

'PLAY'

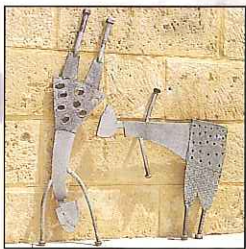
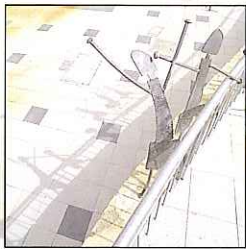
by CORAL LOWRY

Parkfield Primary School, North Australind
Western Australia - A Per Cent for Art Project

Parkfield is the first country primary school in Western Australia endorsed by the Ministry of Education to have a "per cent for art" applied as part of the West Australian Government's public art strategy. The Per Cent for Art Scheme is administered by the Building Management Authority in partnership with the Department for the Arts, and is advised by the Public Art Taskforce.

This partnership reflects the Government's dual goals of creating excellence in its public facilities and increasing awareness of contemporary art and its value to people.

The Parkfield Per Cent for Art Project has been completed in collaboration with Parkfield Public Art Project Committee and with the close co-operation and assistance of the children and staff of the school.



Children the world over have a fascination with their own shadows. This facet of childhood curiosity and delight in playing with their own shadows is the basis of the artworks at Parkfield Primary School.

Initially the works were conceived as static elements within the uprights of the iron balustrading above the retaining walls of the school walkways and courtyards.

However, the work has matured and changed in response to design and construction demands to become a series of metal silhouettes weaving in and out of the curved balustrades and against limestone walls.

The figures themselves are lively and animated. They brim with energy, some leaning backwards, some leaning over the balustrade. Others tug each other in different directions and yet another does a handstand against a wall below, watched curiously by a smaller individual. Arms and legs of the figures are sometimes casually draped over a rail or a foot pokes through, capturing the casual abandonment and naturalness of children's movements.

Made of recycled plates of steel and round bar, the figures have a satin patina. Surface colours range from silver to charcoal, designed to catch the light. Each of the figures forms a play of shadows across the pavements and walls, responding to the hours of the day and the seasons of the year.

Coral Lowry has blended the children's own creativity with her own for the surface texture and patterning of each of these lively sculptural forms.

Speaking of a visit by children from the school to her studio, the artist said

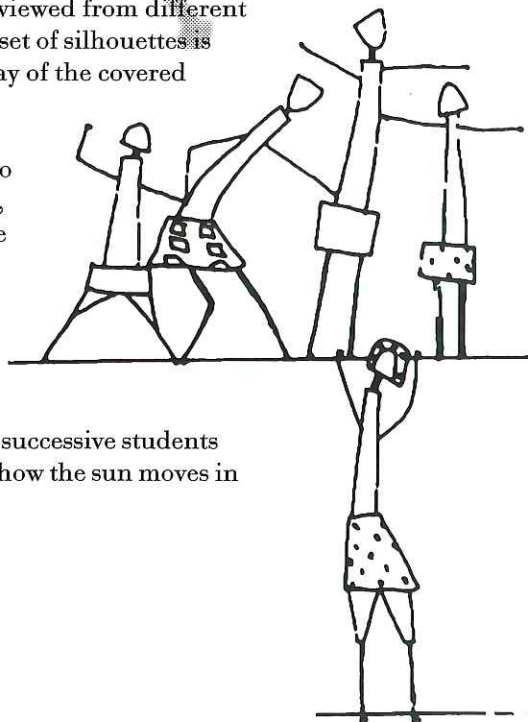
"My request for help with the designs for the areas with surface texture was taken up with great enthusiasm and soon a deluge of brightly patterned paper came flooding my way."

The stance and arrangement of the figures was directly discussed with the children of the school. On a studio visit children were invited to perform an array of acrobatic and other poses, which they were then encouraged to sketch along with the shadows these cast.

The artwork is best enjoyed by following the pathways and routes that the children take through the school.

The figures and their play of shadows on walls and courtyard surfaces vary when viewed from different vantage points. At one angle a set of silhouettes is perfectly framed in a breezeway of the covered assembly area; others form a focal point as children run up the steps of the amphitheatre to the library and the class-room, and others keep watch over the bicycle racks.

The kinetic nature of the work should ensure enduring fascination and serve as a key for the school to open discussion with successive students of how shadows are made and how the sun moves in the sky.



PARKFIELD PRIMARY SCHOOL DESIGN TEAM

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Artist

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