

FEATURE

Head On Pftofo Festival

29 April-6 June 2010

There's only a few more days to come and see this exciting outdoor and indoor exhibition of photography in Centennial Park. However, if you miss it, we are delighted to present a pictorial retrospective of this important showcase of photography.



Duck Pond at night... after all the humans have left. 2010
by Peter Solness from The Night Garden Exhibition

Humble beginnings

Head On had its beginnings in 2004 as a well-known annual National Portrait Photography Prize. However in 2010, with limited budget but grand ambition, Head On rebranded itself as a Photo Festival, broadening the photographic disciplines on exhibition and encompassing over 80 exhibitions across 67 venues throughout Sydney.

The festival aimed to attract a wide range of excellent photography from Australia and overseas regardless of whether the photographer was well known or not.

Centennial Parklands was delighted to be one of the venues for both an indoor and outdoor exhibition as well as hosting workshops and media events. Many other unusual spaces became art venues around Sydney, including restaurants and cafes. Public galleries, including the Museum of Sydney and the Manly Art Gallery also took part, as well as a large number of commercial galleries.

The Head On Portrait Prize remains the Festival's flagship event. Founded by Moshe Rosenzweig in 2004, the show's main selection criteria is the quality and impact of the image rather than the celebrity of the photographer or subject. As a result, this prize is regarded by the arts community and reviewers as the most critically important photographic portrait prize in the country.

Festival highlights included a retrospective of Oculi - one of Australia's top photojournalists' collectives - and a retrospective of the late Rennie Ellis.

The Night Garden

30 April - 6 June (Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays)

Centennial Parklands was thrilled to offer the Superintendent's Residence as the venue for a stunning collection of images by photographer Peter Solness.

Peter Solness is renowned for his landscape photography which is taken after dark, using a blend of moonlight and torchlight to create his unique images.

This exhibition featured some splendid new photographs taken very recently in Centennial Park, including one standout-image, which Peter has dubbed "The World's Greatest Tree Photograph". This may sound a little self-congratulatory, but as a long-time tree photographer and author of the acclaimed "Tree Stories" (Chapter and Verse, 1999) he can claim some authority.

Peter says: The image in question is so utterly sublime that I'm dedicating an entire room within the cottage to this one photograph'. If you haven't seen this image, you have until 6 June to view it. Centennial Parklands has acquired this image and is

looking at ways to make it available to the general public after the exhibition has closed.

The image of the illuminated ducks in Centennial Park's Duck Pond (reproduced above) has captured the public's imagination and interest. It captures the magic of Centennial Park, however as Peter said 'it took a fair bit of planning!' Without giving away the secrets of this poetic image, Peter said: 'I commandeered the rubber ducky belonging to my 3 year old son, Tuomo. Unbeknown to him I borrowed it and spent the night sketching a number of duck profiles on black cardboard!' He set up the photograph late one night in the Duck Pond, wading out in the water to carefully position the ducks and then, in his unique style, illuminating their profiles by torchlight.

Peter's images have been reproduced on both covers of this magazine and he has generously donated 20 per cent of proceeds from sales of his photos in the Exhibition to support the work of the Centennial Parklands Foundation.

Australian Commercial and Media Photographers

Signature Show

30 April - 5 June (daily)

Throughout the history of photography, famous photographers have often had images that became more famous than the photographers themselves: images that became their signature image. These images capture the unique vision and unmistakable style of the individual photographers, and assert their chapter in the history of photography.

The Signature Exhibition was created when the Australian Commercial and Media Photographers (ACMP) asked its members "What is your signature image, and why?" The exhibition celebrates the depth of talent of ACMP members, and steps inside the minds of the photographers.

Torunn Momtazi, Head On Volunteer, portrait/feature story photographer and member of ACMP said: As the Signature Exhibition had not been shown yet in Sydney, I thought the Head On Photo Festival would be the perfect time for these works to be introduced to Sydneysiders. It was important to me that the works be shown in a public space, outside the traditional gallery context. Clearly Centennial Parklands is its right home.'

The artworks were suspended between trees on Hamilton Drive, adjacent to Cannon Triangle. Torunn said: The exhibition has drawn attention since we hung the first print, with Park visitors drawn in from afar as they see the prints suspended among the trees. The response has been overwhelmingly positive and I've been impressed by how generous people have been in expressing their appreciation. Works in a public place like this seem to invite discussion about a print that visitors find particular intriguing or just stunningly beautiful.'

Inspirational workshops

Centennial Parklands hosted a number of workshops associated with the Festival. Peter Solness conducted a workshop on night photography, giving his expert tips on how to get the best exposures and effects with a variety of lights and tricks.

Regular Parklands' photographer Chris Gleisner ran two workshops, teaching camera basics to children and adults. Chris is well known to Centennial Parklands patrons as she runs our popular school holiday Introduction to Photography programs. If you missed Chris's workshop you can sign up to her next school holiday program on Friday 16 July.

For more information on the Head On Photo Festival visit www.headon.com.au.



Images from the ACMP Signature Show. Pictured here are works by Ian Hofstetter (Observatory Hill), Emma Phillips (Pauline Hanson) and George Petting (Blaine Te Rito - Ta Moko)



From Distant Lands by Penelope Beveridge, from the ACMP Signature Show in Centennial Park