

Meryl Bell

Nowhere is the beauty of Australian native flora more evident than in the new collection of works by Western Australian artist Meryl Bell. Bell specialises in the genre of still life floral art, with highly realistic images of exceptional clarity and botanical accuracy. Her use of brilliant colour and her technique creates a tactile appeal, similar to that employed by the seventeenth century Dutch floral artists, resulting in visually stunning pieces that are a celebration of Australian flora.



“My reason for painting native flora is to introduce others to the delights, surprises and pleasures found in the Australian bush. The joy and wonder of being close to nature touches so few of us as our lives increasingly become divorced from anything that is of the natural world”, says Bell. “Many wonderful Australian artists have made us visually aware of the vastness of landscape, of light and the colours of this country but there is also pleasure to be found in the intricate structure of plants and their vibrant colouring. The forms and colours of our native flora together with the delicate insects and stunning creatures that have adapted their life cycles and physical attributes to integrate so perfectly with their habitat, continue to amaze. If my paintings make people stop for a moment to look, enjoy and wonder then I will have succeeded.”

Bell’s paintings invite close inspection of the bloom, the foliage, the form and colour. Those who look hard enough will also be surprised by the glimpses of delicate insects or small reptiles which are incorporated into many of her works. Bell hopes that visitors to this exhibition will enjoy the unexpected and engaging arrangements and gain some sense of the wealth and beauty of our environment. Her work - in tenderly depicting the plants and blooms of Australia - draws our attention to a natural world which fascinates, captivates and yet is so often left unnoticed. In capturing their quiet beauty, Bell makes us look in wonder.

Faye Jones

I was in my final year of the Certificate in Art Craft Practice at the Kalgoorlie Campus of Curtin University when I saw my first crystalline-glazed pot.

It was a dark blue vase made by the Victorian potter Ted Secombe, and I was literally blown away by the brilliance and design complexity of this beautiful glaze.

I purchased this pot and when I confided to my lecturer Wayne Alty, my ambition to create crystalline-glazed pieces myself, he said "When you get your first crystal on your first pot I will give you this teapot", and so the battle began!



There were many experiments with disappointment time after time, for the preparation of the ingredients must be precise, the method and application of the raw glaze is important, and the temperature range at which the crystals will seed and later grow is narrow and varies with the different oxides used.

Some nineteen firings later, I finally managed to produce two pieces in the kiln with small crystals. I was never so proud as when I showed them to my lecturer who immediately handed me the promised teapot he had been making.

From these two formulae I have continued to experiment, mainly with macro-crystals which I find exceedingly beautiful. Because the crystals actually form at random in the extreme heat of the kiln the results can never be guaranteed, but to me the ability to produce an object of such beauty from a lump of clay, far outweighs any frustrations along the way.

I have now sold well over one thousand pieces of crystalline-glazed pottery which are in homes and offices in Western Australia and the Eastern States as well as America, Italy, Singapore, England, New Zealand and Belgium.