Adventurous Souls

By

Grace Ruby Herrmann

Picture Framing
Being a picture framer and an artist has enabled me to blur the line where artwork meets frame. The frame has been used to create a consistent design across the series. By using contemporary framing techniques and reflective free glass I have added visual depth to the pieces. The processes used in the carvings are influenced by traditional framing and print making practices.

Symbols
Before society understood the science behind nature they used mythology as reason, symbolism of the sun, the moon and the stars took on magical characteristics. I used gold to symbolize divinity and splendour in nature.

The Singing Ship

"The ship seems to convey to us more than anything else a sense at once perfect freedom and perfect adventure. That is why we are content to stand on the harbour stones all day and watch anything with sails. We ourselves want to live in some such freedom and adventure as this. We are feeding our appetite for liberty as we gaze hungrily after the ships making their way out of the harbour into the sea" Robert Lynd, The Herring Fleet.

The symbol of a ship is used to represent the explorer. It personally signifies childhood; the Singing Ship is a monument to the explorer Capt. James Cook on the headland of the seaside town of Emu Park. This was my childhood home until I was six. The monument is a tall, white, concrete structure with hollow, flute like masts that sing when the sea breeze blows through it. When developing my carvings I had the image of the singing ship being guided by an albatross through a misty, tumultuous ocean and together they help each other overcome obstacles.

The Albatross
Traditionally albatrosses were depicted in the wake of a ship and are omens of death or heavy spiritual burden. It was believed that they were the reincarnation of sailors lost at sea and to kill one would bring bad luck to the crew.

In this series the albatross is placed in front of the ship as a guide.
Quite a few similarities exist between Human and Albatross behavior. They have a period of adolescence during which time they spend 5 to 10 years at sea without a migration pattern before returning to their original nesting place to find a mate. Their breeding rituals are not innate and must be learned by observing other Albatross. They will practice with many others until they meet a compatible partner. They then finesse their dance ritual until it is uniquely theirs.

The series reads like a story but has no sense of finality or end destination. There will always be a struggle between contentment and a desire to explore and experience more than what we have. The images are a glorified and naïve idea of finding enlightenment.
It is an interesting contrast to leave the comfort of Australia and want to put ourselves in potentially uncomfortable places, when so many risk their lives to find comfort and safety in Australia. It is a timeless human impulse to travel over the ocean no matter what sort of background you come from, yet it goes against instinct to leave safety and risk our lives purely to satisfy curiosity.

Paintings
The landscapes in the paintings are images of Samford Valley, which has been my home for 15 years. I have seen it develop into a prosperous community, however slowly suburbia encroaches on the natural landscape. Established habitats are cleared to make way for houses and grazing paddocks. It takes only one person to make drastic changes to the environment and the effects on wildlife are obvious to see. The paintings are a conflict between our control of the land and the land's influence on us. We are responsible as individuals and the more natural the environment the bigger the impact we have.

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