

Deborah D. Halpern.



Jan 29 -
Feb 11 2023

QDOS
LORNE

DEBORAH HALPERN



*Creature with blue hand and levaves
87 x 28 x 38cm, glass, fibreglass, steel*



Creature with silver and gold wings, 90 x 35 x 36cm, glass, figreglass, steel

"Ever since Deborah Halpern's Angel was unveiled on its original site in the south moat on St Kilda Road it has evoked a wide range of reactions from the millions of Melbournians and visitors to the city who have gazed up at this ambitious, unorthodox and 'accessible' public commission. For many, Angel is a symbol or emblem of the city of Melbourne and for that matter, of the Gallery itself, and it is much beloved by school children. It has often been said to have 'softened', 'enlivened' and even to have 'humanised' the formidable grey facade of Roy Grounds' design for the National Gallery of Victoria on St Kilda Road,

Shortly after daybreak on a Sunday in late July 1989, a slow-moving truck with a large, strangely shaped load - like the prone and motionless body of some huge creature from the deep - eased into the curb of St Kilda Road, and came to a halt in front of The National Gallery of Victoria. At this hour, when roads were largely free of traffic and pavements bare of pedestrians, there was something vaguely furtive about the manoeuvre. Rugged up against a nip in the air, a small huddle of figures on the Gallery's forecourt observed the proceedings with a mixture of great expectation and mild trepidation.

On the back of the low loader a vast mounding form concealed under a dark tarpaulin appeared wondrous in the half light of the winter's morning. The strangeness of the spectacle and the rapt attention of the onlookers called to mind a marvellous description by the English writer Edmund Gosse (1849-1928).

In one sense at least, like the dead whale brought to the Gosse family's door on a truck, the arrival at the NGV forecourt in mid 1989 in the bulky 'torso' of Halpern's pre-fabricated Angel sculpture was, without a doubt, a memorable 'addition to the experience' of those who were involved in the commission and installation of this festive monument.

The artist's crowding of motifs on the colossal form also creates the impression that somewhere among Angel's ample repertoire of whimsical motifs, banners, scrolls, trailing ribbons, mask-like heads, serpent bodies and wide-eyed hybrid creatures - one might also find a comet and a whale.

The curious and colourful effigy soon became the most popular - and certainly most photographed - of Melbourne's venerable assemble of large-scale works of outdoor sculpture. Angel was promptly acclaimed as



Person and jug



Creature with wings



Creature with two legs
Each 35 x 45cm (framed), ink on paper

a major acquisition for the city's complement of works of public art.

Halpern's Angel was a notable and welcome addition to Melbourne's cavalcade of outdoor sculpture, which includes the major European works on the forecourt of the State Library of Victoria; assorted contemporary commissions (by Inge King, Clement



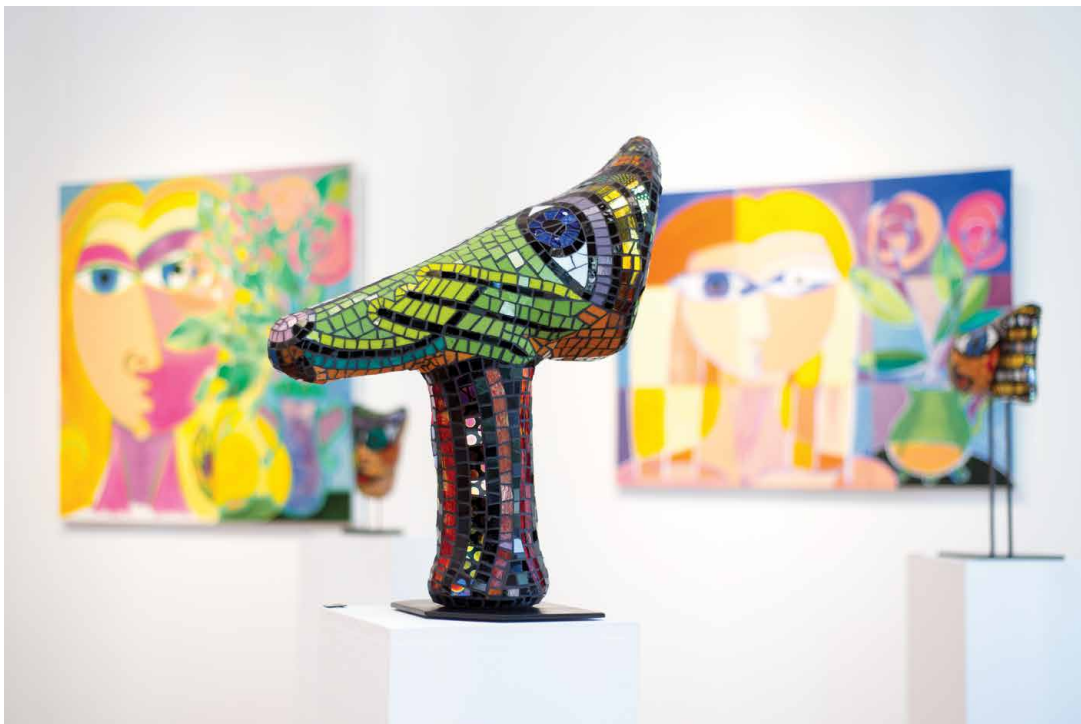
*Creature with pink nose
68 x 37 x 68cm, glass, fibreglass, steel*

Meadmore, Andrew Rogers, and others) along the Southbank promenade; those in the immediate precinct of the NGV International in St Kilda Road, and of course the magnificent buttress groups in stone by Paul Montford on the nearby Shrine of Remembrance.

While most of Melbourne's major public commissions of contemporary sculpture are formal in style, Halpern's *Angel* brings a lyrical narrative quality to the scene. In an age when there is no longer any call for artists to grapple with representations of heavenly choirs, annunciations, St Theresa in Ecstasy, or the dutiful figure of Tobias travelling with the archangel Raphael incognito. Halpern's *Angel* is a singular and singularly successful demonstration of the enduring appeal for us all of fantasy, mythic narrative and sheer exuberance of visual expression.

Angel has been referred to on occasion by the artist as 'my large child'. The formal and technical success of the work encouraged her to pursue this same idiom in later works of large-scale mosaic sculpture. '*Ophelia*', 1992, which is part of the Southgate project, is one of the best of these later works. [*Ophelia* became 'The Face of Melbourne' for several years.] Another example is the hunched, beguiling, big-eyed form entitled '*Portal to Another Time and Place*, 2004', a work that, at the time of writing, was sitting in glorious incongruity before the dour stone facade of Werribee Park, one of Victoria's finest historic houses. [Now located at the Point Leo Estate Sculpture Park.]"

-Geoffrey Edwards, 2006, excerpt from the catalogue for '*Angel*', a retrospective exhibition at The Ian Potter Centre, NGV Australia, Federation Square, to celebrate the installation of *Angel* at Birrarung Marr

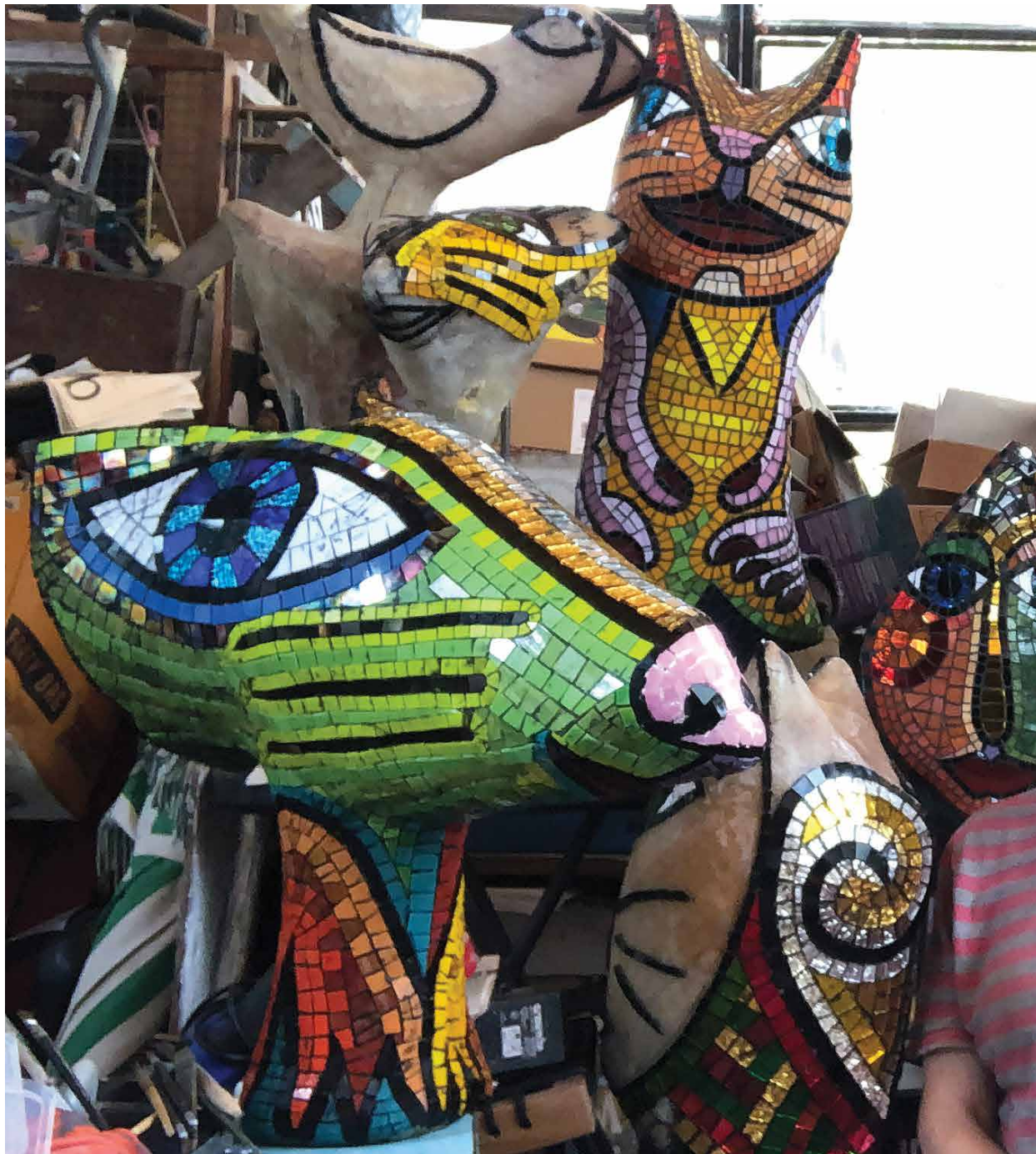




Dog flying over landscape, 114 x 140cm, ink on paper



Left to right: Alice and rabbit, 122 x 122 x 3.5cm, spraypaint on canvas
 Creature with pink hands, 94 x 32 x 30cm, glass, fibreglass, steel
 Girl with blonde hair, 122 x 122 x 3.5cm, spraypaint on canvas





Deborah in her Warrandyte studio



Girl with teacup and cloud, 97.5 x 67cm (framed), gouache and ink on paper
Girl with fish, 97.5 x 67cm (framed), gouache and ink on paper



Creature with pink hands, 94 x 32 x 30cm, glass, fibreglass, steel



Person with dichroic neck, 58 x 66 x 24cm, glass, fibreglass, steel



Reading order: Girl with pigtails, Dog flying on wind, Girl and dog, Girl and flower
each 57 x 77cm, ink on paper



Alice and white rabbit, 68 x 84cm (framed), gouache and ink on paper



Antechinus, 63 x 34 x 34cm, Phascogale, 48 x 34 x 37cm, each glass, fibreglass, steel

Selected Collections

Aichi Arts Centre, Aichi Prefecture, Japan
 Art Gallery of Western Australia
 Artbank
 Australian National University, Canberra
 Australian National Gallery, Canberra
 Ballarat Fine Art Gallery
 Box Hill College of T.A.F.E. Collection
 City of Frankston
 City of Manningham
 City of Melbourne
 City of Yarra
 Council of Adult Education Collection
 Diners Club International
 Fintona College
 Geelong Art Gallery
 Levantine Hill Estate
 Luther College
 Melbourne University Collection
 Metricon Homes

National Australia Bank
 National Gallery of Victoria
 Osaka Sculpture Park, Japan
 Palace Museum of Taipei
 Point Leo Estate
 Queensland Art Gallery
 Queensland University of Technology
 Rearing Horse Estate
 Rochford Winery
 Shepparton Art Museum
 Shire of Nillumbik
 Southgate Collection, Melbourne
 Swan Hill Regional Gallery
 University of New South Wales
 University of Southern Queensland
 Victorian Ceramic Group Collection
 Victorian State Craft Collection
 Visy Packaging
 Yabby Lake Estate

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The Face, 5 x 2.5 x 2.5m (kinetic), glass, fibreglass, stainless steel