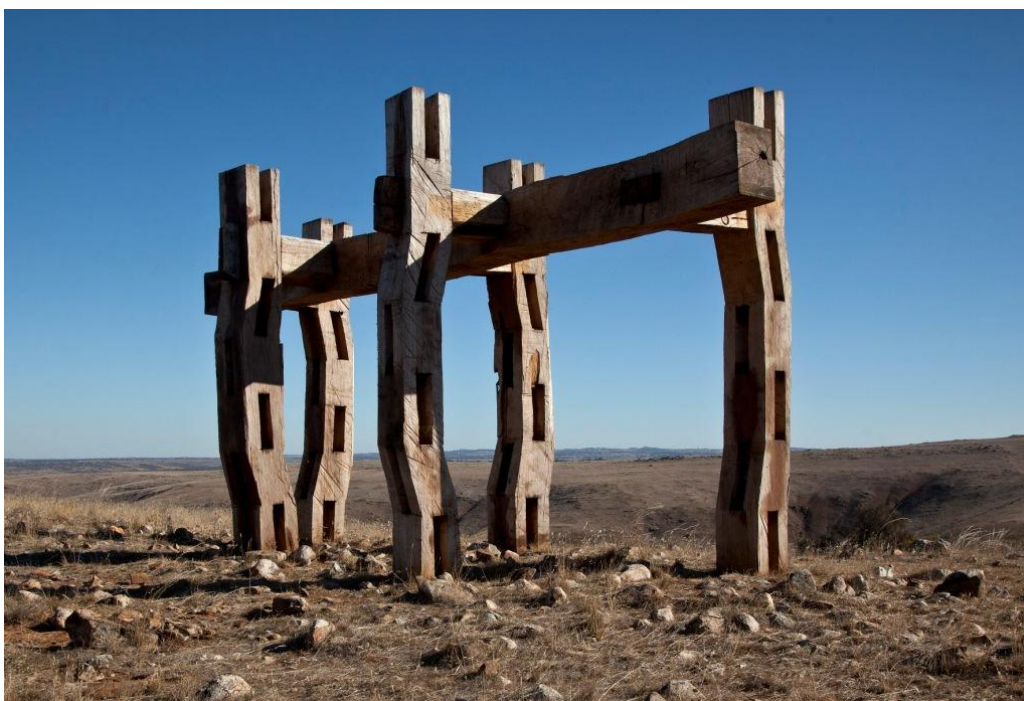


“For those accustomed to exhibiting within the confines of gallery walls it can be an exhilarating and a challenging experience to exhibit at Palmer. The space is vast, the horizon far distant in this very Australian landscape. How to compete? To lie low and embrace the earth? Or to dramatically rear up and confront the space? Palmer has its unique challenges - and great rewards.”

Ken Scarlett OAM (Ken is a leading writer, curator, and authority on Australian sculpture.)

CALL FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST
to participate in the
11th PALMER SCULPTURE BIENNIAL
March/April 2024



Pipeline by Stephen King. Winner 2022 Palmer Sculpture Prize. Photo, Michal Klivanek

Dear Artists

You are invited to submit an Expression of Interest to participate in the 10th Palmer Sculpture Biennial. The exhibition will be open for four weeks in March/April 2024. The actual dates depend on the dates of the 2024 Adelaide Fringe which are yet to be announced. 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.

The requirements for expressing interest are detailed at the end of this document, but before you start, please read the intervening pages which will give you a clear idea of what you need to know first. They include a description of how the Palmer Landscape differs radically from most venues where sculpture is exhibited, and the resulting conceptual and practical issues you will need to consider.

You will also find important reading about how the biennial operates and its environmental, historic and philosophical background.

We look forward to your submissions for the 2024 Palmer Sculpture Biennial.

Kind regards,
Greg Johns.

“When it comes to art, Palmer is a hostile environment. Each work sited here has to rely on its own wits to grapple with such demanding terrain rather than lean on each other for visual support in more curated surroundings. Importantly they all have room to breath.”

John Neylon

The Palmer Sculpture Biennial is run by its artists

The Palmer concept is unique. It delivers a sculpture event with international standing, but has no corporate structure or commercial organisation. This means that its artists are expected to help make it function. For instance, South Australian artists are asked to commit to greeting visitors at the front gate for at least three half-day shifts during the four weeks of the event.

Palmer Integrated Projects

In 2001 Adelaide sculptor Greg Johns purchased a 400 acre property in the Palmer Hills, 76 kms east of Adelaide. Greg’s intention was to bring about the ecological rehabilitation of the Landscape and to display in it both his own works and a range of other contemporary sculpture. Since then, the original concept has broadened to include activities such as residencies, seminars and events featuring leading edge thinking in areas including ecological education, archaeological and historic research, sustainable housing design, and other related disciplines. Bill Clifford (contact details below) helps Greg to administer the Projects and will be coordinating the Biennial.



Palmer Landscape

Photo by Jan Clifford

About Palmer

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. 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.

“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)

The Palmer Landscape

Greg’s property, the Palmer Landscape, has now been freed from grazing and the long term, intergenerational 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 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, ten Biennial Exhibitions have been held in the Palmer Landscape and the event is now one of the longest running sculpture events in Australia and 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 Oscart 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 2024.



Floating Figure, by Greg Johns - the first sculpture installed in the Landscape (2001)

The Biennial has received significant publicity at both state and national levels. It is also recognized 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.

“We have in Australia a fresh context for making art which is far more meaningful than that offered by international styles or the slickness of much public or urban art. I believe very few Australian sculptors have so far engaged with this kind of place. But I sense a beginning, a scratching beneath the soil, beneath the patchwork quilt thrown over our landscape since European arrival.”

Greg Johns

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 meets many overhead costs and has enabled the production of a high quality catalogue by Detour design. Artists meet all costs involved with exhibiting their works (including travel). Works can be made available for sale (20% 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 activities, such as opening-day catering, and promotion etc.



Excavator by Greg Johns

Photo by James Mayfield

What Interested Artists Need to Know about the Palmer Landscape

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

Water: Sudden downpours can and do occur at any time of year. Water-soluble materials are not advisable unless intended for ephemeral works.

Heat: Heatwaves can still occur in March/April, so artworks need to be able to withstand strong direct sunlight and possible temperatures of around 40°C.

Ambiance: Seen against the rugged vegetation and the landforms and skyscape, works at Palmer stand out with a unique authority not to be found in galleries. Their setting and the angle from which they will be viewed can make them appear smaller or larger than they do in a studio or suburban environment.



Palmer Landscape

Photo by Pat Jones

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 Thursday 1st June, 2023. 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 (palmersculpturebiennial@gmail.com) or phone (08) 8398 0868. You may also visit our website, www.palmersculpturebiennial.org

Regards

Greg Johns and Bill Clifford

January 2023

Palmer Integrated Projects are supported by the following Sponsors and Benefactors

The logo for Detour Design Studio, featuring the word "detour" in a lowercase, rounded, sans-serif font.

Detour Design Studio
Brand + Communications
www.detourdesign.net.au

The logo for Blackwood Hire, consisting of the word "BLACKWOOD" in a small, uppercase, sans-serif font above the word "HIRE" in a larger, bold, uppercase, sans-serif font. To the right of the text is a red square.The logo for Country Arts SA, featuring a stylized, colorful graphic of three interlocking loops in blue, orange, and red, followed by the text "COUNTRY ARTS SA" in a bold, uppercase, sans-serif font.

*The
Palmer
Hotel*

The logo for Nature Foundation, featuring a stylized graphic of a green tree and a yellow sun, followed by the text "Nature Foundation" in a bold, uppercase, sans-serif font.The logo for Fox Creek, featuring a stylized black fox head silhouette above the text "FOX CREEK" in a bold, uppercase, sans-serif font.

struktura
Structural & Civil Engineering