

# JOHN STRINGER 1937 - 2007

**John Stringer** had an intense fascination with the visual arts that cut easily across every theoretical green line. He knew all the theories, but he also trusted his eyes and his instincts. One of his outstanding qualities (and he had ute loads of 'em) was that he never lost or discarded his innate curiosity and wonder. John always responded to the guts of things; not for their political template, and definitely not just for their novelty.

Although John was a serious national and international figure, for WA he was particularly significant. It is difficult to not think of his watch at the AGWA (late 80's early 90's) without great affection and even nostalgia. With a talented and engaged raft of people, the Gallery became, for too short a period, a truly exciting and vibrant place; a genuine cultural

precinct. John's boundless enthusiasm and expansive vision brought us exotic and compelling exhibitions from unexpected places and unexpected shows from compelling places. The Venezuelan show, the Other Tuscany, those small, menacing, horizontal works from New York amongst a host of others; all these shows plus his advocacy and open door policy for discussion and interchange made it not only okay to be an artist in Western Australia but okay to not be simply providing visual aids for an incumbent orthodoxy.

John's generosity of spirit and borderless vision made his the perfect head to be hunted for the ongoing development of the Kerry Stokes Collection. Especially there, it was not uncommon to see Old World art icons hanging cheek by jowl with equally engaging work by people unknown beyond Rottneest and both



John Stringer with Adara & Boris. Photo: Dave Gervas

contributing equally to the collective experience within those lush, dark, acoustic chambers. And John was equally at home showing this fabulous collection to students as he was to People That Matter.

**Is John replaceable? Only if the Watts' Towers and Monet's cathedrals are replaceable.** As a man whose spirit and good humour seemed to be blast proof, and as a professional whose dinkum intellectual eclecticism embodied all that is and should be rich and exciting in the visual arts, his passing is very saddening for every reason.

Good journey John. You represented all the good bits in every artist.

You shall be missed.

Stuart Elliott, November 2007