



16th Australasian **Botanic Guides Conference**

Beauty rich and rare
Kings Park and Botanic Garden Western Australia

16 - 20 September 2019

WALK SUMMARY: NATURE IN ART

The garden and artwork concept is designed to inspire and educate people in the significance and beauty of plants and landscapes. The artworks are an asset to us as guides in the Botanic Garden as our visitors have diverse interests.

Symbiotica, the newest of our sculptures, is the glistening entry statement for the Botanic Garden (2016). Queensland artists Paul Johnson and Gail Mason used brushed aluminium, copper and dichroic glass to portray the symbiotic relationship between plants and insects. Many patterns cut into the metal are developed from seeds of plants endemic to WA. The dichroic glass casts colours onto the surrounds that represent the iridescent shades of insect wings. The ground marble mosaic, artists Jacqui Pinnock and Rudolph Verscher, depicts our state's floral emblem, the red and green Kangaroo Paw (*Anigozanthos manglesii*).

The Banksia Seats and Mosaics were built in 1996 to complement the development of the Banksia Garden. Local artist Philippa O'Brien used Italian marble and the time consuming construction technique of the Greeks and Romans. Two platforms showcase six prostrate banksias and, at a lower level, five banksias that grow naturally in Kings Park plus pollinators. The curved seats made use of the wood of a Bull Banksia (*Banksia grandis*) and the steel uprights of the seats take the shape of its serrated leaves.

The Pioneer Women's Memorial Fountain containing the sculpture of mother and child "symbolises the woman's part in the development of the State, her dreams and aspirations". The Botanic Garden was established in 1965 and Margaret Priest's statue of mother and child (1968) was considered then to be the largest one-piece bronze casting in Australia. The fountain sequence tells the story of a pioneer woman who arrives at the coast in a new land and makes a journey into the unknown in search of taller trees and clearings where she will make a home. Every woman in the State was asked to contribute a shilling towards the cost.

The Acacia Steps were created by local artist Stuart Green in 1998 and are worked into granite in the shape of an arid region watercourse. The irregular steps, featuring mosaics of six acacias and carved seed pods, show the evolutionary development of the genus from a primitive acacia on the bottom step to a highly evolved species at the top (leaves to phyllodes). The materials are marbles and Pilbara tiger-eye stone (northern mining area of WA). Most of the wattles are represented in the surrounding gardens.

The Life Sculptures In The Water Garden (1999) were the work of local artists Coral Lowry and Holly Story. The water garden replicates a flowing creek in the Darling Ranges (Perth) and has various pockets of interest along its course. The five sculptures in the pond are made of copper plated steel and, with a botanic sequence beginning at the seed stage, symbolise the significant role of women in the community. Sculptures - Life, Growth, Strength of heart, Renewal and Leadership are labelled on the descending pathway.

The Lotterywest Federation Walkway (2003) constructed of Corten rusted steel is an artistic fusion of sculpture, architecture and engineering that complements the rich texture of the natural environment and together with the arched glass bridge very successfully connects the city and Swan River to the Botanic Garden. Richard Walley and Shane Pickett (Nyoongar community) were artists of the contemporary flora and fauna and sculptor Kevin Draper of the flowers and leaves on the bridge pylons.

Beedawong Meeting Place marks the end of the journey along the Walkway and is an area where the local Aboriginal people and others can meet and engage in cultural and educational activities. Beedawong, (meaning celebration), was designed by Richard Walley, indigenous Statesman. The six granite stones signify the six Nyoongar calendar seasons with the largest symbolising the central fire.