ADAM CULLEN  Artist 1965-2012
A frisson ran through the Blue Mountains art community when in 2000 Adam Cullen came to town — imagine a cowboy with pistols hugging both hips [he liked cowboys and other masculine imagery]. There was anticipation at the prospect of meeting this art world curiosity and seeing him around the traps.

Cullen and his then girlfriend Carrie Miller settled in this well-off Blue Mountains village - a community well known for its artists - in a typical Mountains cottage with an admired garden in Angel Street, a Council designated ‘sustainability’ street. Two of the adjoining neighbours are practicing artists; surrounding residents are friendly and hold an annual street party and new arrival Adam Cullen and his partner were made welcome. She responded to the friendly invitations but Cullen was more circumspect. One wonders why he bought a little cottage with a beautiful garden in a conservative village with neighbours just metres away. Surely not an innate desire for what Joanna Mendelssohn describes as ‘borderlining’ where everything he did was aimed at challenging the hierarchy or the status quo. While that may not have been the conscious plan, it is certainly how things turned out.

Cullen’s art is controversial and the image he created for himself began very early. At art school he gained notoriety when he went around with a pig’s head chained to his ankle. One of his teachers at the time at the City Arts Institute, now Professor Ian Howard has described this as performance art. Cullen also brought a dead cat to class, as an artwork. Howard says: ‘These works were challenging in terms of the aesthetics and the politics of his actions. This was and remained part and parcel of Adam’s modus operandi.’ Cullen, says Howard: ‘...always valued, and retained, the ability to shock in his art. Meanwhile his life had become a performance, sometimes distanced from others’ realities.’ (theconversation.com)

An important part of Cullen’s performance was his choice of friendships. He was proud of his friendships with criminals such as Mark ‘Chopper’ Read. He was best man at Read’s wedding, illustrated Read’s notorious ‘fairy story’, ‘Hooky the Cripple’ and painted Read for his 2002 entry to the Archibald Prize. ‘I’d never done a kids’ book before, but I thought my puerile, infantile style might suit it,’ Cullen said in The Age in 2002. He shocked many when he painted the portraits of Anita Cobb’s killers for ‘Anita and Beyond’, an exhibition at the Penrith Regional Gallery in 2003. Cullen’s reasons for painting the portraits of the Murphys’ brothers failed to convince everyone. While describing Anita’s rape and murder as ‘a disgusting crime’ Cullen also expressed sympathy for the murderers. ‘Things are more complex than the single issue of rape and murder and associated crimes against women – especially when art is involved.’ ‘I’ve painted the killers of Anita Cobby because, as with all my work, I’m responding to information – information on all levels, televised and printed media. This is why the killers are of legitimate interest. In no way is my focus ignoring the plight of the victim. But to ignore the five convicted is to disregard the source of the problem. Painting deals with problems. Art isn’t about shutting down dialogue – art is about opening dialogue up, even when it’s messy and distasteful.’

When one’s life is a performance, it may well be difficult for others to see behind the mask. Joanna Mendelssohn describes a revealing event illustrating Cullen’s penchant for ‘borderlining’ which she has called ‘his finest hour’ (theconversation.com).

Cullen and his then partner Cash Brown gave a performance piece at the Museum of Contemporary Art in 2005 called Home Economics where Cullen and Brown stood at a table with various domestic appliances and easily purchased ingredients. As Cullen read from sources found on the internet, Brown drew diagrams showing how to make a weapon of mass destruction. Mendelssohn says: ‘As well as the different formulae for increasing the volatility and explosive power... they showed their own varieties on the theme of domestic explosions. This included an all-Australian battered sav and claymore mines from a plastic microwave omelette maker.’ Mendelssohn wonders why this clearly subversive behaviour, illustrating how easily anyone can make a weapon of mass destruction, failed to receive media attention, something which also must have surprised Cullen and Brown, given that controversy must have been their aim.

Adam Cullen won the Archibald Prize in 2000 with a portrait of David Wenham from the film ‘The Boys’ said to be about the Cobby murder; he was a finalist in 2002 and 2003, won the Sulman Prize in 2003 and the Mosman Art Prize in 2005. He has been top of the Art Gallery of NSW Contemporary 12 Hottest list. Edmund Capon, director of the AGNSW in 2000, said at the time of Cullen’s win: ‘I do think a lot of the public will look at it and say ‘I think my kiddy-wink did that the other day’, but they would be missing its insight and maturity, knowing how and where to place the marks.’

Wayne Turnercliffe, head curator of Australian art at the AGNSW believes that Cullen’s 2000 win ‘shook up the Archibald at a time when it had become safe and
conservative, paving the way for a whole generation of younger, more experimental entries.’ Clearly, for the Art Gallery of NSW, Cullen’s win was heaven sent.

Cullen loved guns and knives and motorbikes and boasted of his delight in killing ‘feral’ animals. But he also termed ‘roadkill’ the huge collection of dead animals and their parts hanging around his cottage or stored in Eskys, and claimed dead birds were killed by flying into the cottage windows. It is doubtful that much of this collection was actually roadkill or that so many birds could have been killed flying into cottage windows considering his expressed enthusiasm for shooting and trapping animals and birds. He also had an interest in taxidermy. Cullen seemed to oscillate between an animal killer and a benign museum curator.

Cullen’s brushes with the law were numerous, mostly relating to guns, drugs – prescription and illegal, alcohol, driving and licence offences. Police visited his cottage many times to investigate complaints. Once charged, Cullen presented well and with legal assistance [he credited Charles Waterstreet with saving him from a jail sentence] his convictions resulted in fines or community service, such as a stint at The Ritz nursing home in Leura, or agreeing to undergo medical rehabilitation. He admitted to being very frightened by the possibility of being given a jail sentence.

Cullen’s demeanour could be dignified; he spoke pleasantly and had the appearance of a serious and intelligent man. When meeting him on these occasions, it seemed implausible that he could also be the notorious grunge artist, confidant of criminals, a drug addict, a shooter and cat killer. Those who observed his behaviour when writers or visitors met him at his studio say that he could then go into his performance mode with the bad-boy artist coming to the fore. Adam Cullen had many faces.

When art evokes such disgust as much of Cullen’s has, any agreement on whether or not there is talent seems to fly out the window and what is described as Cullen’s ‘highly personal visual language’ by one critic is called adolescent and puerile by another. It is an interesting debate and one which polarises the art community. Some remark on his skill as an artist, his work
displaying ‘a keen eye for abstraction and for more or less traditional painterly qualities. Stylistically, particularly in his graphics, Cullen borrows from popular graffiti and by doing so, questions the boundaries that traditionally separate art from life’ (artequity.com.au). However, most discussion centres on content rather than his graffiti-inspired, expressive or whatever style. Carrie Miller, former partner, says he was not one to subscribe to complex philosophies on the meaning of art, rather Cullen advocated ‘televisual’ ways of seeing, with the emphasis on the role of art to hold the attention in the most compelling way possible (artwrite49.wordpress.com/adamcullen by Anastasia Murney).

Cullen’s later work was defined by evermore chaotic black outlines and the heavy use of house paint. Paintings for his last exhibition were created by shooting at cans of paint causing it to splatter over the canvases. Dr. Vivien Gaston (theconversation.com) says Cullen ‘courted ugliness: an art that was an assault on the eye in both its subject matter and the way it was painted... Most of his art was about violent or depraved subjects. It’s not so much about their poignancy or vulnerability; it’s just their sheer horror and grunge value.’

Julian Wrigley, a friend and an art teacher who has been collecting material for a biography of Adam Cullen for a number of years describes Cullen’s art as leaning towards brut in style and notes the similarity of style of Ben Quilty and Jasper Knight. Brut or outsider art is well documented and Philip Hammial, an international expert on the subject with his own collection of outsider art, disagrees. For Hammial there is no likening of Cullen to an outsider artist; he sees Cullen’s style as more appropriately described as expressive.

Throughout history there have been painters who have depicted scenes of horror and carnage which inspire strong emotions in viewers; we respect their works and acknowledge the motivation and inspiration behind them. Indeed Cullen professed an admiration for the work of the Spanish master Goya and claimed that seeing Goya’s painting ‘Satan Devouring His Children’ was his earliest inspiration to become an artist. Perhaps this also provides the clue to a pathway to fame and notoriety which Cullen assiduously cultivated when he obsessed about the killers of Anita Cobby and illustrated ‘Chopper’ Read’s ‘fairytale’ and whose other subjects included grotesque images, dead cats, bloodied kangaroos, headless women and punk men. Are we dealing with a highly intelligent and talented artist who is forcing us to rethink our preconceptions or a publicity junkie using notoriety to sell his art? Either way would seem to be very clever.

Alex Gawronski, in a piece entitled ‘Adam Cullen: Looking for the man’, says: ‘The difficulty of Adam Cullen’s art lies in its ambivalence. If an art form exists merely to proclaim its impotence then perhaps in the end that is all there is. Similarly

Below: ‘Adam arrived at my studio’, says photographer Peter Adams, ‘wearing a camouflage jacket, a WW1 cartridge belt, Russian motorcycle goggles, a racoon hat (which I think he had made himself) and a dead bird, both of which had a certain pong about them, and an ancient firearm of dubious heritage.’ © Peter Adams 2009
if art is merely the impersonal medium for its own degradation as a cynical response to a marketplace that nevertheless still rewards its productions handsomely, then is it enough to be merely cynical? If the answer were yes [or alternatively, doesn’t matter] then perhaps Cullen’s work is simply smug and complacent, the bad-boy art of an insular scene’ (monash.edu.au/globe/issue9, 1999).

Cullen has on a number of occasions been described as ‘the real deal’. Wayne Tunnicliffe, AGNSW, noted that ‘Adam was living a life very much on the edge himself, so that gave him considerable insider’s perspective into that subject matter.’ Charles Waterstreet, barrister, writer and friend, gave the eulogy at Cullen’s funeral, held at St. Rose in Collaroy, Sydney. It was an extraordinarily affective and generous oration. Waterstreet said: ‘Like Jackson Pollock, he discovered a new, exciting way to put paint on paper and canvas and did it better than anyone else. Like Pollock, he drove fast, he drove drunk. He not only loved life, he squeezed the life out of life.’

Cullen’s admirers, among them young and aspiring artists, were inspired by Cullen and have been protective. Jasper Knight on the AGNSW website tells of painting Cullen’s portrait: ‘He took his shirt off and it was quite confronting… He had surgery scars and a lot of tattoos including a swastika and a Southern Cross and a love heart with his father’s name Kevin, a dagger and a Magnum 44 – his favourite gun.’ Knight decided not to paint most of the tattoos. ‘I wanted to show his softer side and focus on the Adam I knew.’ Cullen’s partner until 2007, Cash Brown, says that Cullen was so admired by the younger generation of Sydney male artists such as Ben Quilty and Jasper Knight for his authenticity. ‘Sure, they get swept up in the surface of it, but he was the real deal, that’s what the kids admire.’

Some chose to blur the truth about Cullen, and others simply refused to believe the more extreme accusations made against him. Some in the local community found his killing of wildlife abhorrent and his fascination with the criminal character disturbing; others defended him, explaining his behaviour simply as an interest in taxidermy using roadkill and a talent for attracting publicity with his colourful criminal friendships.

Cullen was aware of the opposing views he attracted and would make comments which worked to exacerbate a situation. His contempt for Blue Mountains artists expressed in an interview with a local paper was regarded by many as offensive and when Peter Adams’ and Alan Lloyd’s book ‘The Streetwise’ was published with Cullen’s comments about ‘executing’ animals, local artist and writer John Ellison felt that the situation had gone beyond the pale and in an appropriately theatrical response he challenged Cullen to a fist fight. By this time the community’s honeymoon with Cullen was over. People saw him differently now that he was living amongst them.

Cullen grew up in the Sydney beach suburb of Collaroy. For a time he lived with his parents in the Blue Mountains and attended a local school. Adam Cullen would graduate from the City Art Institute with a Diploma of Professional Art in 1987 and receive a Master of Fine Arts from the University of New South Wales in 1999. His Vietnam vet father enjoyed sharing the spotlight at art gatherings and the openings of his son’s major exhibitions. Cullen craved his father’s love and approval. His father encouraged his participation in physical activities, teaching him to fight, swim and surf. Adam Cullen could ride horses and loved his motorbikes and, of course, his guns and knives. He missed his mother deeply after she died of cancer two years before his own death.

For someone who had always cultivated a perception in others as a subversive, winning the Archibald Prize turned Adam Cullen’s life on its head. When interviewed by Alan Lloyd for the book ‘The Streetwise’, Cullen said: ‘Winning the Archibald changed my whole life — my whole aspectual psyche. It enlarged my audience. I was no longer underground, non-establishment. All of a sudden I was part of the art world … the bourgeois.’ Cullen told Alan Lloyd: ‘I’m not a violent man. I don’t think I could paint if I was pushed that hard. …but there is an element of violence in my work. I have some interesting associates; they
Drugs and drink and taxi fares (many of them long distance taxi rides) can all add up to very large sums of money. For an addict and an alcoholic, money is a necessity and when the money is short borrowing and bartering take over. With fame it becomes easy to exchange some colourful drawing for what you really crave. Taxi drivers, business people and acquaintances all become eligible for a deal and when many of these people are also art literate, they are willing participants. Drawings become currency and everyone is satisfied.

Michael Reid, gallery owner, records on his website that Cullen 'was astonishingly kind and the many hundreds of thousands of dollars in paintings he donated to charity attest to his endless giving'. Cullen on the one hand boasted about the worth of his paintings and on the other gave away work with abandon, as though he couldn’t care less for it. Who was he mocking? He was invited to submit a drawing to the annual Kedumba Drawing Award (shown on page 22), a prestigious event for drawings. His work was not chosen for acquisition by the judges. Cullen then donated it to the Trust. What was Cullen thinking when he submitted this work? Was he serious or was it a private joke?

Art dealer Steven Archer is a friendly, generous and very entertaining man and the first to claim that he knows how to make money. Cullen’s exchange with the skull was the beginning of a long and occasionally fractious relationship. Archer knew how to make money for Cullen and of course the artist was a willing participant. He also found friendship with Archer and his son Aaron and the colourful cavalcade of characters which is a constant at the auction rooms. There Cullen was known to sit for hours beside the fire making figures out of plasticine, strange grotesque sculptures of animals, skulls, figures and imaginary monsters which Archer sent away for casting in bronze. A couple of these Archer also had enlarged into impressive metre long boars or ‘yowies’. Small bronzes have sold recently for up to $12,000. Cullen was looking for company and he was also made welcome at the art supplies and framing business owned by Sandra and Andrew Jakeman in Wentworth Falls where he would sit chatting for long periods. The Jakemans, along with Cullen’s neighbour Ruth le Cheminant, were staunchly supportive of Cullen and became increasingly concerned for his wellbeing, particularly after the death of Cullen’s mother.

Steven Archer has photographs on his phone of Cullen taken a couple of weeks before the artist’s death, sitting in the auction room, hunched and head drooping, ‘in a very bad way’ — unable even to inject himself, according to another of the artist’s friends [he was a diabetic as well as an addict]. The dye was cast and there was nothing anyone could do to change it. For some time people had been talking about how ill Cullen was and that he was thought to be dying. It was his neighbour, Ruth le Cheminant, another artist, who was to find Cullen dead at home not long afterwards.

Ruth le Cheminant recalls a friendship with Cullen which was personally rewarding. Ruth writes: ‘Listening to Amy Winehouse singing Rehab makes me think of Ad or Adam. The house he had up the road a bit is now sold, the garden will probably become more organised and the inside neater and tidy, the internal chaos gone.'
he bought in the USA is well remembered. He had a love of skulls with many in his garden and one proudly placed on the
handlebars of his bike. He liked to do taxidermy and showed me the process. He had a wall with beautifully preserved birds,
heads etc. After his death we discovered a small bird in a plastic bag in the freezer that had hit the window and died.

He got on well with us and when he lacked funds to keep the phone connected would come down and use our phone and
have a chat afterwards.

I remember early in his time in the Mountains he was interviewed by the local paper and was quoted as saying there were
only ‘wallpaper’ painters up here bar a few. I wasn’t sure how he would respond to my art. He in fact became a mentor,
challenging me when he visited me in the studio to see my latest work. He often said ‘don’t think too much, just do it. Paint
in the moment.’ It gave me the courage to be fearless in my approach to the process of painting.

We often heard Adam on his bike before we saw him. It was so noisy, something that did not endear him to the neighbours.
This particular winter evening he came up the drive and said ‘Ruth let’s do a painting together. Get on the back and we’ll go
to the studio.’ No helmet, dirt track, wet. I suggested instead doing a painting in my studio as I had a spare canvas, which we
did, the canvas in front of us both and working quite frantically together, taking turns. We both signed the back. It was great
fun. It ended up he in effect gave me the painting. I often said to him, particularly near the end of his life: ‘Ad what about that
painting of ours?’ and the last weekend of his life he said: ‘It’ll be worth money, it’s yours.’ It could well be the only collaborated
painting he undertook with anyone.

He was a thinker and I really enjoyed those art and philosophical conversations we engaged in. I remember once meeting
him at the Wentworth Falls shops and started talking in the street leaning on a rubbish bin and we talked for over an hour
and a half.

I once said to him when he was annoying me (he must have been laying on the celebrity bit!) ‘Adam firstly you are our friend
and our neighbour and only then Adam Cullen the artist’. He could provoke and loved controversy, not necessarily curbing
his behaviour for neighbourhood peace.

Adam’s health was precarious towards the end of his life. He liked to ignore his health issues and carry on, stoic to the end,
frail but very determined. I went for a walk this Sunday and dropped in to see if he wanted some eggs. He didn’t need the
eggs. I discovered him on his bed.

I met Adam and his then girlfriend after he won the Archibald Art prize. It was a case of ‘wow fancy Adam Cullen living near us’. Initially he was guarded and a little distant but my partner and I got to know him. He had the presence of a ‘bover boy’ that was a great cover for a much softer side.

The property he bought had a wonderful garden so I was curious and asked him if he enjoyed gardening? Oh yes. I came to realise over time that Adam was more a conceptual gardener. I helped him do some gardening, planting some bushes. Patience I found was not his virtue in gardening as in most things; he preferred immediacy. Not sure how but the plants grew.

He had a dirt bike [unlicensed] that he’d ride past our place to his studio in McLaughlin Avenue. He was fond of
different headwear to wear on it. The Davy Crockett hat

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Sometimes you meet someone who impacts positively on your life that is not expected. In all, he was a pretty amazing neighbour and friend.

Photographer Peter Adams who worked with journalist Alan Lloyd on 'The Streetwise' book which included the interview with Adam Cullen referred to, tells how Cullen, due to arrive shortly at Peter Adams' studio phoned to ask if he could bring his guns. Er, yes, said Adams. Cullen was dressed for the photo shoot in army oddments and old motorcyclist's goggles. Cullen asked Peter Adams to take him to a friend's on the way back to his Wentworth Falls home — he wanted Adams to take photographs of the two of them with their guns. Posing in their uniform oddments and with their rifles, suddenly there was a loud bang and a bullet whistled past Adams' head. It was time to get out! said Adams.

Lloyd's interview with Cullen quotes as a headline 'I love the act of executing them. My eyes are the last thing they see.' His adjoining neighbour, artist Leonie Lyall, was shocked by the sight of Cullen shooting birds from his back deck and killing foxes which he caught on his property. One performance Lyall observed was undoubtedly a private one, with Cullen's partner dodging around the garden, retrieving the bodies of the birds Cullen had shot. Given that this was a small cottage in a residential street, Cullen's activities angered immediate neighbours – the revving of motorbikes at 2 am, the sound of gunshots and the threats to neighbourhood cats by Cullen who professed an intense loathing for cats. He set traps for animals, calling them 'soft' traps, enabling him then to kill the animals himself. There were quantities of dead animals, whole bodies, skins and various parts scattered throughout the cottage. In recent years the atmosphere of the house had become so offensive that Cullen refused to allow anyone inside.

In his possession when he was last charged with drink driving was a quantity of weapons: guns, a slingshot and a Tazer. Although the charge against Cullen was defended on the basis that he used his guns to create artworks, it is difficult to see how a Tazer might be used for this purpose. The thought lingers that it may have been to use on animals.

Lloyd's conversation regarding 'executing' animals recorded with Cullen upset many, among them wellknown local artist and Katoomba's Winter Magic Festival wizard John Ellison who felt that it was time to publicly challenge Cullen.

Ellison: 'Five years ago I challenged Adam Cullen to a bare-knuckle fight to be held on the front lawn of the Carrington Hotel, the proceeds to go to a charity of his own choice. An odd proposition perhaps, as neither of us were boxers and the last bit of fighting of that kind I had engaged in was when I was about 10 years old. But in the circumstances I felt it was an entirely appropriate challenge.

'In reading the article about Adam (in 'The Streetwise' book) I noticed that he was skiting once again about his association with Mark 'Chopper' Read and then went on to explain how he likes to trap and kill 'introduced' animals. 'I fucking love the act of executing them. My eyes are the last thing they see.'

'I found that sickening, but quite consistent with his other public utterances since arriving in the Mountains. It was as though he was trying to scare people into admiring him as an artist or as a man.

'I wrote a letter to the Gazette in which I voiced my irritation and told him rather pompously that Cezanne and Vincent would not talk in that fashion. Artists, I said, should be heroes and not thugs. I then issued my pugilistic challenge.

'Cullen rang me at home a few days later. A slow laconic drawl and an air of genuine puzzlement on the other end of the line.

'What's it about?' he wanted to know.

'You come on like a member of the young Nazis,' I said. 'I thought I'd give you a chance to show how tough you are.'

'You have a go at me about being violent, but then you want to fight me on the front lawn of the Carrington Hotel?'

'Contained violence,' I said. 'Marquis of Queensberry rules. It's a different thing.' He hung up.

'Half an hour later he was on the phone again. This time the voice was more belligerent. 'I've been talking to my advisors,' he said. 'I'm going to contact every newspaper in the country. By the way, you should know that I fight dirty.'

'What does that mean?'

'Guns and knives.'

'Is that the only way you can fight?' He hung up again.

'Another phone call a few minutes later. 'Listen mate,' he said. 'I can out-read you and out-paint you.'

'Right.'

'And I want to tell you that I hate the human race, and I'd rather see ten thousand children killed than one poor animal.'

'Yes, that's pretty extreme Adam.'

'Extreme? What about you? You called me a thug.'

'No, I said that artists should be heroes, not thugs. A matter of principle.'

'So... What do we do?'

'You reply in the Gazette and then we set a date for the fight.'
'I'll break your bloody jaw.'

'Right. You've been in training have you?'

'No, I don't have to. Have you?'

'A bit.'

'Oh shit. Now I'm going to get my head punched in by a bloody hippy.'

The next week he wrote a letter to the Gazette telling me to wave my magic wand and make everything nice again. As for him, he said, he was just going to get his kicks before the whole shit-house goes up in flames.'

Hero or thug? It seems in Cullen's view the thug can be the hero.

What is sad is that while Adam Cullen and his companions were welcomed into this new neighbourhood by people who for years continued to keep an eye out for him, in the end they could not save him. The Blue Mountains are known for their acceptance of eccentrics and artists and Cullen was no exception. Adjoining neighbour Leonie Lyall, although frightened by the proximity of someone who was frequently high on drugs and alcohol, who kept guns and who she observed shooting birds in the garden and clubbing a fox to death, nevertheless did maintain a neighbourly relationship and on two occasions drove Cullen's girlfriend to the hospital in an emergency. In appreciation the woman gave Lyall a copy of 'Chopper' Read's book, autographed by both Read and Adam Cullen. Privately Lyall was horrified. In the end Cullen was left living alone, the women having departed.

Looking on the internet at screens filled with images of Cullen's work one is struck by how much of it is the expression of unrelenting horror. Charles Waterstreet described Cullen as a man who loved life, but this is not the impression one has from his art. Cullen blamed his Irish genes for his illness; it was his severe alcoholism which essentially destroyed him physically. One of his partners, Cash Brown, described him as being strong as an ox but that he suffered dreadfully from alcoholism. She struggled to understand how a child who grew up in a loving environment could become so tortured as an adult.

It might be argued that an artist's personal life is irrelevant and that one should be judged on the legacy of one's art alone, but few high profile individuals have the luxury of such privacy. Do we need to know that he had to psych himself up to paint by drinking a full bottle of vodka in the space of half an hour? Is it relevant that he derived pleasure from killing birds and animals? Does it help us to know about his friendships?

I lived not far from Cullen and met him occasionally. Until I researched this article I had accepted his art at face value, largely unaware of the complexities of his personal life. I had difficulty with some of his subject matter. I am not alone in remarking that the little bronze sculptures which were so effortlessly produced in plasticine, are up with the best of his art. I find myself unexpectedly feeling sympathy for this lonely man and his demons and curious to know how others feel now that time has passed and some of the heat of the passions he aroused has diminished.

Carolynne Skinner