



Brushstrokes

30th Anniversary Retrospective

Special Edition 1984 – 2014

www.aucklandeastsarts.org.nz

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Above: An artist's impression of the proposed Galerie Theatre

This special edition celebrates thirty years of **Auckland East Arts Council** (AEAC), which was incorporated on 28 August 1984 as part of the network of community arts councils supported by the Queen Elizabeth II Arts Council.

The aims were to introduce people to the arts, to encourage greater involvement in the arts and to grow the arts community of Auckland's Eastern Bays.

It was proposed to build an arts centre, the 'Galerie Theatre', and in 1985 Auckland Council granted AEAC an option to occupy a site in Merton Road, St Johns. The architectural plans included a theatre that would seat 232 people and four display rooms that could be opened up into one large gallery.

Raising an estimated \$2.5 million was a problem and,

owing to the economic downturn of 1987, the project had to be abandoned.

From 1985 to 1998 AEAC mounted exhibitions at venues that included St Lukes Community Centre in Remuera, Orakei Community Centre and the Ex-Services Memorial Hall in St Heliers.

Between 1999 and 2008 the venue for AEAC's St Heliers Bay Arts Festivals was the ASB Stadium in Kohimarama. The festivals included selected pottery, painting and sculpture competitions, popular choice awards, displays of amateur art, demonstrations by guest artists and craft people, and displays of costumes and textile art, including traditional arts of the Pacific.

Local schools displayed bursary portfolios and other student work and also took part in the

programmes of music and dance, which included kapa haka and performances by ethnic groups.

Since 2010 AEAC has held exhibitions at the Orakei Community Centre.

Auckland East Arts also collaborates with other organizations to produce events. In co-operation with the St Heliers Village Association, it has taken part in the annual St Heliers Bay Village Community Festival - for a number of years it set up a very popular children's pavement drawing competition in the main street.

Again, in conjunction with the Village Association, it has organized an annual event, St Heliers Celebration of Art, which has included exhibitions of members' paintings in St Heliers Community Library, demonstrations of painting by

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Above: Charles Alldritt, first chairperson of AEAC, with Ngaire Stewart (right) and an unidentified committee member outside St Lukes Community Centre, Remuera in 1985.

members, children's art competitions, and the display of paintings in St Heliers shops and offices.

Besides, AEAC has an ongoing display of work in St Heliers Community Library (similar displays have been held at the Remuera Library and at the Orakei Community Centre).

The Remuera and Ellerslie Business Associations have both invited AEAC to mount exhibitions and, in both places, it has displayed artworks in the local shop windows. Also at Ellerslie, there was an annual exhibition in the Ellerslie War Memorial Community Centre for a number of years.

Over the last 11 years, AEAC has been invited to Grace Joel Retirement Village for the annual "ArtShowcase at Grace Joel". There is a featured artist, often a distinguished member of AEAC. The evening reception is



Above: Chairperson Doug Ogle with Dame Catherine Tizard, Artshowcase at Grace Joel. Below: Abdul-Satar Jawad's study of the St Heliers' pavement art competition (2010).



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always the highlight of our year with wine, juice and nibbles, a musical programme and a guest speaker who is notable in the art world. The People's Choice competition means everyone gets involved.

AEAC holds open-air exhibitions at St Heliers and Mission Bay and indoor exhibitions at venues which have included St Philips Church hall in St Heliers, the Scout Hall in Churchill Park, the Information Centre in Cornwall Park and the Orakei Community Centre. It also successfully shows paintings in shopping malls.

Although in the beginning, the "Council" included many different types of arts, crafts and musical groups, over the years AEAC has evolved into a society of painters.

To enable its members to learn and improve their knowledge and skills, AEAC runs a "Do Your Own Thing" untutored group (on Tuesday mornings at St James Church Hall, Kapa Rd) and an Outdoor Painting Group (meeting on Thursday mornings at different "plein air" locations).

Until recently, a Life Studies and Portrait group with live models was held. Professional art teachers are employed to run full-day demonstrations and workshops during the year. From time to time, AEAC organises art workshops and competitions for young people.

Possibly unique to AEAC is a series of Tableaux in which members draw and paint historical costumes worn by live models.

Other activities include visits to exhibitions, galleries and artists' studios, and social activities,



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including a Mid-Winter Luncheon, and the Christmas and AGM parties which are greatly enjoyed by members.

Also included in the programme is a "Big Day Out". This year was different as it consisted of open-air painting at a beautiful private garden in Glendowie on a glorious summer day.

Over these 30 years, AEAC has built up knowledge and expertise and a reputation for being able to mount a good exhibition. It has been invited to organise events in partnership with other organisations year after year.

Auckland East Arts is a voluntary organization. True to its objectives, drawn up 30 years ago, it nurtures the arts and voices the need for more and better facilities where members of the community can take part in cultural activities.



Top: Former patron, Gray Bartlett MBE (left). Above: Life member, Les Turnbull with member Pat King.



Above: Founding members Keith and Ngaire Stewart QSM



Above: Toni Millar (left) former chairperson and Les Melhuish (right) inaugural editor of *Brushstrokes*. Below: Life members, Penny Otto (left) and Ailsa Martin-Buss.

