

Watt Space Memories

Pippa Robinson, the inaugural Director of Watt Space 1990 - 1996

- Three students Bryan Bulley, George Drewery and Jacquie Henderson demanding that SRC's (Student Representative Council) money be spent on art students as well as sporting events.
- George wearing a black beret and dark glasses invading the SRC meeting with a loud hailer and demanding to see the books.
- George being sent away to look for a gallery space.
- Jacquie, feisty, aggressive, determined, fighting for the art students, always challenging Stan Barwick, manager, SRC.
- The student's finding of the empty shop, one room in Watt Street.
- The creation of Watt Space Gallery by the students.
- The students, under Ross Woodrow's expert guidance, coordinating the first three exhibitions in Watt Space, the excitement!
- Jacquie coming in one morning and finding forty yellow, sticky, notes about Watt Space on her desk in the sculpture shed.
- The students deciding the gallery needed a director.
- Ross Woodrow writing the first job description.
- My first opening as director of Watt Space, wearing my yellow dress and Brett Alexander asking if I had invisible speech notes on the ceiling.
- The early exhibitions.
- Vera Zulumovski's first solo exhibition, hung at Watt Space the day after I commenced as director. Her amazing, incredible large lino prints including 'The Beekeeper;'
- Sue Stewart, and Libby Rodgers-McPhee; their red exhibition, glazed ceramics and camels in the desert - 'Dookie.'
- Chris Langlois, solo exhibition, soft subtle landscapes.
- Nick Mitzevich, another red exhibition - words this time.
- The challenges; we were allowed a gallery but no office.
- My walking office lived in two carrier bags.
- In the first year - management changing from the SRC to the The University of Newcastle Union.
- Meeting John Broughton, manager of The University of Newcastle Union.
- The new challenge - John!
- Submissions twice a year, the selection process.
- Interviewing students.
- Concocting their show bags, creating contracts.
- Putting encouraging chocolate frogs in their show bags.
- Awarding the students show bags.
- Supporting the students as they hung their first exhibition, their apprehension, their excitement.
- The students, complicated hangings, discussions - sitting on the floor at midnight.

- The students, the committee, plotting and planning.
- The staff on the committee supporting the students.
- Spreading our wings into three other spaces in Watt Street
- Someone stealing the u bend out of the toilet washbasin at Watt Space.
- Openings - joyous, celebrations of art and artists, the brave emerging artists.
- Openings - scary, locking a student in the back room to stop an attack over a drug deal.
- The legal inquiry into another student's behaviour at Watt Space.
- The pause in the inquiry when the student's very aggressive legal representative was told this was not a court case.
- 'Put that down', the large sharp knife for cutting the Watt Space birthday cake being wielded by a crazy student.
- Celebration dinners for the committee in Watt Space, the long table, free flowing drinks provided by the union, concocting and producing a portable feast.
- The instruction from John Broughton that we would have to move from Watt Street.
- John Broughton introducing us to the marble halls at the front of NESCA House as the future student gallery.
- 'Trust me,' John's words as he assured us the lift in darkened NESCA House was safe.
- The rest of the committee immediately turning around and walking up the stairs.
- Having to move, the excitement of seeing the filthy, rubbish filled spaces of the old NESCA printery.
- The committee knowing it was Watt Space despite John's disbelief.
- The Watt Space students, on the committee, arguing with Ross Woodrow who wanted to change the name of the gallery when it moved, the students won!
- The hard work, developing the new spaces into Watt Space.
- John deciding to carpet the long room on the day of the opening despite us saying no, creating chaos.
- The joy of the new spaces, creating a new Watt Space with six ideal spaces for sculpture and art.

**Never forget that Watt Space was created by the students.
They rebelled and fought for Watt Space.
The first years were a constant challenge.
So twenty five years later, keep the bastards honest.**

Pippa Robinson June 2014