

This months Artists Spotlight with Ron Watt

Firstly, when did you start to create? Were you born with a paint palette/ piece of wood in your hand, or did your interest in art develop over time?

- I have always been interested in art. I won a prize for a lino cut work when I was at Thurso High School in the Highlands of Scotland.

In a few sentences please describe your work?

- I like to draw with pastels and charcoal, carve wood, make castings and sculpting in various materials. The majority of my work reflects politics, industry, music and food.

What is your background, have you worked at any other jobs whilst being an artist?

- My first job was as an apprentice glass blower at Caithness Glass Works in Wick in the Highlands of Scotland where I worked under Paul Ysart. My family moved to Australia and I worked at the Port Kembla Steelworks and was then conscripted to serve in the army in Vietnam. When I returned to Australia, I resumed my previous job at the steel works, then changed my job and worked for the council. In my late 20s I did an apprenticeship to become a chef, a job I did for 38 years.

Did you go to art school or have any formal training in the arts?

- I went to TAFE and did Advanced Diploma in Fine Arts then University of Wollongong where I graduated with a bachelor's degree with Distinction in Creative Arts.

What media do you prefer, and how did you come to use it as your primary one?

- I like working with wood. I like the feel and smell of wood and to make a variety of forms from it.

What inspires you as an artist?

- The political scene, music, food, books, musical instruments.

What do you like about your work?

- I enjoy creating.

What images or things keep you company in your workspace?

- Radio (ABC), music, art books, paints and wood

What is your daily routine when working?

- First up walking two dogs on the beach then progress as the day takes me

Do you have a favourite artist?

- Goya, Honore Daumier.

What's the best advice you would give to someone beginning their artistic careers?

- Start early and just do it.