

Sculpture on the Cliffs - Elliston 2006

Artist Statement

Having previously explored expression through photography and painting participation in sculpture on the cliffs was a new and welcome challenge. Based upon a response to the landscape of Elliston during a visit in August I chose the medium of pinhole photography as my preferred method of engagement. I became interested in both foreground objects of rocks and plants, as well as the wider landscape and contemplated their significance to my appreciation of what was before me.

From a selected photograph I simplified the image as line by using my computer and redrawing the image using a Wacom pen and tablet. Laser cutting the resulting drawing in marine ply was my initial idea but after visits to several laser cutters found that it was not possible unless considerably simplified. Since loss of detail would severely compromise the image I considered other alternatives and decided to use clear 10mm thick Perspex, and paint in the line-work so that sunlight would cause a drawn shadow when located where I had initially taken the photograph.

After wrestling with the many issues I had encountered my final sculptural piece sprang from questions I asked myself in the middle of the night.

“Why is a photographer/painter trying to make sculpture...and how do I define sculpture?”

I resolved the work the next day; incorporating an easel and brushes.

It is a sculpture about painting - perhaps questioning what distinction lies between them and came from a yearning to push beyond a two-dimensional plane. It is also about my original concerns when I encountered the Elliston landscape. What are we seeking to do when choosing to capture landscape as images, when either photographing or painting them? How important are the smaller objects within the broader landscape? By taking time to observe does it connect us better to environment and do constructed objects within a natural environment enhance or detract from our appreciation? Is painting of landscape more valid when done in situ as opposed to an extraction from photography, or even from one's psyche?

My adventure into sculpture is also a comment on traditions, difficulties and desires of the landscape artist, remaining upon the cliffs for 3 months, or more, enduring the elements and progressively succumbing to them.

Ronda Wallis 2006