

Rhyl Hinwood

A Legacy in Stone



Press Release



Rhyl Hinwood, left, © University of Qld Media;
right, © Aimee Catt

Brisbane sculptor Rhyl Hinwood has designed more than 700 commissioned artworks with her most demanding work being the recent carving of 13 statues representing 24 characters for the west end of St John's Anglican Cathedral in Brisbane (the last Neo-Gothic cathedral built in the southern hemisphere).

Inspired by Westminster Abbey which placed twentieth century martyrs in place of the traditional arrangement of statues, in 2012 the Chapter of St John's Cathedral resolved to likewise depart from the traditional arrangement of characters.

"The Westminster Abbey statues were all pulled down by Cromwell during his puritanical reign of England and they replaced those statues in the 20th century with 20th century martyrs so I was inspired by the fact that they went off the usual program and put up something different," explains Dean Peter Catt.

"So normally people would expect us to put up 13 statues which would be Jesus with his 12 mates and it seemed to me that we could use those spaces more imaginatively."

Each of the sculpted characters is based on a real person, incorporating traditional symbolism and supported by representations of Queensland native flora, recent meteorological and astronomical events in the region.



St. John's Cathedral, Brisbane, © Rhyl Hinwood



Wordsmiths Cafe at University of Queensland



Rhyl working on cathedral commission at studio © Terry Bouton

Broadcast dates:

ABC TV Plus, Sunday, March 28, 8pm
 ABC TV Compass, Sunday April 4, 6.30pm
 ABC TV, Sunday April 11, 11am



2021 / Catherine Hunter Productions

For Dean Peter Catt, it became a very personal experience when he volunteered to be the model for Judas.

He explains, "I actually think Judas gets a bad rap. I think he gets scapegoated both by the story and the way we have used the story in tradition to let all the other disciples off the hook. Judas may have actually betrayed Jesus for reasons he thought were quite honourable in that there is a thought that Judas was a member of the group called the zealots. The zealots had the idea that the Messiah would destroy the Roman occupation. It was only when Judas discovers he misread the situation that he becomes absolutely devastated that he has handed Jesus over."

The central figure of Christ, and the first to be sculpted, was inspired by Hinwood's late grandson.

"He's there to represent new life and I think eternity, if you'd like to think of it that way. He seemed to be the obvious one there for me at the time," she says.

Now aged 80, Hinwood began the rigorous carving process for the cathedral in 2013. She has no assistants preferring to design and carve the work herself. A 1986 Churchill Fellow, Rhyl Hinwood was awarded a Honorary Degree of Doctor of Philosophy by The University of Queensland in 2001 and in 2006 became a Member of the Order of Australia for service to the visual arts.

Hinwood started her career as an artist with the Queensland Museum. By night, she went to technical college and began carving.

In 1976, she won a national carving competition for The University of Queensland. Over the next 30 years, she completed more than 250 works for the university. And in 1987, she was chosen to create the ceramic Australian Coat of Arms for the House of Representatives in Parliament House, Canberra. More than 300 of her carvings have been listed on the Registers of the National Estate and Queensland Heritage.

Contact details:

Director/Producer - Catherine Hunter
 Mobile: 0422 403886 / Email: chunter@yesno.com.au
 Camera / Editor - Bruce Inglis
 Production Company - Catherine Hunter Productions

Catherine Hunter and Bruce Inglis have been committed to covering the visual arts for many years. Their recent documentaries screened on the ABC include: *Justin O'Brien - The Sacred Music of Colour*; *Quilty - Painting the Shadows*; *Australia's Lost Impressionist: John Russell and Glenn Murcutt - Spirit of Place*.

The Glenn Murcutt documentary was a finalist in the 2017 Walkley documentary award and has screened in more than 40 international film festivals.