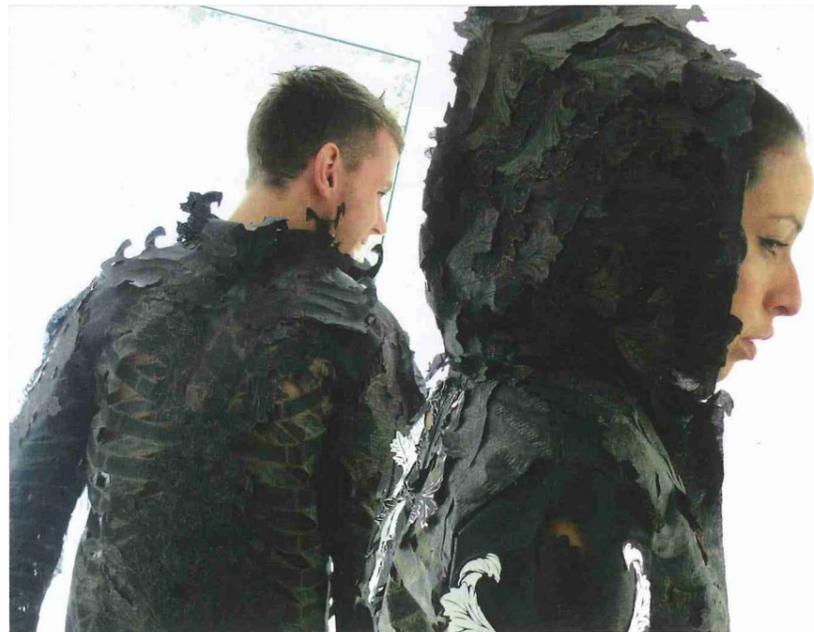


# BURNIE WEARABLE PAPER ART COMPETITION PAPER ON SKIN 2012



STORY BY JANET DE BOER

I was fortunate to be able to attend the Gala Parade Award Evening in Burnie Tasmania for PAPER ON SKIN on May 25<sup>th</sup> in the company of Larissa Murdock, one of the 26 artists featured on the night. This inaugural competition was a national project by the Burnie Arts Council, a branch of Tasmanian Regional Arts, and the Burnie Regional Art Gallery with major sponsorship from Betta Milk Co-op Society Ltd. I was dressed in a paper kaftan and hat by the Papermakers of Queensland (with thanks to Di Tait and Helga Hill) and my jewellery was donated by the Papermakers of Victoria through the special efforts of Gail Stiffe and Tricia Alexander. It must also be recognized that Larissa helped me source very special false eyelashes on e-bay.

A bonus was getting to spend time with Jenny Toynbee-Wilson; she had donated her paper collar series (19 works in all) to Burnie Regional Art Gallery. We first published an image of one of these spectacular collars in a 1985 issue of Textile Fibre Forum as part of the coverage of the touring 'Cross Currents' exhibition of innovative jewellery from Australia, Germany, Holland and the UK that was launched at the Powerhouse Museum with the support of the Crafts Board of the Australia Council. Later that year I was also able to publish a collar that featured in the 1984 Fibre Interchange Exhibition held at the Crafts Council of the ACT in conjunction with the 1984 'FORUM' staged in Canberra with such success.

This remarkable collection was paraded on the night, in a special segment, and later, thanks to Greg Leong, we were able to examine the collars in more detail as he explained the gallery's storage system to us and how the collars would be maintained. Greg is Director of both Burnie Arts & Function Centre (the venue for the parade) and Burnie Regional Art Gallery and was one of the judges on the night, along with Colleen Burke, artist and Glenda King, Manager Visual Arts & Design, Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery. They did not have an easy job.

Douglas McManus (Victoria) was winner of the Betta Milk Open Award and Leonie Oakes (Tasmania) won the Sustainable Fashion Award; each had a cash prize of \$2500.



Douglas McManus won the Open Section with the two works shown at left and above. Below, two small figures scrambled to their feet by Leonie Oakes; work also shown at bottom of page opposite along with the back and front view (with collar) of her winning work, *with shadows that are their nightgowns*. Top of opposite page, 'Constraint', paper collar by Jenny Toynbee-Wilson.



For the past 70 years Burnie has been a town centred around papermaking. Despite the closing of The Australian Paper Mill in 2010, there is on-going recognition of the city's paper heritage with the Makers' Workshop complex being a splendid place to spend a rainy afternoon as Larissa and I discovered. It incorporates a museum, arts centre, visitor information centre, café, gift shop, paper making workshop, interpretive displays and working artists. The cheese and wine tasting come highly recommended and you can see plenty of inspiring 'paper art'. ☐

*PAPER ON SKIN* was an Arts for the Community event presented by the Burnie Regional Art Gallery in partnership with Burnie Arts Council and Burnie EnVogue Modelling Academy (Giovanna Simpson). The compere was Libby Dobson, Communications Office, Burnie City Council. Special mention must be made of Pam Thorne whose idea this originally was; she was the Project Coordinator for the Burnie Arts Council for this event and is a well known local papier maché artist. Pam Thorne, together with Ruth Rees created a small population of life sized paper people over ten years, that remain prevalent in Burnie. Works submitted for the Gala PAPER ON SKIN Parade were exhibited at Makers' Workshop gallery from 1<sup>st</sup> June – 15<sup>th</sup> July 2012.

Leonie Oakes' winning work in the Sustainable Fashion Award was with *shadows that are their nightgowns* made from ephemera, maps, antique onionskin book pages, letterpress, shellac and dye. She also submitted 'two small figures scrambled to their feet' in the Betta Milk Open Award, screen printed Kozo paper, detail paper, letterpress. Douglas McManus won the Betta Milk Open Award with 'synthetique of bone & matter, blossfelt & mcqueen', laser cut and engraved rice paper, screen printed foil on rice paper.



Douglas McManus has remained a non-conformist throughout his long career, exploring the frontiers of his specialty, textile printing, to produce both commercial and conceptual works. McManus has been a major contributor to the development of Australian printed textiles, both as a practitioner, curator and textiles teacher at RMIT (he obtained a BFA from Curtin University, WA in 1984). The Powerhouse Museum collection includes four examples of his textile designs. (Information from website)

In 2002 Leonie Oakes graduated from the University of Tasmania with first class Honours. She received an Australian Postgraduate Award to submit for her Masters. The central theme of her current work considers the notion that the book can be used visually as a vehicle to express the self and the female body. Oakes has considered the notion that traumatic experience can manifest internally and physically emerge like a hidden text unfolding. Leonie explains that she creates books as sculpture, as wearable objects, as props, as images and all as vehicles for the stories we all hold. The work reveals a fragmented and broken text, giving glimpses of the past rather than a full disclosure of the actual story. (Information from website)

