Arts Mildura transcript 2012

Ross Lake:

Well La Trobe University has been associated with Arts Mildura since 1994. In fact, the current campus director was on the committee that formed Arts Mildura and assisted in putting on our very first event which was a poetry reading by Robert Gray and the late Phillip Hodgins. So La Trobe’s involvement with Art Mildura is in fact from its beginnings. Since its inception Art Mildura has grown from just one single event at a local restaurant, Stefano’s Cantina in fact, to a festival that employs full time a number of people and now conducts five individual festivals.

Kristian Haggblom:

Students get involved in a number of different ways. Of course volunteering which is fantastic because the festivals don’t really happen if we don’t have people to help out. They help but not only just looking after the spaces but they also get involved with the visiting artists, so we always need people to show them around or even just driving them round from different locations and then of course helping to install the work and document the work. Then of course most of the visiting artists are involved in the art forum program, so the students get to have opportunity to hear them speak directly. The visiting artists get involved with the reviews by looking at student work and student feedback. So I think that’s fairly exciting - there’s local and international people who attend those events and the students get see real people practising and how that happens.

As academic and degree students there had a stage where they are learning to create their own practice through methodology whether that’s painting, photography or video but they also need to understand how the mechanics of the art world and industry and running festivals happens. So through getting involved with the events they can see how those things take place, how you apply for funding, even how you mingle or interact with people who are visiting at exhibitions openings or public lectures.

Ross Lake:

Bringing the arts to your community is about illustrating and invigorating people in terms of the value of arts and culture. I’m a great believer in bringing things that might be a bit challenging, also in bringing things that people who don’t have the capacity to go, out of town to or overseas, to Mildura. We have brought acts from Japan, Finland, England, from essentially all over the world to Mildura and some of those artists have taken their work that they have created here in Mildura out to the world. So I actually see that capacity to bring excellence in the arts into the community as vital.

Neil Fettling:

Well La Trobe University Mildura campus has been involved as an partner and a sponsor of the Arts Festival right back to inception, so we’ve shared the increase of the reputation of the Arts Festival over that time. Combinating I suppose two or three years ago when Robyn Archer was here, as part of a major lecture she did to the Canberra political community sited the Mildura Arts Festival as one of the most important in the nation and that of course has been supported by a whole range of people who’ve cycled through the program in every year from John Coetzee to Clive James to Les Murray - all have ongoing kind of support and interest in the growth of the festival.