



## EDITORIAL

We are constantly hearing that we are traversing a whole new world these days with everything changing and seeking re-adjustment. These are heady times, offering promise as well as causing concern.

In many communities (I am extrapolating this from observing my own), art trails, open studios, workshops, small galleries, fairs are everywhere, with calendars full of concerts and openings and book launches. It feels as though the creative life is flowering abundantly, with or without funding or financial support. One might wonder if what seems almost frenzied is a deeply subliminal response to the threats we all feel these days.

Fortunately, for many artists there is always the personal satisfaction of creating their art, the making of the brush strokes, the physical act of dyeing and weaving, the designing and stitching, the throwing and glazing, the intricate work of crafting jewellery. These are the stories which make up most of this issue.

Cover artist MICHAEL RIPOLL lets inspiration flow directly through his sharp scalpel or his pencils, with no preceding plan or sketch. JANET DE BOER is—as always—promoting the textile arts, this time *paper on skin* to be held in Burnie, Tasmania, next year. There dozens of talented wearable art creators will be offering their latest designs, some of them having been in the making for the past two years, since the last *paper on skin* event.

It feels as though we're looking more to the past, comparing it with now and assessing how we've fared. Any more inspiring and innovative designers than JENNY KEE and LINDA JACKSON would be hard to find—except perhaps for the extraordinary ZANDRA RHODES who is also celebrating 50 years of her 'fabulous' life creating the style which has been influential far beyond the UK where Rhodes is based. HELENE MARKSTEIN has reviewed the two superb publications which have been produced to celebrate the lives of this extraordinary trio.

Tapestries are timeless and the AUSTRALIAN TAPESTRY WORKSHOP is still—after over 40 years

—producing stunning tapestries based on artworks by our most admired artists. On this occasion we observed the making of a JANET LAURENCE work. ELIZABETH WALTON went to ATW headquarters in a heritage listed knitting mill in Melbourne to find out more.

We have also included a snapshot of the work of artist activist RAQUEL ORMELLA to be shown at the Lewers (Penrith Regional Gallery) from December to March 2020. While she says, at age 50, she should no longer be called an activist, Ormella's multi media works very much reflect our times and include posters, banners, videos, zines and needlework. She is absorbed by the relationships between humans and the natural environment. This is challenging stuff—who among us could find themselves in a market in Indonesia observing caged wild birds and animals (many protected), and not feel angry and distressed.

At the SYDNEY CONTEMPORARY ART FAIR a couple of months ago I came away feeling vaguely disappointed. Very little had gripped me and I felt as though we have seen most of it before. Yet it costs an arm and a leg for any commercial gallery wishing to take space and promote its artists at these events.

Dealer Michael Reid revealed the considerable cost to his gallery to be present at the Fair, giving some indication of what the larger commercial galleries must expect to sell in order just to break even. Although fairs are adapting and introducing a range of different events and add-ons to entice visitors, the future still seems uncertain. No doubt the internet will fill the gap! Thankfully we have our excellent public galleries and a particular favourite, Sydney's WHITE RABBIT GALLERY, intellectually stimulating and hugely fascinating and freely offered by its philanthropic collector owner. Currently celebrating their 10th birthday.

And so we've come to the end of another eventful year. We wish all our readers, contributors and supporters season's greetings and all good wishes for the coming year.

Carolynne Skinner, Editor

