

Gallery Sunshine Everywhere News 2011

The Metaphor Story

As part of the Gallery Sunshine Everywhere's 1,000 Houseboxes Project we have been running workshops at the Brimbank Festival in 2010 and 2011 and at Funtasia Children's Festival in 2010.

This year, with the houseboxes hanging throughout Sunshine Plaza, we were delighted to use a shop at the front of Sunshine Plaza on Hampshire Road, just near Hertford Road.

Lots of families came by during the day, including Braydon, his brother Tyler and his grandmother. Braydon said he was off to a party at 1pm so couldn't use paints. Tyler didn't have that constraint and painted away happily.

Using texta pens, Braydon drew a figure I didn't recognise. Talking with him, I found out it was "Rey Mesterio" who is evidently a pretty good television wrestler.

Braydon explained, "He's small (like me), but very strong and beats the big guys".

Braydon wrote "Big things come in little packages" and called me over, asking "How do you spell metaphor?"

Impressed, I told him and asked, "Why do you want to know?"

Pointing to "Big things come in little packages" he said, "Because that's one".

I had another question, "How do you know?"

"Because our teacher uses them all the time."

As a long term teacher educator (I was there (with the foundation stone) when teacher education started at Footscray Institute, now Victoria University in 1985), I asked Braydon about the school he went to and his teacher's name.

With this exchange still in my mind, we started to collect children's work from local pre-schools for the next exhibition at the Granary Café in Sunshine. We've held over forty exhibitions there, mainly of pre, primary and secondary school students' art work since we started in late 2007.

When we visited one of the pre-schools to collect work this time, one teacher said to another, "Shall we give her the storybook?" and there on the wall was the tiny pen and ink drawing by The Vinh. As I looked at this, hardly bigger than a postage stamp, showing such control by a four year old, I thought about Braydon and our conversation about metaphors.

I decided then and there I needed to track down Braydon so that we could display his work with The Vinh's. I thought he'd said his school was either Albion North or Ardeer South. A quick ring around and the help of the school principal and we found Braydon in Year 3 at Ardeer South ... and now we are delighted to display his work with The Vinh's from Dorothy Carlton Kindergarten and hope you enjoy them and the metaphor story as well

Maureen Ryan
Director, Gallery Sunshine Everywhere
April 2011.

1,000 HOUSEBOXES EXHIBITION

A most amazing spectacle at Sunshine Plaza ... not to be missed They are colourful, imaginative, magical and lantern like ... but so much more

Cardboard boxes turned into houseboxes, they capture hearts and imagination, highlight love, peace, freedom, and reveal favourite poets, love of reading, preferences for rugby, bike riding and camping, for the beach, AFL teams (Richmond, Western Bulldogs, Sydney Swans, Adelaide Crows and of course, the Magpies) music, gymnastics, Little Athletics, dancing (especially, rap), soccer, motorbikes, computers, scooters, Guides, shopping, bikes, choir, television, tennis, films, toys, cross country, animals, Maths, cricket, books, horse riding, netball, karate, pottery, swimming, gardening, badminton, basketball, ballet, Lego, car racing

They tell about school uniforms, friends, zodiac signs, flags, religion, food, languages, national costumes, family celebrations, festivals, recipes and being "best at day dreaming and being silly"

They describe family backgrounds including Indigenous Australians and tales of grandparents who met on trams, went to war, travelled to Australia as refugees and from many countries: Cambodia, Chile, China, Croatia, Denmark, Egypt, El Salvador, England, Eritrea, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Holland, Hong Kong, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Iran, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Korea, Laos, Latvia, Lebanon, Macedonia, Malta, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Pakistan, Philippines, Poland, Romania, Russia, Samoa, Scotland, Serbia, Seychelle Islands, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Syria, Thailand, Timor Leste, Turkey, Ukraine, Vietnam and more

Gallery Sunshine Everywhere is delighted to present this exhibition at Sunshine Plaza and is very grateful for support from Sunshine Plaza management and from Australia Post.

We are very pleased to be part of Sunshine's 150th celebrations and for the funding received from Brimbank Council.

The idea for the 1,000 Houseboxes came from local artist and teacher Mirjana Vuk-Nikic who has coordinated the project since 2008.

In this project, Mirjana encouraged participants to share their community lives (usually on the outside of the boxes) and their family lives (usually inside the boxes).

As Mirjana explains the project;

" Moving from one place to another is our past and our future.

Figuratively, the family home is a big moving box.

Inside this moving box is a family story and culture. Outside the moving box is a family's relation to the new community.

When walking on the streets we can not reach all these family stories and cultures behind the house walls.

These stories and cultures are our treasure.

Through sharing stories and cultural richness we learn about each other and how to live and grow in our communities.

I chose a post box for making houseboxes because the post box symbolises sending items from one place to another.

It makes connection from one city to another, from one country to another, from one culture to other, from one person to another person".

The boxes provide a picture of the rich diversity of Brimbank and nearby communities.

We hope you enjoy looking at the houseboxes created in various school and community settings:

- by families at Brimbank Festival, Funtasia Children's Festival, Sudanese Australian Integrated Learning (SAIL) Program, West Sunshine Community Centre and Flemington Community Centre (Recycle Art Class) and
- by primary school students at St Albans South (now University Park), Mackellar, St Francis' de Sales, Oak Park, St Theresa's, Albion, Swifts' Creek, Yarraville West, Sydenham/Hillside and
- by students from Sunshine Secondary College

Take time to celebrate the wonderful work of all the artists involved.

Special Thanks to:

Rachel Harvey, a photographer, now based at Brimbank Library in St Albans who led the way with the first group of housebox makers at St Albans South Primary School (Now University Park PS). Many other teachers, Victoria University Education students and Gallery Sunshine Everywhere volunteers have been involved.

If you are interested in the exhibition at Sunshine Plaza (Hampshire Road), make sure to visit there between 19 February and 26 March.

If you are interested in producing houseboxes during Brimbank Festival (Saturday 19 March) or at other times, contact us.

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