

GLOBAL INSTALLING – ARTISTS KEN & JULIA YONETANI



Something wonderful about life in these Bluest of Mountains is that our neighbours are most often very artistic and inspiring folk. I am lucky enough to share a street with the ferociously creative duo Ken and Julia Yonetani. These artists live a fascinating life, the recipients of a mixed and exciting bag of local and international residencies, recently including Mildura, Finland, Portugal and an exhibition at GV Art in London.

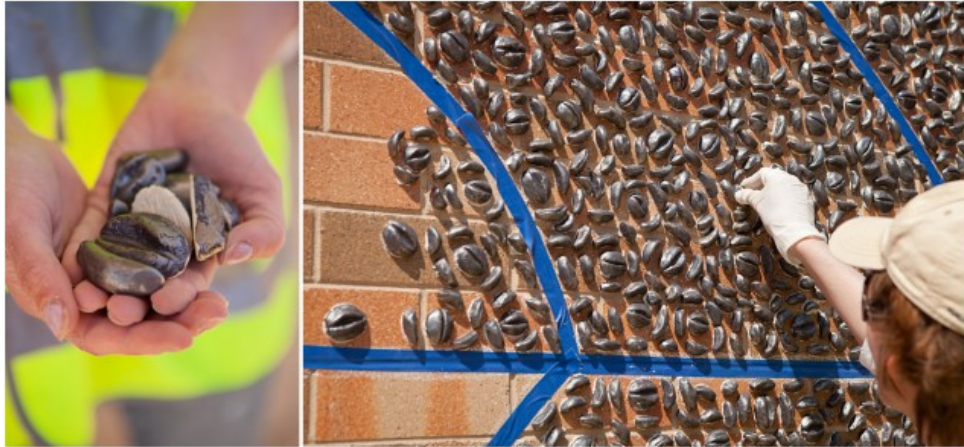


An example of their beautiful sculptural work, distinguished by intricate and super delicate micro patterns, will be permanently on display outside the new Blue Mountains Cultural Centre in Katoomba. Ken and Julia are currently installing 12,000 tiles which make up the stomata and inner workings of a single breathing leaf. The tile shapes were inspired by microscopic images obtained from the Australian Centre for Microscopy and Microanalysis.



The fragility of our planet, and the responsibility that we have to take care of the earth beneath our feet, is a constant concern for these artists. Sugar, salt and uranium glass are some of the unusual materials Ken and Julia have used for art installations that focus on the environment.

In response to Japan's 2011 Fukushima Nuclear Power Plant accident, Ken and Julia crafted an enchanting and spooky series of sculptural installations made from uranium glass. A monstrous ant and a giant chandelier made with tiny uranium glass beads were recently exhibited at 4A Centre for Contemporary Asian Art in Sydney, while 15 of the chandeliers were installed at Arterreal Gallery, Sydney. At the 53rd Venice Biennale in 2009, the artists explored the relationship between human desires and environmental issues with their "Sweet Barrier Reef" made from sugar shaped into enormous coral sculptures. And in response to rising salt levels in the Murray Darling basin, a collection of elegant salt sculptures which mimic classic table settings, titled "Still Life: The Food Bowl", were installed in Sydney and the UK.



To see more of their fascinating work, visit Ken and Julia's site
kenandjuliayonetani.com

Ken and Julia: great to have you nearby, and I wish you all the very best.

A Cloudscape Q&A and G&T with Julia Yonetani.

Was there a pivotal point in your lives that set your destiny as artists?

We both always loved art, but ended up getting steered in a completely different direction when we were young. Then we got too old to care about wasting any more time not doing what we love.

How did you start working together?

Ken was always hassling me to work with him. I thought one artist was enough for one family! Then I worked as project manager for his work Sweet Barrier Reef in Venice, and it was great fun. I guess our collaboration started then.

What projects have kept you busy in 2012?

We worked on three major projects. It was a little crazy! One was a solo show at 4a Centre for Contemporary Asian Art that opened in early August. The other was a solo show at Arterreal opening at the beginning of October. The third is the major installation for the new Blue Mountains Cultural Centre. Apart from that, we also have had group exhibitions at Brenda May Gallery and Hervey Bay Regional Gallery.

What brought you to live in the mountains?

We were trying to buy a place in Sydney. We looked for about a year, and couldn't find anything

decent that wasn't going to tie a very large mortgage noose around our necks for close to eternity. Then we visited the mountains and bought the third house we saw. We are real estate refugees, and wouldn't have it any other way. Once you live here too long, Sydney becomes a nice place to visit and an even better place to get out of at the end of the day.

Is there a local artist who is exciting you right now?

We are totally excited by the vibe in the mountains in general these days. We went overseas for six months, and even in that time it seems like more and more creative people have moved up. It is sad that this creativity cannot thrive in inner city Sydney like it used to. But it is great for us.

What are your favourite things to do in the mountains?

Eating, walking, hanging out.

Your perfect mountains weekend...

Still, clear days to do whatever we feel like doing on. They are sometimes few and far between, so you appreciate it all the more when they come around!

Where can we see your art?

The Wall of the Blue Mountains Cultural Centre opening in November!

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