

## Q & A with Luke Sciberras April 2019

### **If you could meet any artist alive or dead who would it be?**

I'd love to meet Hokusai, to learn from him about drawing nature, weather and sex . Also how to leave things out of a picture to intensify its impact.

### **You've been lucky enough to paint landscapes from Ill Belle Île, to the Kimberleys to Gallipoli to your home of Hill End and everywhere in between, where has been your favourite place to work and why?**

One of the most intriguing landscapes of all, in recent years, is probably on the island of Belle Île, off the coast of Brittany in France.

There is a chapter of art history held there that is of world wide significance and it comes via the life of John Peter Russell who moved there from Australia in the 1880's. He was a long term friend of Van Gogh, Monet, Matisse and Rodin among others and was a maverick of modern painting.

To have visited the places he knew and painted well was like a dream come true. Further to that the opportunity to paint my version of those places was like putting my finger on his pulse.

Across the centuries, and the equator, a story came in to full colour for me there, and a life long hero of mine seemed to have only just left Belle Île which hasn't changed much at all since he left in the early 1900's.

### **What other Australian artist has influenced you the most?**

I guess it is Elisabeth Cummings. She taught me to draw when I had just left high school and ever since we have maintained a close friendship and over the last twenty five years we've travelled to many places from Hong Kong, Queenstown, the Flinders Ranges, Wilcannia and most recently the Kimberley coast.

I suppose there's an energy and sensibility that I feel we share, even though we come at things in our own way of course.

### **What is your most important artist tool?**

It would have to be the humble pencil. Because I find at the centre of my work is drawing. To see and then understand the form of my subjects is of the utmost importance. But of course it's hard to ignore the nibs, brushes, scrapers, crepe flippers, cement trowels, spatulas and tomato cans I rely upon every day of the week!

### **What do you never leave the house without?**

That would be my Opinel pocket knife, because you never know when you'll need to slice a piece of Parmesan, or quarter a pear.

### **If you weren't an artist what would you be?**

Boy oh boy if I weren't an artist I think I'd be an art critic, because I would really love to tell people the truth about what I really think!

### **Do you remember meeting Lucio for the first time? How did it go?**

I remember meeting Lucio twenty years ago exactly, and I was so totally delighted to discover that men like him existed. He struck me as immensely respectful (I was having lunch with John Olsen, Looch wasn't genuflecting to me I'm sure) but also with his own flair and inventiveness. I was immediately, and enduringly, enchanted by Lucio's playfulness and artistic temperament. He is at once determined and incredibly sensitive, a pioneer and at the same time exquisitely sentimental .

My friendship with Lucio is very much like the bonds I share with other artists, formed on a tremendous respect and generosity. These are the enriching forces in all our lives which reverberate, I believe, into our work and therefore into the broader community.

### **What's your favourite dish at Lucio's?**

My favourite dish at Lucio's has always been the fazzoletti neri con frutti di mare. It is so sexy! With its lobes and sauces, the balance of chilli and salt, fresh black pasta with perfectly cooked calamari, prawns and mussels. It's a masterpiece, a poem and a passionate kiss on a plate.

### **What's your favourite dinner party dish to cook and what wine would you match with it?**

My favourite dinner party dish is my ricotta ravioli with duck ragú . Slowly braise the duck marylands with good pancetta, bouquet garni, soffrito, stock, Pernod .. .and the ravioli is filled with ricotta, lemon zest, parsley, nutmeg, Parmesan and a little sage ... served with a crisp Vermentino, quite a few !

### **Other than your own, of course, what is your favourite artwork at Lucio's?**

My favourite work on the walls of Lucio's is surely the lovely little portrait drawing by Ben Quilty, so lively and fresh, and there's something very alluring about it.

[Editor note: the subject is Luke ]

### **Where in the world are you traveling to next?**

My next adventure is to Morocco, which I am undertaking with great trepidation and excitement, but that's how I feel about all the new places I go to. A new light, new tone and with all new challenges

### **What's your party trick?**

Ha!

My party trick is probably an impersonation of the person reading this Lucio's interview!!