

John Brookes' Curriculum Vitae

About the Artist:

John Brookes has over 25 years in arts marketing in the public, government, commercial and disability charity sectors across the UK, Fiji and Australia. As a Charter Marketer (MCIM) and photographer, he worked for the London Metropolitan Police Community Volunteer Scheme, Royal National Institute of the Blind, the London Assembly and the European Union Year of Volunteering, as well as exhibiting locally since emigrating to Canberra 12 years ago. He has managed events at the Tate Modern Turbine Hall and Royal Festival Hall, both in London.

He previously won the Mensa British Photographer of the Year award and more recently worked with the Spinal Injuries Association of Fiji following Hurricane Winston, spending two years documenting relief efforts and managing therapy through art for the Fiji Psychiatric Survivors Association.

Since returning to Australia, John has been very active in the Canberra arts scene and has exhibited widely, most recently "Pictures of You" exhibition at Belconnen Arts centre, which he says encapsulates his philosophy as an artist - that of inclusion; be that the subject or the viewers. He has also mentored disabled people in photography for non-profits such as Wellways, and has volunteered for Fair Canberra, ACT Mental Health Consumer Network, Perinatal Wellbeing Centre, Victim Support and Companion House for Refugee and Asylum Seekers support.

He is also fascinated by the gap between what we assume or believe and what truth is. "Pictures of You", for instance took a series of disabled people who worked actively WITH the artist to produce a portrait and narrative that THEY felt truly represented them as people. Another recent show was "Dark Snow" highlighting the disparity between the pureness of the local snowy mountains with the environmental impacts of tourism and settlement there. He also had a very high-profile exhibition, "DISCRIMINATE" earlier this year, a satirical take on media portrayal of disability using the style of 1940s propaganda posters. This featured in the Canberra Weekly, Canberra Times, Riot-ACT website, Tableau journal, BMA Magazine and ABC Drivetime Radio among others.

John believes strongly in giving a voice to the individual, to people telling their own stories in unique and thought-provoking ways - looking beyond the 'issue' to the whole person and becoming true collaborators in the exhibition.

In 2019 John was awarded the Chief Minister's Inclusion Award for Excellence, followed by the ACT Volunteer of the Year award. He was finalist in 4 categories in the 2023 Chief Minister's Inclusion Awards.

He is currently working on a new exhibition, "unconditional", about the many forms of love; and is freelance Events Photographer for VolunteeringACT.

Exhibitions and events:

- 1999 "Police Volunteers Recognition Event", Curator and stage design. Tate Modern, Turbine Gallery, UK
- 2000 "Police Volunteers Recognition Event", Curator and stage design. Royal Festival Hall, UK
- 2016 "Creative Expressions", literature and poetry project for those living with physical and mental illness. NCDP Complex, Brown Street, Suva, Fiji (Curator and contributor)
- 2018 "Don't Stop, Keep Going", mixed media photography, poetry and ceramics for Wellways Reception area (solo exhibit)

- 2018 – 2020 “Traces III, IV, V” - Belconnen Arts Gallery (group show)
- 2018 “Pigment of the Imagination” Wellways / Belconnen Community Gallery (group show)
- 2019 “Resilience”, Belconnen Arts Centre (group show)
- 2019 “Piece of Mind”, Belconnen Community Gallery (group show)
- 2020 “Face Unframed”, Belconnen Arts Gallery (group show)
- 2021 “Journeys”, Canberra Airport Public Display (solo show)
- 2021 “Place Unframed”, Belconnen Arts Gallery (group show)
- 2022-2023 “(In)Visible”, Belconnen Arts Gallery (group show)
- 2022-2023 “Pictures of You”, Belconnen Arts Gallery (in partnership with Hilary Wardhaugh)
- 2022-2023 “Pictures of You”, Westfield Centre, Belconnen (in partnership with Hilary Wardhaugh)
- 2023 “Earth Unframed”, Belconnen Arts Gallery (group show)
- 2023 “Professor Hyatt’s Tarot”, Smith’s Alternative Gallery (in partnership with Professor John Hyatt)
- 2023 "Dark Snow", October to December 2023. Belconnen Community Gallery (solo show)
- 2023 - 2024 "Transformation", Belconnen Arts Centre, Generator Gallery, opening in December until February 2024 (group show)
- 2023 “DISCRIMINATE”, Belconnen Arts Centre, Window Gallery, opening in December until February 2024 (solo show)
- 2024 - 2025 "unconditional", solo exhibition - in development

Experience and Awards to present:

- MA in Mass Communications (with Distinction), Leicester University 1998.
- Brand launch and marketing for the Metropolitan Police Service’ new Met Volunteer Scheme, allowing great community engagement. Designed brand and launched at a fully catered event for Met Volunteers at the Tate Modern Turbine Hall 2003. Followed up next year with lead on management of event at the Royal Festival Hall, London with an audience of 2,500.
- Awarded Police Commendation for Outstanding Performance and Dedication in 2007.
- 2007 Winner of MENSA UK Photographer of the Year
- 2022 Awarded Queen's Platinum Jubilee Medal for contribution to public service.
- Marketing manager for Institute of the Blind, Winston Churchill Trust, Pharmaceutical Society of Australia, Pedal Power ACT and ACT Mental Health Consumer Network; as well as freelance work.
- ACTMHCN David Perrin Achievement Award 2017
- Winner of 2019 Chief Minister's Inclusion Award (Excellence in Volunteer Support)
- 2020 Volunteering ACT, Volunteer Leadership Award
- 2021 Chief Minister's Inclusion Award (Lifetime Achievement Award)
- 2022 Volunteering ACT, Certificate of Recognition, Outstanding Service in the Canberra Region
- 2022 Finalist, Chief Minister's Inclusion Award (Excellence in Volunteer Support)
- 2022 CAPO Arts Grant - Belco Arts Inclusion Award (for DISCRIMINATE)
- 2023 ArtsAccess Grant for 'Dark Snow' exhibition
- 2023 Volunteering ACT, Certificate of Recognition, Outstanding Service in the Canberra Region
- 2023 Finalist, Chief Minister's Inclusion Award (Excellence in Volunteer Support)
- 2023 Finalist, Chief Minister's Inclusion Award (Excellence in Making Inclusion Happen)
- 2022 Finalist, Chief Minister's Inclusion Award (Excellence in Achievement in Inclusion)
- 2024 Events Photographer, VolunteeringACT