

TONY SOWERSBY

The Political Landscape

This collection of recent paintings is a combination of satirical depictions of powerful political figures within the conservative government and landscapes largely concerned with the outer suburban fringe and the Bay. These works seem to be coming from two different sensibilities but I regard them as inextricably linked. No modern image of the coast can be anything but tinged with melancholy at the thought of what we have put at risk. The political figures I lampoon have advanced the culture of greed that is threatening the world my other paintings celebrate.

Biography

Tony Sowersby has been a professional artist for nearly three decades but it is only in recent years that he has turned his attention to exhibiting. From the early 80's to the present day he has worked continuously in the fields of both Community and Public Art most often as a muralist, but also as a cartoonist and comic book writer and artist.

Tony has painted and directed hundreds of murals especially on the Mornington Peninsula but also around the state and in Tasmania, NSW and SA. In 2003 he traveled to Goroka in the Eastern Highlands Province of PNG to work on a mural with local artists.

Tony is still a firm believer in the potential for art as an agent of social change. Previously he has pursued this more at a micro level with small groups or in communities. Many of his projects have involved working with at risk young people or disadvantaged adults, using art as a means of promoting a sense of self-worth and hope.

This work with the least powerful in our society has in the last decade been increasingly coupled with a willingness to criticize the most powerful. Since 1998 he has won the People's Choice for the "Bald Archy" Prize for satirical portraiture three times [1998, 2004 and 2005] and in 2005 he won the prize with his portrait of George Pell and Tony Abbott entitled "The Cardinal with his Abbott".

Earlier in his career Tony was active in organizing and showing in Artist run initiatives such as the IHT show (1983), the Loungeroom artists (1984), the Ten Years After Show (1989), ART Ltd (1991) and with the Artworkers based at Trades Hall (1993-94). In 1998 The National Cartoon Gallery showed original drawings from his comic books.

His exhibitions this century have been
2004- The Frankston-Dandy Roadshow, Walker Street Gallery
2005- Arts on Burke, Inaugural Exhibition, Surrey Hills, Sydney.
2006-07- Paddy's Bar, Trades Hall Bar.

