

CV Helga Prosser

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Born: South Africa 1932

Education & Qualifications

I obtained a B.A. (Fine Arts) degree from the Michaelis School of Fine Art at the University of Cape Town, where I studied under Lippy Lipshitz. I was awarded the Michaelis prize in 1952.

In Britain since 1959, I studied welding and bronze casting at the Central School of Art in London with Leslie Thornton and became fascinated with possibilities of welded sculpture. It was an inexpensive means of working directly without having to consider the difficulties of casting complex shapes, and more importantly, large shapes or figures could fly through the air balanced on a single point. Space could not only penetrate shape, but also be under it. The strength of the steel could overcome other limitations of more traditional materials being able to be large, tough and moveable. These qualities coincided with my growing interest in moving human figures – the vigorous striving of football and rugby players, and the human relationships expressed in the movements of the ballet, could be built up and frozen into gestures in this strong, but flexible material. I particularly like its uncompromising hard shiny quality which forces on to pare ideas down to essentials.

Living in Saudi Arabia for a number of years I started painting water colours of the desert and its people. Painting continues to be an absorbing interest, especially when visiting new and exotic places.

Recently I have started working more in clay. The innovative slab-building techniques of contemporary ceramic artists have inspired me to use clay like steel, but instead of using rolled slabs, building from thrown pieces which are structurally stronger. I have been astonished at how sympathetically ideas transfer from one medium to the other. Glaze colours are proving challenging and exciting.

Group Exhibitions

1955 South African Group, Cape Town
1960 Cambridge Arts Society
1963-1978 South Wales Group (now the Welsh Group)
1963-1964 Welsh Arts Council
1964 Royal Academy
1964 Paris Salon
1964 & 1965 Women's International
1979 – 1988 Gallery 10, London

1986 Royal Society of Painters in watercolour
1988 & 1989 Manor House, Cardiff
1993 & 1994 Margam Park
1995 CCA Gallery, Bath
1997 Art Space Barn Gallery
1997 Henley Festival
1998 Parkfields Gallery, Ross on Wye

One Man Exhibitions

1958 Port Elizabeth, South Africa
1958 Michaelis, Cape Town
1969 Llantarnam Grange, Cwmbran
1970 Woodstock Gallery, London
1974 Llantarnam Grange, Cwmbran
1977 Alwin Gallery, London
1984 Redec Gallery, Saudi Arabia (Watercolours)
1985 Redec Gallery, Jeddah
1988 West Wharf Gallery, Cardiff
1994 Manor House, Cardiff
1994 Ffwrwm Oriol, Caerleon
1996 Ffwrwm Oriol, Caerleon
2002 Washington Gallery, Penarth
2006 Washington Gallery, Penarth

Commissions

1956 17ft x 3ft Architectural (cement) South Africa
1958 Two 3ft yellow wood carvings, St. Josephs, South Africa
1966 5ft footballers (steel) Cwmbran New Town
1966 Sculpture – front of Llantarnam Grange, Cwmbran
1967 7ft garden sculpture (steel)
1980 Crucifix (steel) Michaelston-y-Fedw
1991 6ft Leap Frog (steel) Ebbw Vale Garden Festival – Commissioned by British Steel
1997 5ft Battle of Camlan, Ffwrwm
2004 Crown for Welsh Eisteddfod