

artsource

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Two WA artists awarded for their enduring influence on WA culture by Artsource

The fourth annual Artsource Lifetime Achievement Awards, held last night, saw 250 artist peers and arts connoisseurs gather to honour Dr. Ben Joel and Anne Neil at a sophisticated award evening, set within the stately walls of the City of Perth Town Hall.



Award recipients Anne Neil and Dr Ben Joel celebrate after accepting their awards at the ceremony held at City of Perth Town Hall last night. Photo: Christophe Canato

Guest of Honour Andrew Frost, renowned art critic, broadcaster and writer, flew to Perth to present the Awards. Libby Guj, established architect and colleague of Anne Neil, and Anna Sabadini, artist and student of Dr Ben Joel; each paid tribute to the two artists, recognizing their outstanding achievements in the visual arts and the lasting footprint they have made on the culture in Western Australia.

Ben Joel is well respected and cherished among students and academic peers at Curtin University, where he taught for 20 years as Head of Painting at what is now the School of

Design and Art. Ben holds a magnificent portfolio of paintings and drawings, including many commissioned portraits found in local, interstate and international collections.

Anne Neil is arguably the states most prolific public artist; creating large scale urban installations and sculptures across WA. Her striking works can be found along highways and main roads in Bunbury, Mandurah, and Yanchep; to landmarks in Nedlands, beaches in South Fremantle, Edith Cowan University in Joondalup and decorating State gardens in Perth CBD.

Libby Guj who has worked on numerous public art projects with Anne Neil, including the new Library at ECU Joondalup, spoke of Anne's contributions to the art of mentorship and collaboration.

"Her sheer energy, exuberance, talent, generosity and kindness are both inspiring and infectious and it is of no surprise that at the end of each project she will have amassed an army of genuine admirers and friends", Guj mused.



Longtime public colleague and friend of Anne Neil, Libby Guj, honored her mentor in front a crowd of artists and industry leaders. Photo: Christophe

"Anne has, through her practice, re-established some of the mainly lost traditions of craftsmanship and mentorship in the making of urban spaces", Guj continued.

Anna Sabadini who knew Ben Joel firstly as a teacher, and later as a colleague and friend, shared touching personal anecdotes of his generosity as a tutor and life as a passionate painter.

"Ben made painting accessible. Apart from his practical knowledge and patience he is also honest and generous with down-to-earth stories about his own artistic journey", told Sabadini.

"In staff meetings Ben was always prepared to argue for the beliefs he accrued through twenty years of attentive experience...He argued for the continued relevance of drawing to contemporary practice. Good drawing, he says, enhances perception and the richness of a work of art," Sabadini continued.

Ben and Anne were selected for the esteemed award by the Artsource Board, in discussion with a panel of arts industry leaders. Both recipients proudly accepted the accolades in front of a crowd of leading visual artists, their managers and industry associates including Minister for

Culture and the Arts MLA, John Day; Rio Tinto CEO and Chair of Chamber of Arts and Culture WA, Sam Walsh; and Managing Director of Channel 7 Mario d'Orazio.

The Lifetime Achievement Awards, initiated by Artsource in 2009 aim to acknowledge, celebrate and encourage cultivation within the arts in our state. Previous awardees include the likes of Pippin Drysdale, Brian McKay, Nalda Searles, Hans Arkeveld, Shane Pickett, George Haynes and Stuart Elliott.

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ABOUT THE AWARDS

Artsource launched the Lifetime Achievement Awards in May 2009 with the expressed intention of paying respect to artists who have sustained their practice achieving excellence in their chosen field for over 30 years. The annual Awards are just one way to acknowledge the rich contribution of artists in our community.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Anne Neil (b. 1951)

Anne Neil, originally from Queensland, but living most of her artistic career in Perth since the early eighties, is today a resident of North Fremantle. Anne studied jewellery design at Curtin University and later undertook post graduate studies at the Australian National University. Her formal exhibiting career began with a solo show at Galerie Dusseldorf in 1992 and she has interspersed a series of 8 solo exhibitions and numerous group shows with residencies in Seoul, Kuala Lumpur, Basel and Melbourne. Best known in WA for her public art practice, Anne has been responsible for numerous commissions creating designs for bridges, noise walls and lighting, the Forrest Highway to Bunbury, on Roe Highway as well as works for the District Court, Stirling Gardens, primary schools and playgrounds all over Perth.

Dr Ben Joel (b. 1948)

Ben Joel grew up in Bunbury and now resides in Darlington, WA. Ben is primarily a painter who has a wide range of interests and expertise in traditional and contemporary processes in most media: oils, acrylics, watercolour, gouache, large shaped surfaces, murals, multiple screens and digital techniques. Over the years Ben Joel's work has also involved interactive multimedia computer aided art, and multi-projector audio-visual media. He has exceptional technical proficiency in portraiture, life drawing and colour theory. Ben is well known for his numerous commissioned portraits which are in local, interstate and international collections.

ABOUT ARTSOURCE

Artsource is Western Australia's peak representative body for visual artists. A not-for-profit organisation in operation since 1986, Artsource works to expand and improve the sustainability and profile of artists through practical services and support.

For more information, please visit www.artsource.net.au

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