



A R T S

## EDITORIAL

Writing the review of Erik Jensen's book about Archibald Prize-winning artist [Adam Cullen](#) left me in a fug of darkness and depression for days.

Jensen's book has been largely well reviewed. It is certainly well written, but what disturbs me is that the very ugly, dark side of a deeply flawed man which many people were well aware of, is barely noted. Cullen was known to enjoy arming himself with guns, tazer and grenades and going on drunken killing sprees. He talked about his pleasure in torturing and 'executing' his animal victims.

One reviewer quoted Jensen's comment that Cullen had beautiful eyes and instantly I thought of Alan Lloyd quoting Cullen in *The Streetwise* saying: 'I love the act of executing them. My eyes are the last thing they see.' At home he used 'soft' traps to catch local cats and foxes so that he could kill them with his hands. He shot the birds in his garden from his back deck, not to mention his activities when out in the bush. If Cullen had produced extraordinary art, would that have redeemed him or helped us understand his sadistic idiosyncrasies? No, we didn't even have that excuse, and Jensen has largely ignored this subject. We kept him on a pedestal, the carnage all about him. Latterly he even lived in the stench of death.

Fortunately there are many in the arts community who are concerned for the wellbeing of animals and a natural counterbalance to Cullen's story was to include here an article about artists who paint for the love of animals, such as Animal Liberation founder [Christine Townend](#).

We looked at artists who give a percentage of their sales to help those working with abandoned and neglected animals, or to stop the cruelty associated with the live export trade or draw attention to the way in which we treat animals raised here for food. Those whose feelings on the subject are strongest often gravitate to vegetarianism or veganism, believing that we brutalise ourselves by eating other sentient beings. So the powerfully expressed ideas of poet and writer David Brooks have been used to knit this article together.

The second part of the [Lewers story](#) continues in this issue, illustrating the present generations' artistic talents, from Darani as a jeweller and Tanya as an architect, writer and artist, to their children, Pia and Aaron. If you missed the first part of this fascinating story, you will find it online.

It is a year since OZ Arts was relaunched and began its new life as an online arts magazine with a limited print distribution. Apart from being a good read, the online articles we publish provide an excellent resource for anyone researching or otherwise interested in the arts. They are also a valuable asset for artists we write about, enabling them to disseminate this information about themselves electronically. Whenever you enjoy one of our articles, we ask you to share it or link it to your friends and contacts. And do check out our article about [Design and Art Australia Online](#), a free Who's Who for all in the arts.

**Carolynne Skinner**



*Fiona McDonald: Sleep, drawing 2014*