

While attending the Wanganui School of Design Conference this year, I was introduced to Rex Turnbull who challenged me to write an article about 'what makes Claudia Borella tick'.

As if by instinct I searched to find an analogy.

Claudia

story_ Claudia Borella

BORELLA

good intentions
make for good



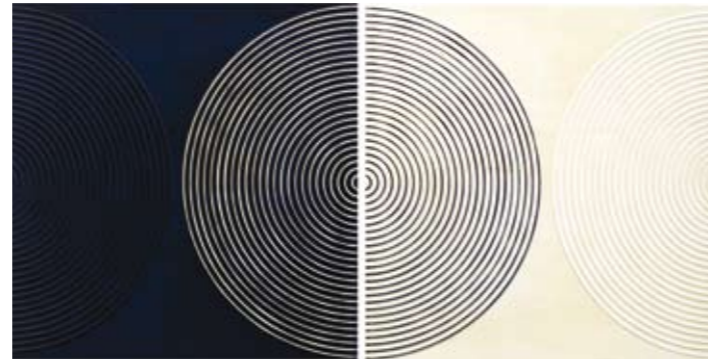
i n v e n t i o n s

I discovered a fairly nonchalant shrub, a Muehlenbeckia, at a nursery two years ago. It caught my attention because of its apparent atomic structure, a wiry plant speckled with miniature leaves. So I bought two of near-exact sameness. I never managed to re-pot one, whilst the other grew into a large mesh of molecules, as if it were reflective of the process of covalent bonding. The neglected shrub gradually formed into a sort of precious bonsai.

This bonsai has aroused much curiosity by guests, one in particular commented, "Why bother... why don't you just go and buy one fully-grown?" This question took me by surprise coming from a friend, which left me wondering exactly "why I didn't?" I realised what this exercise of growing a bonsai had to do with glass and just how it made me tick.

Being interested in objects, especially living ones, I realised that they both relate and compete with their existing environment. Against all odds, the forgotten 'bonsai' was, in the end, the most intriguing, not necessarily only because of its inherent aesthetic value, but because of the journey it had survived, and through adversity claimed to join. My interest in it continues to grow in parallel.

In many ways, glass as a crafted material possesses this elusive, but bonding quality. The actions that involve its manufacture are intrinsically linked to the outcome and indeed, any shortfall, reflecting as evidence in its definitive form. Glass is a material that requires strict observance and obedience. It can shape and control even notoriety.



..“THE GRAPHIC GEOMETRY IS INSPIRED BY CONCEPTS THOUGHT AS FAR BACK AS THE DA VINCI THEORY - THE DEVINE PROPORTION”..

I have been fortunate to have had opportunities to experience diverse cultures, having already made former connections with my Italian heritage, not unlike the Australian film 'Looking for Alibrandi' by director Kate Woods, travelled Europe and North America and now New Zealand where I have lived for the last four years. An interesting country, New Zealand has some remarkable creative talent in Film, Graphic design, Fashion and Music.

Your magazine appropriately reflects this southern talent, which ironically established itself off-shore to the disapproval of some New Zealanders in the field. Ironically, it suffers the plague of both country's fear of survival, but is synonymous with my belief that, whilst retaining independence, the two countries have a common history that has evolved into diverse outcomes worth sharing with each other as a form of interesting critical debate.


The objects or works I produce encompass these ethics in some shape or form, whether it be the outcome or through its technical process. Inspirational figures such as Glenn Murcutt, one of Australia's revered Architect's, who emphasises his philosophy 'to touch the earth lightly', are further cemented into our growing consciousness, a statement that is consciously avoided so often because of the impending reality of our existence.

Metaphysics, going back to the molecular Muehlenbeckia, is also omnipresent in my work. Without sounding too academic, and not adhering too strictly either, the graphic geometry is inspired by concepts thought as far back as the Da Vinci theory - the Divine Proportion and the Golden Section - to theories of Chaos which relate probably more to my daily existence. The point to highlight is the fine balance between them all and the means by which we can only ever presume to attain in striving for perfection.



The legacy initiated by Prince Albert who established a Royal Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufacture and Commerce culminating in London as the Great Exhibition of 1851. A gardener then, Sir Joseph Paxton, later knighted for his achievements, designed the largest prefabricated structure ever built, using glass and steel. Inspired by the structure of a leaf, the Crystal Palace, a pre-eminent building regarded as the epitome of the Industrial Revolution, was designed in 10 days and built in 17 weeks. A technological revolution for its time, it housed the first International exhibition of Art and Culture that later founded institutions such as the Victoria and Albert Museum from its profits, an event that 'outshone Queen Victoria's coronation'.

Through art the world becomes united, as Prince Albert writes, backing this international event like a peace festival, "It cannot fail to soften, if not eradicate altogether, the prejudices and animosities which have so long retarded the happiness of nations".

Today, similar expositions in the United States, such as the biannual SOFA (Sculptural Objects and Functional Art) Chicago and SOFA New York, follow on from this legacy of collecting Fine and Applied Arts on a worldwide scale. Like sport and the Olympics, the appreciation of Art has become a significant movement. 

www.claudiaborella.com

Claudia Borella graduated from the Canberra School of Art in the mid 1990s. This award winning artist's works are in collections around the world and currently touring in a showcase of Contemporary Glass throughout New Zealand, organised through Milford Galleries Dunedin, New Zealand, until 2006. Borella's work will be represented by the Bullseye Connection Gallery at London's Victoria and Albert Museum in 'COLLECT' in early February 2006 and a solo exhibition at the Bullseye Connection Gallery in Portland, Oregon USA, later that year, with plans for Taipei in 2007.