

John Dahlsen

Biography:

March 2009

John Dahlsen is a renowned contemporary environmental artist based in Byron Bay Australia. John was educated at the Victorian College of the Arts and the Melbourne College of Advanced Education. He exhibits regularly in Australian capital cities, throughout regional Australia, and internationally in Europe and the US, where he shows regularly in New York.

He won Australia's oldest art award, the prestigious Wynne Prize, at the Art Gallery of NSW in 2000 and was again a finalist in 2003 and 2004. In 2006 he was also a finalist in the Sulman Award at the Art Gallery of NSW. He was runner up in "The Signature Of Sydney Prize" in 2006 and won a prestigious award for mixed media/new media at the Florence Biennale of Contemporary Art in 2003.

John has lectured at various universities and

secondary schools from 1980 – 2009. He has been an invited speaker at architectural and environmental symposiums in Australia and internationally, including at the Australian Embassy in Washington DC, which coincided with an exhibition of his work there in 1999.

In 2004, John became the first Australian artist, (he joins such renowned artists as Andy Warhol, Keith Haring, Francesco Clemente and Damien Hirst) to be commissioned by global vodka producer Absolut, to create a major public artwork "Absolut Dahlsen".

In 2005, he curated as well as participated in an exhibition at the Samuel Dorsky Museum, in New York State in the USA; he also took up an artist in residence position in Jefferson City Missouri, USA in September 2005, where he made a public artwork for their sculpture walk. In November/December 2007 John's work was exhibited in New York in an exhibition titled "Ecological Integrity / On The Brink" John exhibited his work in Connecticut



USA in March 2008. He was an invited guest of the North Stonington Education Foundation, to work with students and to deliver a lecture at Mystic Aquarium and Institute for Exploration Mystic Connecticut USA.

He was a cultural ambassador for Australia, when he exhibited his work at the Athens Olympics of Visual Arts Exhibition in 2004 during the Olympics. John is represented by major public and private collections in Australia, Europe, the USA and Japan.

Public Lectures and Speaking Engagements

John Dahlsen regularly gives lectures and talks on his environmental art, in speaking engagements, all over the world and delivers these seminars, beginning with a talk on environmental art. His target audiences range from participants in seminars and environmental symposium events and at corporate functions, to universities, exhibition openings and embassy events. John also regularly delivers talks at his various shows.

He delivers these seminars for various timeframes, from 20 minutes to one to two hours, depending on the target audience.

The speaking engagements are delivered with both Power-Point and DVD presentations, and involve an introduction about himself and some basics about his history as an artist, leading

on to discussion about the importance of art, emphasizing environmental and ecological awareness. This leads into the PowerPoint presentation, where he projects various images. Depending on the length and nature of the presentation, this can amount to anywhere between 70 and 200 images, followed by a question and answer discussion. In this time of image projections, he focuses on the visuals of around eight main aspects of this environmental artwork. John encourages audience participation in the form of question and answers.

John has spoken to groups of people ranging in size from 30 - 3,000.

He shows a selection of 3 DVD's, which have been made about his work. One is a recent interview and survey of his work, tracing the past 10 years or so and runs for approximately 10 minutes. Another, which documents the production of his well-known Absolut commission - this DVD runs for 30 minutes and is sometimes shown in segments. A further DVD, which is a 6-part presentation

of aspects of his work -titled "Renewed", is also presented, if time permits and there is the audience demand.

Statement:

'Public speaking has occurred for me as a natural development with my work. I love to address audiences and feel I have a gift with delivering them. My many years in the past as an educator have aided this, with my lecturing at both the university level as well as in the secondary school level. Invitations to speak publicly keep coming these days, which I enjoy. I love to travel, and I'm paid well for it, which is a good acknowledgment. Plus, I believe the effect I have on my audience far outreaches the carbon footprint I'm making with the travel component of giving these lectures. I'm very fortunate to connect with people on such an intimate way in these lectures, as evidenced by how I regularly receive e-mails for weeks afterward from around the globe by people who have been touched by one of my lectures.'

Testimonials:

'John Dahlsen embodies the spirit of all Australians who love our coastline. His contemporary work is the very core of what makes Clean up an important community event in our nation. His concepts are abstract and imaginative and he has turned the flotsam and jetsam washed up on our beaches into highly collectable art.'

Ian Kiernan, AO, Chairman and Founder Clean Up Australia & Clean Up The World.

'The power of Dahlsen's work lies in the artist's abilities to witness the beauty in the every day and the mundane. However, it is his history as a painter that gives him the ability to see the objects he collects in their purest form, that is the shape and color.'

Brett Adlington, Curator, Exhibitions and Collections. Gold Coast City Art Gallery QLD

'Years of abstract/figurative painting... inspired by living organic forms often monochromatic, smoothed transition to his present exhibition of works. ... His flotsam collection acquired at the same time as his driftwood evolved into a further dramatic phase. ... 'Contemporary Landscapes' his mammoth task – afforded him a freedom to demonstrate aesthetic possibilities which radiate vitality and joie de vivre, uncommon to most artists deeply conscious of environmental issues'.

Review of 'Contemporary Landscapes' exhibition by the respected critic/artist and trustee of the Queensland Art Gallery, Catharina Hampson.

'The successful artistic expression of an abstruse concept such as universality is difficult to achieve, but ultimately rewards both artist and viewer. It is what lies beyond the boundaries of abstraction and figuration that intrigues John Dahlsen and he has developed a unique visual language to

articulate this. Dahlsen has only arrived at this crucial stage in his work after a course of exploration, both in a personal and artistic sense....'

Sandra Murray: Director - Lawrence Wilson Art Gallery, University of Western Australia

"John has been working on a very successful new body of work that extends from his previous enviro sculptures into paintings. They are of the places he has collected detritus for his sculptures. The subject matter also happens to be Byron Bay, a place of infinite beauty and great affection. "

Steven Alderton, - Director of the Lismore Regional Art Gallery NSW Australia.

'Few could have predicted that Australian artist John Dahlsen would have transitioned from representational painting to abstract painting and finally, for the last decade, to found object work – not even the artist himself. Yet today, the mixed-media/ assemblage sculpturist is one of the most recognized and awarded environmental artists in the world.'

Kim Hall, Florida artist - Editor New York Art Calendar Magazine

'Dahlsen, is an optimist. To begin with, he's already made a positive statement by clearing off the unsightly stuff that is lethal to fish and fowl. (Australia's wildlife conservancies adore Dahlsen's work, which was hardly his intention, but so be it.) Piling up black combs, disposable razors and pieces of rope yielded a Louise Nevelson-like sculpture with attitude.'

John T. Spike - Director of the Florence International Biennial of Contemporary Art.

'John Dahlsen's barefoot story of how he turned 'found rubbish' on Byron Bay's beaches into meaningful, collectable art is a fun and inspiring tale. His art provides a valid commentary on our wasteful, throwaway society and his lively speaking presentation



challenges people to think about how they can make a difference to our environment.'

Kim McKay, AO, environmental campaigner & author; Co-founder Clean Up Australia & Clean Up the World

'At the Mystic Aquarium & Institute for Exploration the audience listened with rapt attention to John Dahlsen's lecture while they viewed slides of his artworks. John's words and images drew them into his world and inspired each person to care deeply about this world we share...John Dahlsen's insightful work is an inspiration to all who care about our world, and all who learn to care, as they view his art and hear his words. We were thrilled to have met and learned so much from this distinguished artist.'

Suzanne Starr Art Educator and North Stonington Education Board Member Connecticut USA

'Your work has had a profound effect on me since I discovered it for the first time at the Powerhouse Museum in Sydney 3 years ago. The totems stopped me in my tracks, I felt the impact of your art in my mind and in my heart. Not only were they beautiful, they had a strong message to awaken the consciousness of the "asleep" This filled me with inspiration, It was then that I realised I could make art that would be able to shift consciousness to a deeper place.'

Alison Laird Kapiti Coast NZ