



ILLUMINATED BY FIRE

Portland Harbour 2011

regional
arts
victoria

ILLUMINATED BY FIRE

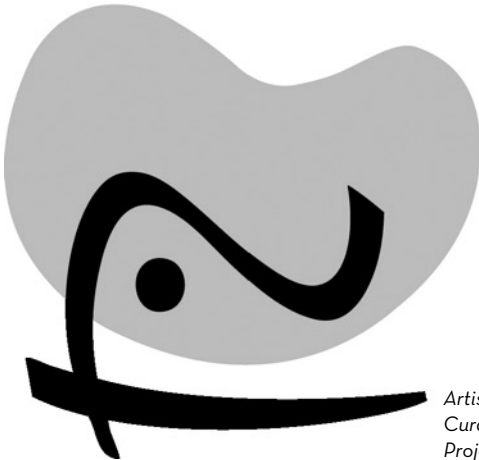
Regional Arts Victoria proudly welcomes you to the opening performance of *Illuminated By Fire*, Portland.

Illuminated By Fire is one of the largest statewide arts residencies initiated in Victoria. Produced by Regional Arts Victoria, *Illuminated By Fire* is taking place over a period of 18 months and spans 11 regions. It is an extraordinary exploration of what it means to live with fire.

From Portland to Maldon and Swan Hill to Kinglake, 11 artists and their communities are delving into the role of fire and its impact. While the tragic resonances of Black Saturday are never far away, artists across the state have engaged with the theme in a variety of ways - what do indigenous fire practices mean in contemporary society? How do fire cycles fit into a broader environmental context? And more simply, how do we eat, cook, and celebrate the joy of a shared meal?

The 11 projects work across a diverse range of artistic practices and include: installation, dance, spoken word, and digital media, and push the boundaries of aesthetic engagement. They foster a sense of community and creativity while producing work both breathtaking and inspired.

Lindy Allen
CEO Regional Arts Victoria



Artistic Director, Donna Jackson
Curator of Stories, Malcolm McKinnon
Project Coordinator, Joseph Toohey
Regional Arts Development Officer (South West), Jo Grant

ILLUMINATED BY FIRE, PORTLAND

Carmel Wallace worked with the Portland community - facilitating forums, workshops, field-trips, and the sharing of local knowledge - to produce an artwork that references both social and environmental aspects of the region.

This artwork is constructed as a ship's hull filled with large sculptures of endangered native orchids that depend on fire for survival. It will be towed by the locally built historic whaleboat, *William Dutton*.

The form of the ship's hull tells of our immigrant past and seafaring present. Specifically it alludes to the ship *New Zealander* that brought 465 emigrants to Portland in 1853, before burning to the waterline in the harbour, where its wreck still resides. It is not intended to be a replica of this sailing ship however, but a creative interpretation where sails are reworked to form the covering of the hull.

The orchid sculptures represent our unique natural environment and in particular Mellblom's Spider Orchid, *Caladenia hastata*, thought to be extinct for thirty years, then re-discovered after a fire on the heathlands in 1973.

The presentation culminates in a pyrotechnic performance on the water in Portland Harbour. A film with original music-score will creatively interpret this event.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Carmel's art practice focuses on the advantages of multi-disciplinary exploration of place and its ramifications for environmental awareness and ethics. After gaining a PhD in this field from Deakin University in 1998, she has exhibited regularly in solo exhibitions at Gallery 101 in Melbourne and in selected exhibitions such as the Blake and Wynne Prizes in Sydney, and the Lorne, Montalto and Yering Station sculpture exhibitions in Victoria. Collections include the National Library of Australia, State Library of Victoria, and The Silk Cut Collection in the National Gallery of Australia. In 2004 Carmel co curated *Surface Tension*, a printmaking exchange exhibition shown in New York and Melbourne. Major projects also include *Walk*, where eight artists walked the 270km Great South West Walk track in Victoria and produced interpretative environmental works for a national touring exhibition through NETS Victoria and VISIONS Australia; *Fresh and Salty*, a Regional Arts Victoria state wide project addressing the issue of water use; and *The Stony Rises Project* developed by RMIT Design Research Institute. Carmel is currently represented by Jenny Port Gallery in Melbourne.





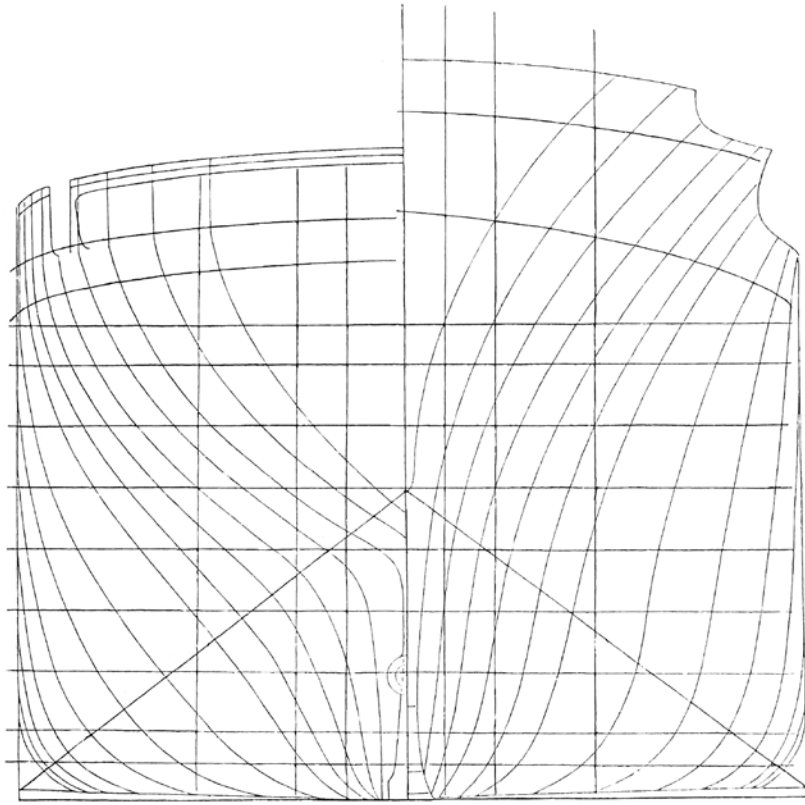
MELLBLOM'S SPIDER ORCHID / *Caladenia hastata* /
POYN POYN NYANEEN EANEET

Caladenia hastata is an endangered orchid that exists naturally only in this area of Victoria. It was thought to be extinct for thirty years before being re-discovered after a fire on the local heathlands in 1973. A viable colony of this orchid has subsequently been established through hand pollination as its natural pollinator, a single species of thynnine wasp, is now quite rare.

Caladenia hastata has very specific environmental requirements. It depends upon a microscopic mycorrhizal fungus that lives in the soil and provides the orchid with nutrients. Seeds of the orchid must make contact with this fungus in order to germinate. It requires a particular male wasp (*Lestricothynnus nr. vigilans*) to pollinate it. To attract this insect, not only does the orchid flower emit pheromones that mimic those of a female wasp, but its labellum has also evolved to provide visual stimulation to the male wasp. These wasps generally fly around the height of the orchid flowers (approximately 30cm) and will avoid large dense scrubs. Regular fires keep heathland plants low and diverse, providing suitable structure for the wasps to move through and find the orchids. Fire also opens up the area by reducing competition from other understorey plants and letting in more light, helping to promote mass flowering. The female wasp is flightless, spends most of her life underground, and only lays her eggs on scarab beetle larvae.

Indigenous people once used the tubers of the orchid as a food source. Their name for the spider orchid is *poyn poyn nyaneen eaneet*.





The story of *New Zealander* is tied to the establishment of the colonial city of Portland and it reverberates to the present: not only does the list of passenger names indicate that many descendants live in Portland today, but the ship is also tangibly present with the remains of the hull still visible from Whalers' Bluff. It is a story of intrigue and perhaps roguery, as the fire which burnt the ship to the waterline began when the captain was ashore and after the four hundred and sixty five emigrants from Scotland and Ireland had disembarked. An investigation followed and some of the crew were suspected and held for questioning. They were, however, released without charge. It is thought they headed straight for the goldfields. Having 500 tons of coal on board, the ship burnt for weeks in view of the township.

One night after we had retired, we were roused by a vivid illumination and, looking out to sea, we saw the ship New Zealander in flames. It was frightful to look on and see the beautiful ship afloat from end to end, and the leaping flames devouring the rigging. She burned fiercely and no one could save her. Fortunately the emigrants had all left and the sailors were safe. It was a sorrowful sight. A girl we had engaged came running in and declared the men had set the ship on fire. They were determined to stay and go to the goldfields . . .

extract from the diary of
Mrs. George Goodwin Crouch, 1853¹



¹ Carrol, David A., Deborah J. McPherson, Tony Tipping, (1980). 'The immigrant ship *New Zealander*', paper published with the support of Alcoa Australia, Portland, Victoria

Illuminated By Fire, Portland was possible due to the generous support, dedication, and creativity of the following individuals and organisations:

Portland Neighbourhood House

Administration

Kerry Arnott, Coordinator
Lois Holmes, President

The Arts Company Administration

Nikki Pevitt, Arts Program Coordinator
Lesley Jackson, Chairperson

Upwelling Festival Committee

Glenelg Shire Council: Liz Foreman, Judy Hartmann, Prue Lovell

Local Sponsors

Portland Aluminium
Pacific Hydro
Glenelg Shire Council



In-Kind Sponsorship

Christopher Hodgetts: dinghy
Bob Stone and Rosemary Cole: outboard motor for dinghy; transport of hull
Bob Stone: construction
Anton Hornemann and Merry Abbey: shed/site for building ship sculpture; transport of hull
Grant Wallace: construction/transport
Sally Gilchrist: drawing and painting workshops
Merry Abbey: sails for hull
Sue and Steve Parkinson: sail for hull
Tim Black (South-West Canvas): use of industrial sewing machine
P.N.H. workspace

Ship Sculpture

Bob Stone: lead role, construction/logistics
Anton Hornemann
Merry Abbey
Grant Wallace
James Wallace
Ian Leck (dinghy operator and installation assistance)

Whaleboat Crew

Bob Stone	Manya Dickinson
Gordon Stokes	Lyn McDonald
Rob Hunt	Camilla Jackson
Lynne Hollis	David Bamford
Gary Coulter	Hugh Jackson
Heather Richardson	Annie Malin



Piper

Ken Crozier

Pyrotechnics

Kelvin Rogers and Belinda White,
Southern Star Fireworks

Film

Peter Corbett,
Powerhouse Productions

Film Score

Michael Wallace

Film #2: R.A.V. Documentary, Firing The Orchid

Malcolm McKinnon

Orchid Expertise

Andrew Pritchard, D.S.E. Team Leader Biodiversity Services, Far South West
David Pitts, D.S.E. Biodiversity Officer - Biodiversity Services, South West
Kate Vlcek, D.S.E. Threatened Species Project Officer
Jeff Blackman, photographer

Orchid Painting And Drawings

Group #1: South-West T.A.F.E. Transition Students

Therese Dolman and Jenny Griffin (teachers)

Michael McDonald	Bernadette Wood
Julie Storrie	Joy Hollis
Marlene Fry	Sandy Free
Lysa Booth	Jessica Moore
Jessica King	Vanessa Edwards
	David Goebel

Group #2: Project Workshop

Sally Gilchrist (instructor)

Jeannie Gleeson	Elizabeth Knight
Daniel Joseph	Margaret Beames
Myra Lackner	Ilona Koehnlechner
Yvonne Biasol	Alexandra Davis
Christine Markulev	Jenny Ward
Anna Deacon	Sue Langley

Botanical Drawings

Kate Vlcek (instructor)
James Wallace
Alexandra Davis
Deborah Bunce
Warren Mars
Betty Trewavis
Janene Jacobs
Daphne Pascoe

Heather Richardson
Camilla Jackson
Jeanette Huppatz
Heather Rowsell
Anna Deacon
Margaret Beames



Portland Bay Press Print Exhibition,

Pyrisence: Friendly Fire

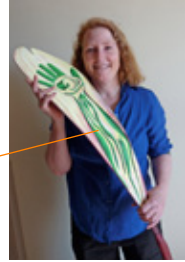
Bob Stone Deborah Bunce
Lynne Hollis Heather Richardson
Phil Cousins Georgia Cook
Nikolaus Dolman Debbie Oakley
Therese Dolman

Orchid Sculptures

Grant Wallace: frame construction/welding

Set #1: Portland Neighbourhood Hosue Needleworkers

Elizabeth Simpson Lois Holmes
Leonie Greenham Jane Roberts
Jean Hillam Daphne Pascoe
Betty Mitchell



Set #2: Portland Secondary College staff

Tracey Ward Milly Cameron
Nancy Brown Catherine Francis
Mara Satins Maureen Watts

Set #3: Portland Fibre Group

Trevor Smith Dorothy Longney
Pauline Donovan Edith Bailey
Dot Kelly Bev Smith

Set #4: Project Workshop Group One

Jeannie Gleeson Alexandra Davis
Yvonne Biasol Nola Risk
Jenny Griffin Elizabeth Knight



Set #5: Project Workshop Group Two

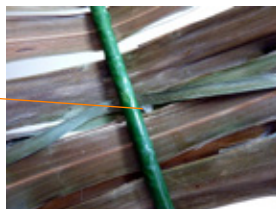
Catherine Bailey Rebecca Marriott
Sarah Sharp Annette Taylor
Michael McDonald Margaret Beames

Set #6: Bolwarra Art Group

Anne Brown Jean Hillam
Leonie Greenham Robert Clarke
Daphne Pascoe Heather Rowsell
Susan Knight Helen Crow
June Lazell Barbara Kidman

Set #7: Poy n poy n yaneen eaneeyt (Spider orchid), Peetyawan weeyn (Rekindle the Fire)

Amira Nicholson Pearl Lattarulo
Gemma Lattarulo Dan Joseph
Kellie Frankland-Saunders



Illuminated By Fire Portland Public Events

Public forum with local native orchid experts
Andrew Pritchard, David Pitts, and Kate Vlcek

Artist Residency: Sally Gilchrist (Colorado U.S.A.)

Workshops: Numerous open drawing, painting and orchid-petal making workshops at both Portland Neighbourhood House and The Arts Company, including a painting workshop with Sally Gilchrist and a botanical workshop with Kate Vlcek

Orchid Sculptures Exhibition at The Arts Company

Pyrisence: Friendly Fire exhibition at Portland Bay Press

Illuminated By Fire Portland Project Exhibition at the Maritime Discovery Centre/ Information Centre

Illuminated By Fire Portland Performance in Portland Harbour

Set #8: Orchid bud - Portland Pioneer Quilters



Catalogue Design: Michael Wallace 2011
Photography: Jeff Blackman, Kate Vlcek, Carmel Wallace



