

## Be careful what you wish for.....

Three commissioned paintings by Michael Berry are proudly hanging in their new home in the clubhouse of the multi-million dollar One 15 Marina at Sentosa Cove in Singapore. Michael refers to them as his 'babies'.

He had been ruminating for some time about the need to "paint really big canvases" to more thoroughly explore the expansive element of his work, when the offer from a corporate art consultant, which came about through his website, was confirmed in February 07. He had only forty days to complete three works – a diptych being 3x4 metres, and two other paintings at 1.3x4.5 metres each.



Once the specially-made canvases had been stretched and delivered to his home Michael was immediately into it, completing the actual painting of the works in nineteen very long and inspired days and nights.

The varnishing – always a risky enterprise even in smaller works, especially for such a perfectionist – and drying and edging, were successfully finished in time for the pick-up by a freight company for the overnight flight to Singapore – to be installed before the official opening of the marina on the weekend of April 14/15.

Michael always works from his home, and this particular painting and varnishing process took over the whole house, as he lived and breathed every painterly decision and brushstroke – each nuance, shift of focus, vanishing point and lovingly prepared application of vibrant colour.

While Michael cheerfully describes himself as 'a pain in the artist', beneath his breezy and humorous manner there is a dedicated and insightful man who has an extremely sharp eye, and consummate understanding of the visual art world – and of his place in it.

The paintings have been ecstatically received in Singapore and Michael's Singapore agent is currently planning more commissions for him, and also an exhibition of his paintings in the near future. His next one man exhibition in Melbourne is August/September with Jenny Pihan Fine Art at the Glen Eira City Council Gallery for which he is presently planning, preparing and painting. He will be showing about eighty paintings, drawings and sculptures.

When confronted with the four really large and very blank canvases back at the commencement of his Singapore venture, Michael murmured quietly – "Be careful what you wish for – you just might get it!" Asked can he fulfill the commission in the limited time span available to him – knowing he is not an artist who can just churn out paintings but insists on a masterpiece each time – he replied, "I have no ideal!"

But he did. And one senses it is just the beginning of many more monumental and spectacular works.

- By Stella Sharpe

## A LONG *Journey Home*

**In 1975 a friend threw Kip Turner a lump of clay and said: Here, make something! She made a simple pinch pot. When she was presented two months later with her finished bowl, fired and glazed it was instant love and the first step on her journey with ceramics.**

Clay became her pastime, her passion & her refuge from the rigours of teaching French and Japanese.

Her humanities background meant she knew nothing about clay, glazes or kilns and she had to learn as she progressed. She made numerous mistakes, learning from each one, seeing each as an opportunity and, every now and then, a piece emerged from the transforming fire of the kiln which made all the frustrations worthwhile.

Encouraged by her husband Gary (a sculptor in his own right) she worked on elegant classical forms, influenced by traditional Chinese and Japanese pots. Together they created a strong range of vibrant copper reds, celadons, chuns, and Kip's speciality, star-burst crystalline glazes.

When she approached her principal at Elwood High wanting to teach ceramics, he issued her a challenge to have her own exhibition and then he'd consider her request. Six months later she had a one woman show in the AMP building in Melbourne and started teaching pottery in the classroom. She shared several exhibitions with other artists before her work took an entirely new direction into printing treescapes on standing panels of clay. These resulted in her being asked to exhibit her work at the Meat Market and having it photographed for Pottery In Australia.

After a long break, she has returned to her ceramic passions in the small home studio shared with Gary. She also enjoys great support from the Dromana Potters Group who runs classes in the Old Shire Hall there.

### An Unorthodox Take on the Ordinary

**That ever ebullient and energetic Red Hill identity and artist MICHAEL LEEWORTHY is all fired up and re-enamored with the thrills of landscape painting, and the potential breakthroughs that the second leg (it's really the first leg but typically he chosen to do the second leg first and the first leg second...no wonder he is just recovering from knee arthroscopy) of his overseas walking trip will galvanize.**

Right now, despite the dicky knee he is in training for his September sojourn of walking from Le Puy in the south of France to the Pyrenees...a town called Saint Jean de Pied Port, a single trip of 800 kilometers – it is actually the first leg of the famous Pilgrim's Walk also apparently tracing the historic Saint James walk.

Michael completed the Spanish section (the second leg first) a couple of years ago walking 26 km in 30 straight days...with the knee he is aiming at the low stress pace of only 20 km a day. At least that will allow him time to take the necessary photographs which will provide the grist for the artistic mill when he returns home to edit the best shots into paintings.

"I'm in training, I have just walked Wilson's Promontory and have been walking the Peninsula

Her current work includes functional pieces such as bowls and platters, painted in strong black and white designs.

Most recently her fascination with gates and doors as powerful symbols in all cultures has led to the creation of strong archaic-looking structures. She uses acid etching to achieve a weather-worn surface finish.

Her knowledge of Japanese calligraphy is reflected in some sculptures and she includes traditional images from different religions. She plans a series taking her through world religions & philosophies.

But it is predominantly in her non-functional work where her whimsical sense of humour becomes obvious, allowing her to deliver a sharp social comment while making the viewer smile. She recently won the prize for the Most Popular Piece at the annual teapot exhibition at The Studio @ Flinders with her pot entitled The Paris Hilton Teabag. It reflects her abhorrence of using any animal as a fashion accessory and her dislike of self-promoting celebrities who provide poor role models for young women.

For Kip Turner her return to pottery has been a long journey with many sidetracks but her travels, her teaching and her experiences have not only enriched her life but are now finding exciting expression in her new work and new directions.

**Kip Turner won the Popular Choice Award at the hugely successful Annual Teapot Exhibition at the Studio @ Flinders in April.**



– it has awakened my love of landscape as a painterly subject," he says.

Not a man or an artist to be caught repeating himself, he wears the tag "Mr Diversity" almost as a token of painting and walking against the flow – he readily admits that he is "fortunately" unable to repeat himself as he is always seeking out an unorthodox take on the ordinary.

"Yes I jump around all over the place as I have a passion for self-discovery – my new paintings are landscapish and very loosely brushed and composed," he says.

He just won the Oak Hill Gallery "drought" competition with a picture entitled "Looking fro Rainbows" depicting the back view of a lone farmer haplessly rowing a clinker boat on a sky-high scaffolding with a similarly lone puddle of water soaking into the dirt at the bottom of the scaffolding.

It is at once an enlighteningly silly and pathetic visage which somehow has managed to touch people's, and the judges', raw sensibilities to the plight of this largely desert-centric country without easy water – a lady was seen crying at this poetic image & another laughing, Michael adds.

- Michael Berry