



BECKWORTH ALUMNI - WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

ROBYN LEA



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Years at Ballarat Grammar: 1983 - 1988

What Art and Design subject(s) did you study when you attended Ballarat Grammar?

From Year 7 - 9 all the students would rotate through the art department doing a term in each discipline from metal and woodwork, to painting, ceramics, printmaking, graphic design, and photography.

What did you enjoy about these subjects?

Having access to many art and design disciplines when I was at Grammar, provided me with a range of tools to express myself. I very much enjoyed the dynamic interactions and dialogue with the teachers - and was particularly inspired by John Benn, who taught printmaking, and Mary Delahunty, my photography teacher for several years. Their way of interpreting the world through a creative lens still resonates with me today.

What skills do you believe you gained from studying these subjects?

Creative confidence is built and flourishes in the right environments. For me, the Beckworth had all the ingredients needed to feed and foster my own artistic education and development - great teachers, hands-on experience, a positive encouragement of ideas and experimentation, and the materials on hand to bring these ideas to life.

What did you create in your Art and Design subject(s) which you are most proud of?

I was fortunate to go with the ceramic's students on a trip to India in Year 11. I was the only photography student to go on the trip, and I took the role of 'unofficial official' photographer. I produced a series of portraits during that trip which I used as a basis for some experimental techniques in the darkroom. I was excited by the results and went on to exhibit that work in my first ever little group show.

What were your biggest achievements in Art and Design when you were at Ballarat Grammar?

I received a score of 100% in my final art practice and theory subjects in VCE which I was very surprised and thrilled about. While on paper that was my biggest achievement, I am personally very proud that I achieved Year 9 dream of attending RMIT Photography and going onto having a career in the field.

What was one of the most valuable things you learnt during your time in the Beckworth?

One of the most valuable things I learnt in the art department was to follow and feed my personal creative interests. I was obsessed with the work of Joy Hester, for example, and while she wasn't included on the curriculum of artists to study, I did my own research and wrote about her and her work in my final VCE exam.

What do you do now?

I am an author/photographer and I also direct TV commercials and create moving picture content for global brands. I have two publishers - Assouline in NY and Thames & Hudson, who are based in the UK. My work is published in magazines around the world.

What are your major achievements since leaving Ballarat Grammar?

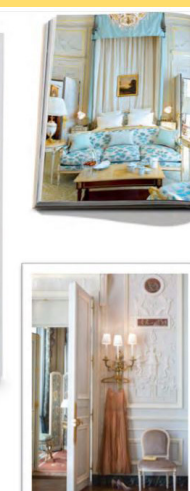
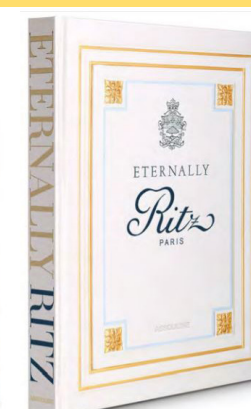
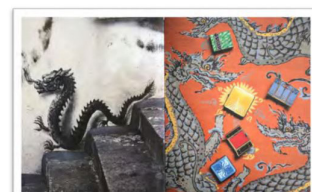
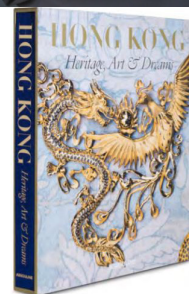
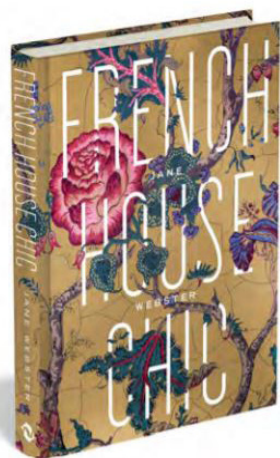
I was fortunate to have a best-selling book DINNER WITH JACKSON POLLOCK: Recipes, Art & Nature (Assouline, 2015) early in my writing career. Until that point, I had focused on photography and directing TV commercials. Publishing the Pollock book opened so many doors to me to pursue other global book projects, which continue to drive my career, feed my personal and creative growth, and hopefully bring joy to the lives of others.

Would you suggest studying an Art and Design subject in Year 12?

Absolutely! A creative outlook and mindset feeds not only into artistic careers, but more broadly, can help ensure a life well-lived. Creative thought is one of the few things we cannot program robots to do for us. Though aside from ensuring a robot doesn't replace you in the job market, creative thinking helps people maintain a flexible, growth-focused approach.

Would you suggest the creative arts as a career?

I would recommend a creative career in the arts. Or any creative profession for that matter. I think it's important to realise how many different careers are available to creative people. My advice would be to find some mentors in the industries you love and see if you can do some work experience with them, or if they will agree to being your official creative mentor. That way you can learn from the professionals and feel out the market for creative roles.



1983 - 1988

PHOTOGRAPHER