WHAT IS IT REALLY LIKE TO BE DEAF?

Looking Out, Looking In: Two Deaf artists explore identity, assimilation and acceptance.

Opening; 6pm, Friday 2 Sept, St Helier's Street Gallery, Abbotsford Convent, 1 St Helier St, Abbotsford.

Exhibition runs until 28th Sept.

If you've ever wondered what it's like to be Deaf, this is your chance to find out. Coming to terms with being Deaf and choosing how that will impact your life and choices is a huge journey. Despite the fact that 1 in 6 Australians experience some form of hearing loss, most people don't know how to handle or accommodate Deafness. Visual artists Irene Holub and Asphyxia explore how they respond to this challenge on a personal level. Giving voice to the subtle, difficult to describe aspects of Deafness has led them to a form of activism as they aim to springboard change in our society – greater assimilation and acceptance. Their artworks validate the lived experience Deaf people and provide insight for those who are not Deaf.

Q: What's the hardest thing about being Deaf?
   A) trying to fit into a world that is not designed for Deaf people.
   B) being unable to communicate effectively with my family.
   C) being discriminated against by people who mean well.
   D) all of the above.

Q: What do you love about being Deaf?
   A) Auslan – Australian sign language, which is beautiful and expressive.
   B) having an automatic passport to the Deaf community, a vibrant place of warmth and acceptance.
   C) that I can sleep through anything.
   D) all of the above.

Come to the exhibition and find out the answers to these questions and others that you deemed too rude to ask.

Asphyxia is a Deaf artist, writer and activist who works from her studio at the Abbotsford Convent. Most will know her work from her award-winning Grimstones marionette show, which toured nationally and internationally for years, and is now a best-selling children's book series published by Allen and Unwin. The Sunday Mail reported it as ‘one of the most deliciously dark and touching shows you will ever see’ and Arts Hub described Asphyxia’s ‘strikingly beautiful and expressive gothic puppets’ as producing ‘a show that enchants all who witness it.’ If you cried when you saw The Grimstones, your heart will melt when you see Asphyxia’s latest work. One fan said, ‘Fixie has more energy, creativity and social conscience than all the world’s leaders combined. I’m thinking some kind of planetary CEO.’

‘One thing that is clear is that Asphyxia is not to be underestimated…’ – The Age.

Irene Holub, born deaf into a hearing family, became a product of social segregation and mainstreaming. As a sculptor, printmaker, painter and outsider searching for identity, her work disseminates and captures the symbolic language within her hands. Patterns, connections, fragments and memories appear in Irene’s works as layers of perception. Her works have been shown at the Women’s Gallery, Firestation Gallery, Melbourne Fringe Festivals and local contemporary events. Deafness for Irene is a gift. She is passionate about education and empowerment and advocates for the rights of young deaf people to have a voice. For this exhibition, her art is a social documentation of people whose right to be different, Deaf and proud have been (un)intentionally removed by the mainstream.
‘Irene Holub’s works takes the viewer deep into the language of symbolism, she is an artist of great technical prowess with unstoppable enthusiasm and energy.’ – Lou Hall, Artist.

Come and celebrate the launch with drinks and nibbles at 6pm on Friday 2 Sept.

For more information or to schedule an interview with Asphyxia or Irene, please email ireneholub@gmail.com or text message her on 0409610044 (SMS only)

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