



Tinsmith: An Ordinary Romance

Barbara Heath ARTISAN : 7 OCTOBER – 17 NOVEMBER 2010

This stunning exhibition by Brisbane artist, Barbara Heath, reveals the fascinating forgotten history of tinsmithing in Southeast Queensland and launches her collection of extraordinary new interior products, inspired by the lost craft of the tinsmith.

Rediscovering the simple skills of tinsmithing, of bending, folding and tinning, Barbara Heath has made striking candlesticks and has also created House Geisters and Hanging Crowns, which are spirit guards for the home.

With their sophisticated rusticity, and redolent with history, these beautiful objects will enhance the interior of any home.

'New tricks from old trades' is how Barbara describes this new work. Best known for her superb precious jewellery, this is an exciting new direction for her.

This exhibition also gave Barbara an opportunity to research in-depth the history of the trade. "I had no idea tinsmithing had such a colorful local history" says Heath, "tin was once as common in our everyday lives as plastic is today. There were many tinsmiths in Brisbane and the R.C. Verney & Sons factory in Fortitude Valley even combined tinsmithing with jam making."

Early tinsmiths used a few simple tools to produce utilitarian wares such as downspouts, kettles and bath tubs. Later they produced architectural detailing including window-hoods and delicate roof finials. *Tinsmith: An Ordinary Romance* exhibits a collection of old tinwares from private collectors, and even the tin patterns of Graeme Gillespie, one of Brisbane's last working tinsmiths, alongside Barbara's new objects. This reveals the link between her work and the techniques, shapes and forms of the early Queensland metalworkers.

"The very word 'tinsmith' evokes nostalgic, romantic connotations; nomadic fixers of things, outsiders, tricky, silver-tongued salesmen who charmed the farmers wives with their glinting wares" comments Barbara, and she cleverly captures this mystique in her work.

Tinsmith: An Ordinary Romance offers an opportunity to rediscover our past and see how it has inspired an artist to take a new direction.

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www.artisan.org.au | info@artisan.org.au | 0732 150 800

381 Brunswick Street Fortitude Valley Q 4006

TUES - FRI 10:30 - 5:30pm SAT 10 - 4pm

MEDIA CONTACT: Cinnamon Watson

M: 0432 219 643 **E:** cinnamonwatson@optusnet.com.au

IMAGES: Barbara Heath, *House geisters (house spirit guards)*, *Hanging Crown*, *House geisters (house spirit guards)* and *Candlesticks* 2010, Hand fabricated copper and partially tinned, mirror.

THIS PROJECT HAS RECEIVED FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FROM THE QUEENSLAND GOVERNMENT THROUGH ARTS QUEENSLAND.

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