULPTURE BIENNIAL
In March/April 2022



“The Storytellas” by Greg Johns, at the entrance to the Palmer Landscape

Dear Artists

The 10th Palmer Sculpture Biennial will be a milestone event. Established as one of the longest running sculpture exhibitions in Australia it will continue to present the opportunity for sculptors to freely explore exciting, challenging and contemporary ideas in the extraordinary Palmer landscape. This approach has and continues to attract significant sculptors from across Australia, Europe and the United States. The development of younger sculptors is also at the fore of the Biennials, we would encourage their expressions of interest for the 2022 event.

Importantly the 10th Biennial will include a retrospect exhibition, with photographic documentation and commentary on the previous nine events. We are pleased to announce that David Kerr (Manager design and development at the SA Museum, 1985 to 2016) will be curating this aspect of the exhibition. It will allow for a meaningful discussion and evaluation of the role the Biennials have played in the development of contemporary sculpture.

You are invited to submit an Expression of Interest to participate in the 10th Palmer Sculpture Biennial. The exhibition will be open for the four weeks from March 19th to April 10th 2022 and will be an item in the Adelaide Festival Fringe. About twenty four artists will participate from South Australia, interstate and overseas, including an invited senior artist and two emerging artists. It will be curated by myself and Robert Lindsay, former Director of McClelland Museum, Victoria.

We look forward to your submissions for the exciting 10th Palmer Sculpture Biennial.

Kind regards,
Greg Johns.



Palmer Landscape

Photo by Greg

Palmer Integrated Projects

In 2001 Adelaide sculptor Greg Johns purchased a 400 acre property in the Palmer Hills, 76 kms east of Adelaide. Greg, with the collaboration of Gavin Malone developed the concept of the Palmer Project which encompassed the ecological rehabilitation of the Landscape and the display of both his own works and a range of other contemporary sculpture. More recently, the concept of the Palmer Project has broadened, integrating related endeavours such as ecological education, archaeological and historic research, residencies and seminars in related topics and disciplines and sustainable housing design.

The Palmer District and Landscape

The small township of Palmer sits at the base of the hills which terminate in the eastern escarpment of the Mount Lofty Ranges, after which the land slopes away towards the River Murray. This region is the edge of the Mallee country. Its hills are semi-arid with spacious undulations, rocky outcrops and views of distant horizons. The indigenous flora has been almost entirely cleared since European settlement, leaving just patches of remnant vegetation. Properties in the area are now used mostly for mixed farming, cropping and grazing. The traditional custodians of country are the Peramangk and the area has a rich Aboriginal history.

The Palmer Landscape

The Landscape has now been freed from grazing and the long term transition to a native species ecology is under way. The resulting terrain, so reminiscent of landscapes in Australia's vast semi-arid areas, is a potent setting for art works that are sensitive to place. The Palmer Landscape allows sculpture and environment to illuminate each other, and in so doing reflects the broader range of issues relating to art and ecological and social sustainability.

Palmer Sculpture Biennial

Commencing in 2004, nine Biennial Exhibitions have been held in the Palmer Landscape and the event has become recognised as a leading contemporary sculpture exhibition. Previous Biennials have won a Bank SA award for Best Visual Art and Design at the Adelaide Festival Fringe, an Advertiser Ocart for best outdoor exhibition, four SA Great nominations in the categories of art and science/environment and an Adelaide Fringe award for best group visual arts exhibition during the Adelaide Fringe. Visitor numbers are now in the vicinity of 1,000 and increased media attention and promotional initiatives are expected to draw even larger numbers in 2022.

The Biennial has received significant publicity at both state and national levels. It is also established internationally as an event of high quality, artists from England, Germany, Holland, Switzerland, Sweden and the United States making a valuable contribution and complementing the work of the Australian artists.

The opening event has become a particular attraction, incorporating food, wine, speeches and a verandah music event in addition to the unique experience of engaging with works of sculpture against the background of the Palmer Hills. The Biennial receives private sponsorship which has enabled the production of a high quality catalogue and meets some other overhead costs; it is expected that this will continue. Artists meet all costs involved with exhibiting their works (including travel). Works can be made available for sale (30% commission applies) and significant sales have occurred.

The Palmer Sculpture Biennial is and will remain an artist run event. The mutual support surrounding the event has been enjoyed by everyone and is a major contributor to its success. There is an 'artist's award' for the best works based on peer recognition for which the artists contribute \$10 each. Artists will be asked to take part in a staffing roster while the Biennial is open, and other organisational activities, such as opening-day catering, publicity and promotion etc.

Bill Clifford (contact details below) is assisting Greg in the administration of the Palmer Project and will be coordinating the exhibition.



Greg Johns - Seasing The Land - Feeling The Land (Shedding Figure)

What Interested Artists Need to Know about the Palmer Landscape

Ambiance: Seen against the rugged vegetation and the expanse of landform and skyscape, works at Palmer stand out with a unique authority not to be found in galleries. In this setting, they may also look smaller than they do in a studio or suburban environment. At the same time, smaller intimate works have often engaged with the landscape very successfully.

Winds: Works need to be well anchored and able to withstand the strong winds which often visit the Palmer Landscape.

Water: While the annual rainfall at Palmer is comparatively low, sudden downpours can and do occur at any time of year. Water-soluble materials are therefore not advisable unless intended for ephemeral works.

Heat: Although the Biennial takes place in early autumn, heatwaves are still possible, so artworks need to be able to withstand strong direct sunlight and possible temperatures of around 40°C.



Palmer Landscape

Photograph by Jan Clifford

Expression Requirements

The requirement to express interest in the event is to submit a concept outline with supporting drawing/documentation on an A4 page/s after a visit to the site. Interstate/overseas artists should discuss alternatives to this requirement with Greg. Times will be arranged for artists who haven't already been to Palmer to visit in groups, and to register for this please contact us. Submissions can be made by email to:

palmersculpturebiennial@gmail.com,

or by mail to Bill Clifford, 1 Elizabeth Street, Oakbank, South Australia 5243.

Please ensure that your expression of interest includes your name, postal address, email address and phone contact numbers. Expressions of Interest are required by Tuesday 1st June, 2021. We will advise participation as soon as practicable after then.

Images of previous works may be viewed at www.palmersculpturebiennial.org

For further information, please contact Greg by email (gjoh4899@bigpond.net.au) or by phone (08) 8278 3273; or Bill by email (jandbclifford@internode.on.net) or phone (08) 8398 0868. You may also visit our website, palmersculpturebiennial.org.

Regards

Greg Johns and Bill Clifford

January 2021

“PALMER BIENNIAL..... is like no other! Big skies, big scapes. An environment that challenges the perception of relationships, of art in landscape. To intrude on an ancient land with a sacred history is Palmer.

This need’s a particular intellectual sensitivity with a real message.”

Graeme Wilkie

Founder of the Lorne Sculpture Biennale

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