

1st July, 2020

Design Eye Creative Paper on Skin – Notes on the Event

Judging in the time of COVID.

When the majority of art and sporting events around the world came crashing down the *paper on skin* team, led by the formidable pair Lyndal and Pam Thorne, dug deep and decided to not let the crisis of COVID 19 destroy this much loved biannual occasion.

Burnie is a proud can-do community, able to deal with great change, never accepting defeat. The love of paper in the town is a driving force, a legacy derived from the mill where the entire workforce pulled together to make the best paper products possible.

For *paper on skin* this year, instead of the traditional Gala fashion parade the organizers have reached out to their pool of talented townsfolk to create a different version of the event. As well as an exhibition, there's to be a filmic reveal of the fabulous wearable paper artworks that have the potential to reach a greater audience than before. In this way COVID19 has prompted Burnie to take this event to the world.

Because of these changes the judging also needed to change. Instead of seeing each work being paraded on the catwalk the judges had the greater privilege of spending a day and half with the exhibits. Like the best of parties the room was a riot of colour and excitement. Some garments immediately attracted attention with size and glitter, others waited confidently knowing we'd get to them as we made our way around the room.

It was very hard to choose favourites from this wonderland. Every piece was a winner. Each artist had to rise above the calamity of lockdown and had to continue to fully focus their creative energy to get their garments completed. Then many of them had to deal with the issues of chaotic transport, and sadly some works are still in transit. That these committed artists managed to continue to make in the midst of global turmoil is astonishing and admirable.

All of the works deserve to be in Burnie. All of them are winners. Every one is a victory, demonstrating joyfulness, the passion for making and the importance of art in our lives. Fantasy, fun, colour, excitement and hope vibrated the room. And as paper has always been a medium for relaying messages the message here is love. The love in the room was palpable.

Art saves lives and paper tells stories. *paper on Skin 2020* is indeed another inspirational story of Burnie and paper, a true triumph over adversity.

Penny Carey-Wells