

The recent history of Arthur Page's Tamborine Mountain Telescope

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In the last year of completing my Fine Art Degree in 2007, Ross, my Partner, was invited to give a talk at the Charleville State High School. The school was being inaugurated as the Centre of Excellence in Astronomy by the Queensland Department of Education, Training and the Arts. There were many science and astronomy talks happening during that weekend. During the event I became quite friendly with one Astronomy Lecturer, Dr Brad Carter, from the University of Southern Queensland. At the time I was also searching for a subject or concept idea for my Honours Degree (2008-2009). I asked Brad Carter if he would be ok if I did a residency with him for my Honours. He was very amenable to this idea. During my residency I visited Dr Carter at USQ campus once every few weeks in Toowoomba, chatted to him to find out about Astronomy and the research he was working on. At that time he was working on the quest to find new planets. Brad invited me and Ross to go on a planet search week at the Siding Springs Observatory at Coonabarabran. It was a great place that gave me a lot of material that could be developed into artworks. Staying up all night was the hardest part - it was slow but interesting at the same time. A few artworks were developed from that week.

I was still searching for something more solid or tactile that I could develop into artwork. During one of my visits I asked Brad if there was some equipment that he and USQ had no use for and were intending to get rid of. He took me to their storeroom. Showed me this and that. Nothing grabbed my imagination. I was hoping for some old physics lab equipment. Anyway. We went outside into their storage area for larger items. Brad showed me this pile of metal in pieces under plastic along with some very large heavy items. He explained that it is a telescope that they previously used at Mt Kent. Now decommissioned after a new one was installed. He said I could take this. Well! My head exploded with ideas for the little and large pieces. I naturally said, YES, I WOULD LOVE TO TAKE THIS OFF YOUR MOUNTAIN! I packed as many of the smaller



pieces into my little Holden Barina. I must have skated down the hill. I came back a week later with Ross and his trailer for the large and small pieces left. I knew what I wanted to do with it. My immediate idea was to paint each item in one colour. This was my intervention. Then either spread on the floor in a certain pattern or hang on wire moving in the air in a certain configuration and call this 'Exploded Universe'. Or something like it. Great idea and image in my head. Anyway this did not happen!! Ross wished to put the telescope together/refurbish it. He convinced me this is a good idea as people will be able to view the planets and stars again through this historical telescope. Mmm! I agreed. It was a good idea to repair the telescope so it can be used for its purpose - to amaze the viewer as they look up

into the dark sky. I also thought I could use any images for artworks.

Ross put it together the best he could. We discovered the tracking device was missing/unusable. A modern one was needed. A mirror was also missing. Ross was intending to make a new mirror. These were never completed as Ross became quite busy at work. The telescope was put aside as a project to finish at a later date when time allowed.

Ross eventually retired from work as a Scientist Engineer with Defence Science Technology Organisation, within their Hypersonic Rocket Research Facility. He was still busy at home though helping various friends and relations, as well as working on projects at home. Ross became ill. It was discovered he had late stage Cancer of the Oesophagi. At this time I was involved with Jaap on a committee to create an application for a light art project for the mountain for the Commonwealth Games 2018.

At the last Glow Light Art Project Meeting at the Monkey Tree Cafe with Jaap and Committee Members, Ross came with me. Near the end of the meeting, Ross offered to donate the Arthur Page Telescope back to the Mountain, via Jaap (unknown to me). A good move, as Ross knew Jaap would do his best to see that the telescope would find its home on the mountain. Therefore one project finished and another started.

RIP Sweet Ross. 21 June 2017.