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Award-winning sculptor Jon Dixon has very generously donated one of his work's valued at \$600 for us to give away to one lucky paid subscriber to Bluestone Magazine...click on image for full details.

David Jones Jr on the future of the FJ site



This stunning image of the Fletcher Jones' silver ball was taken by Deakin University fine art academic **Mark Rashleigh** who has kindly given us permission to reproduce it here. It depicts the tower with its ladder and railings intact.

OPINION

[dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color: #ABCCAB;"] A
[/dropcap]s Heritage Victoria prepares to inspect the dilapidated Fletcher Jones factory in Warrnambool next Monday (7/4), the grandson of Fletcher Jones said his family would be delighted to see something "creative" happen with the site.

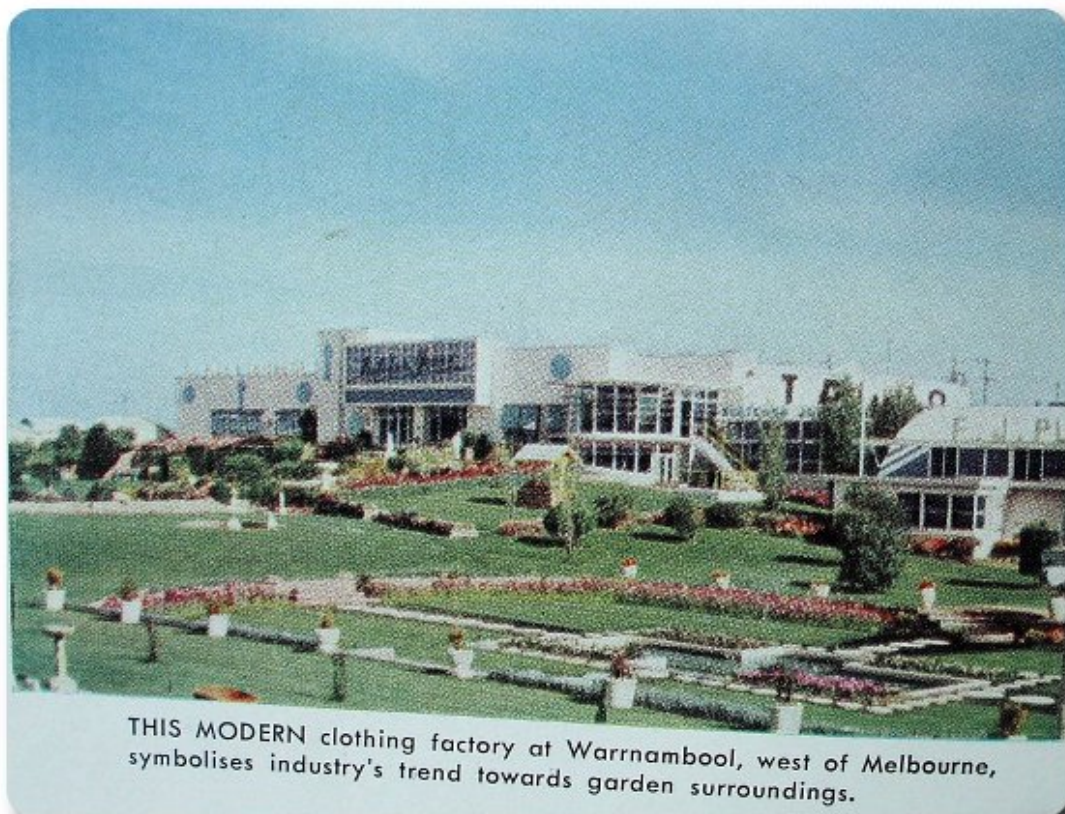
In so saying, however, **David Fletcher Jones Jr** said that his family fully appreciated the complexity of the situation that has developed since the current owner, Daramking (owned by failed Geelong businessman Ian Ballis), went into receivership in 2012.

"I am anxious to stress that we recognise how challenging this all is," Mr Jones said in an exclusive interview with *Bluestone*.

Mr Jones is the son of the late David and Isobel Jones and lived in Warrnambool until his teenage years. As a result, he is keenly aware of the connection that many people feel to the Fletcher Jones factory site because of the high esteem in which his grandfather was held.

"How the site looks today is very sad," he said.

"Everyone would like to see something better done with it."



THIS MODERN clothing factory at Warrnambool, west of Melbourne, symbolises industry's trend towards garden surroundings.

Fletcher Jones factory, Warrnambool circa 1950's.
Photo source: Land of the Southern Cross Australia.
Published by The Australian Publicity Council.
Private collection.

[dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color: #ABCCAB;"] M
[/dropcap] Jones, who with his sisters, Susan and Anne, oversees the philanthropic [FJ Foundation](#), said the debate around the future of the site reinforced that there was no easy answer and a solution would require a "thorough engagement with the council and the community".

"Quite a complex and thoughtful solution is going to be needed," he said.

"And we would be excited if something thoughtful and appropriate could be done."

While Mr Jones did not wish to specify what sort of development he would like to see on the site, he agreed that a project that linked to the broader community would certainly reflect the values of his grandfather.

The Jones' family have had no direct involvement in the FJ factory site since the company was sold in 1995, but the personal links remain strong.

The water tower was designed by Fletcher Jones' son, **Ralph**, who was a consulting engineer and is now aged in his 80s. The Pleasant Hill gardens, meanwhile, were designed by Fletcher Jones' brother-in-law **Darby Boucher**.

The heritage-listed water tower, gardens and other key elements of the iconic site have been central to recent discussions between Heritage Victoria, the Warrnambool City Council, the administrators and the mortgagors as to who has responsibility for maintaining these historic elements.

A [Save the Silver Ball and Fletcher Jones Gardens](#) group has also added a strong element of grassroots community activism.



[dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color: #ABCCAB;"] I
[/dropcap]n the meantime, the various tenants occupying different parts of the building are still paying rent and, in most cases, repairing what they can as the building continues to crumble around them.

The **Triton Woodworkers Club**, for example, pays around \$9000 a year for a space directly under the silver ball that is substantial in size, but leaks like a sieve whenever it rains.

The club has rigged up an improvised internal drainage system that keeps most of the rain off their equipment – if not the floor – but an outsider can't help wondering why they are being charged anything at all, especially as a not-for-profit community group who, simply by being there, help to keep the vandals out.

So where does the long-term solution to the site lie?

Hopefully a constructive plan will emerge from the talks between the various parties, but, in the meantime, it is worth revisiting a key recommendation of the 2003 consultants' report, commissioned by the council, into the site's future.

It suggested the council, even if it no longer owned the site, keep the dialogue open between the community, any developer and the council to ensure its future life was in keeping with community expectations.

[To date, this has not happened](#). This may change and, if it does, we may be on our way to the "thoughtful and appropriate" solution that such a high-profile and important site deserves.

[box] **Postscript:** According to the Warrnambool City Council, it spent almost \$160,000 on the Fletcher Jones site between 2002 and 2008. A breakdown of this figure was unavailable, but it included repairs on the silver ball after an assessment in 2004.[/box]



More on the Fletcher Jones campaign...

[Who will step up for Fletcher Jones?](#)

[Close Flagstaff Hill; save Fletcher Jones](#)

[Don't drop the ball on FJ's icon](#)

[Mini FJ's silver ball to shine again for festival](#)

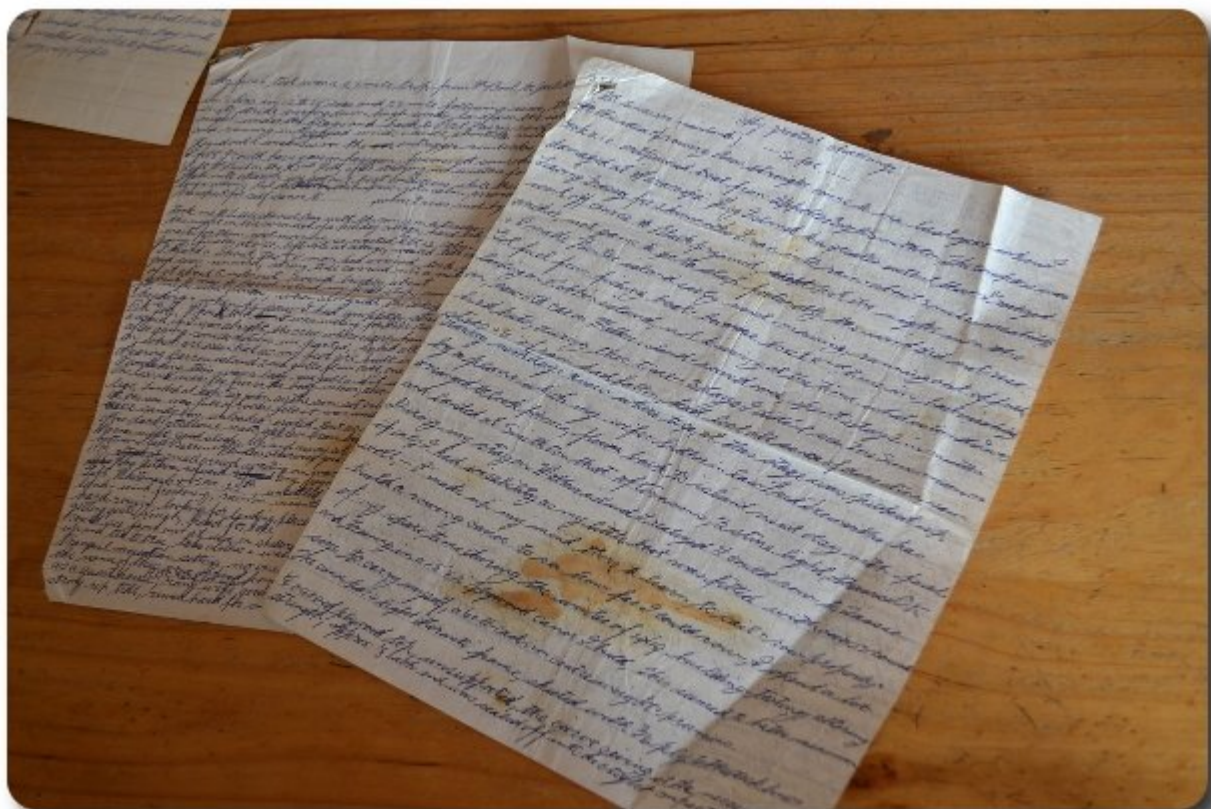
[Fletcher Jones site taken off the market](#)

[The Save Fletcher Jones campaign](#)

My greatest challenge: Alf Altmann's diary

[printfriendly]

Last week we [brought you the full story](#) of Alf Altmann's ill-fated attempt to row solo from Tasmania to Victoria in 1970. Alf, of Warrnambool, kept notes during his journey and at least a portion of these were found in a waterproof section of his kayak after it was retrieved off the Gippsland Lakes. His son, Alan, transcribed them in 2004. This is the first time they have been published.



"My Greatest Challenge"

– So Far –

The idea of rowing Bass Strait came to me last year when I took a 10' outboard powered boat from Apollo Bay to Smithton.

The compass was damaged at Naracoopa, King Island to a greater extent than I realised. Leaving Grassy for 3 Hummocks Is. I ran into rain & about 3 miles visibility went off course to Black Pyramid, put the night in on the anchor, not game to sleep, fortunately the wind did not rise & I made Hunter island early next morning, running out of fuel.

Got fuel from fishing boat & became lost a second time in bad visibility, landing on Robbins island, not knowing at the time which island I was on, (I) saw old car on Walker island and rowed over, spent 2 days in mutton bird huts, during this time – 3 days – I didn't see the sun, moon or stars & 6" of rain had fallen, had lost all sense of direction.

Saw Stanley (Tasmania) next day and knew where to go, at this stage was picked up by a plane which my wife & brother in law Fred Trewartha had arranged to look for me, flown back to (Robbins) island next day with fuel and landed at Smithton that afternoon, $\frac{1}{2}$ stone light otherwise OK.

During my stay on Walker island I realised I could row to Tassie if only I had visibility, as my little boat was fitted with oars & rowed well.

I made up my mind there to learn to sail & row properly, build a rowing canoe to see how far I could row.

I spent a lot of my spare time during the winter of 1969 building – testing – altering and training in a 15' by 2' plywood canoe I built. This seemed to be the minimum size to carry myself, a 60 lb cast iron centre weight & provisions.

The canoe has a light 'Meranti' frame, sheeted with 3/16 ply

to the deck line & 1/8 curved plywood top, unsupported, the curve giving it the necessary strength. Approx. 1/3 each end was sealed off into airtight compartments to assure floatation with airtight hatches to hold food, clothes & equipment and finally filled with plastic bottles.

I also packed foam floatation in the centre compartment where I rowed, this was fitted with a well, to house the centre-weight, which I bolted in. If the centre-weight was lost in this narrow craft, one would hardly survive at sea. After all this is a survival craft, not a showpiece.



Waiting for high tide, by [Graeme Altmann](#). Graeme, who is Alf's nephew, has drawn upon Alf's story for a series of works depicting men at sea.

I learnt to sail it, it ran well with the wind and I could do a fair reach with a small sail & jib. To cut down equipment I rigged an extension to an oar for a mast, one could be under sail in about 10 minutes, but this was only to run back if I struck strong head winds.

The idea was to be the first to row Bass Strait.

During tests I found out I could not capsize the craft and it would ride out strong winds & big seas, however it was possible to have it blown over with too much sail, with an unexpected gust.

I found out one could get out and soon get in the lee side, the craft righting itself, however I almost made as much speed with the wind with the oars running with the wind without much effort, without the risk of capsizing.

The rudder fitted keeps the craft on a much more even course, particularly running with fresh winds and big swells. Also set for beam winds to avoid rowing on one oar to keep on course which is tiring.

I purchased a pair of broken teak oars from our rowing club for \$1 which when repaired were long enough for my craft. Light & strong!

I carry 2 sea anchors – essential for offshore boating, \$1 each at disposals. A sand pick and 200' rope, 2 smoke, 2 flame & 1 parachute flares, torch, alarm clock, floating fish knife, compass, tent, 2 sails, canvas cover which allows me to sleep in boat, tommy axe, multi grips & screwdriver, camera, 1 aluminium saucepan, 1 spoon. Yellow windcheater & trousers which I row in, in rough or cold weather, sleeping bag, plywood, copper tacks & 'Pabco' for repairs, one can tack 3/8" copper tacks through 1/8" ply for temporary repairs straight onto existing plywood & clinch them over making fast waterproof repairs.

Only enough clothes to be acceptable when landing & to keep warm. About 2 lb's of bran biscuits, I have been eating these for 37 years, I must have eaten tons of them by now, a terrific health food, dried fruit, honey, powdered milk, nuts, 'Granose' biscuits & water. These are my main foods.



Equipment salvaged from Alf's kayak after it was retrieved from the ocean off Snake Island, Gippsland.

I also carry flour, rice and cheese in case one is stuck on an island, fishing lines to catch fish, can usually get mutton birds this time of year. I carry a survival bag in case I have to leave the boat, this would be the last resort, I would only leave it if I looked like getting washed onto rocks.

In the bag, a complete wet suit, which keeps one afloat and warm. I feel I would always make it to land in one of these, also about 2 days supply of food and water with a knife, and a 30" beach ball which can be blown up to attract attention.

My final test was a 27 mile trip from Warrnambool to Julia Percy island in 7 hours in 12' to 15' seas and 25 mile following seas. The canoe took it in it's stride surfing down high swells, landed on the island, slept the night under the stars and back to Port Fairy the next day in 90° heat and running into head winds & swell, about 14 miles return. I

found out a weakness in the outrigger rowlocks, otherwise all OK. I felt I could have gone as far again, however got some chafe on legs from rolling seat.

Left Warrnambool on the 23rd of February, after studying our weather for years feel from late Feb. into March – we get our best conditions while the days are still reasonably long & warm.

Put the canoe on the 'Empress' & got a cabin, arrived at Burnie and got train transport for self and canoe to (illegible), where I was met by Jim Petrio of Gladstone who took me to Little Mussel Bay with the canoe on a trailer, unloaded near beach & slept waiting the night on the verandah of a holiday cottage.

Hard bed, little sleep, TV asked me to wait for them next morning, so waited till 12, and was about to go when I heard a shout, the TV man had arrived, took film for 10 to 15 minutes, got away, good seas, no wind, strong tide carried me a mile or two to west before I got out of it about 5 miles out.



The home-made kayak that was tested off the

waters of Warrnambool and Port Fairy before the Bass Strait crossing.

Rowed briskly, about (illegible) miles to go, late start, about $\frac{1}{2}$ way to Barren Island, my first stop, saw some big fishing boat which swung my way, he swung in a wide arc following and finally blew his whistle for me to slow down.

When alongside the 'Skipper' asked me where I was heading & when he saw I had completely stripped he said only 2 words 'Oh God'.

When I told him I was making for Cape Barren island he appeared concerned & asked if I was alright, the crew were eagerly hanging over the side having a good look. After some directions we parted, rowed all day in the raw, only sand shoes on which are essential as my feet are built in to give power on the rolling seat.

Nearing Barren island 2 seagulls flew over, one turned back & had a second look, I concluding this was a lady seagull and it was time I put clothes back on. The less one wears the freer the body moves, also my swimming trunks were chaffing my legs.

Landed at Cape Sir John as the sun set, only about 3 miles from the settlement, but as the sea was full of rocks felt it was unsafe to go any later, pulled canoe up in nice sandy bay, unloaded and erected tent as fast as possible in sheltered scrub. Now dark, ate some nuts, apples & bran biscuits & honey, drink of water & off to bed. Warm night, good sleep.

Up and away at 7 a.m., lumpy & easterly winds funnelling between Cape Barren & Flinders, otherwise good run, some wind assistance, landed at Whitemark 1 p.m., small crowd waiting on wharf, a good welcome, stayed at Interstate Hotel. Left Whitemark 8-15 a.m. on 25th, unsettled weather, headwinds, can always turn back or land, wind freshening, rain on mountains, wind change to west, now beam on, hard rowing, looking for

landing places, strong rip at (illegible), decide to press on.



The Sweep, another of Graeme Altmann's works that reflect the relationship between the ocean and man.

Getting quite rough, head for Cape (illegible), finally land at Pine scrubs near a road I could see from out at sea on sheltered beach, easy to land, no breakers, pull canoe up and tie to tree, take clothes & walk up road, over hill. See large home in beautiful tranquil mountain setting, no one home, so sunbake.

Mr. & Mrs Syd Millyard of Leeka, the name of this area, arrived home about 6 p.m., had been shopping, they ran home as a guesthouse. ABC rang for news, rang wife, good nights rest, left for Kelliecrankie at 8-15, thru a strong rip tide, rowed hard for some 20 minutes and got thru, was baling out, looked up and found out I was being swept back at about 4 knots almost back into tidal rip, around Cape Frankland, almost hit sunken rock, it suddenly uncovered about 8' away.

Good run along coast with some wind assistance to Killiecrankie, children waiting on beach, a very pretty sheltered little bay. Met Alf Stackhouse & wife, also local people, very friendly. Alf had full knowledge of all the islands & landing place right thru to the mainland. Also had his private plane, stayed the night with them. ABC reporters rang up.

Decided to miss Craggy island after seeing it and discussing it with Alf. Stayed the night with them, no sleep, thinking of 38 mile (illegible), hadn't been this far before, arranged with Alf to fly over about 4p.m.

Set alarm for 3 a.m., in water at 3-20 a.m., can see Deal (Island) light flashing & head for it. Conditions good, slight side winds off Craggy island at 7 a.m., pleased with progress.

Winds freshening, thinking what have I done to deserve this, pray for good conditions.

Sighted Deal Island at 8 a.m., quite high in haze, winds dropping off (illegible) rock at 10 -15 a.m., strong tide pull... [notes end]

Postscript: The notes finish about half way through Alf's journey which came to a fatal end on March 6, 1970, just 2km from the Gippsland Lakes. Before his death, Alf was already plotting his next adventure: to row from mainland Australia to Papua New Guinea.

The beauty of bathing in

goats' milk



Sharyn Carmichael has operated an Anglo-Nubian goat stud at Woorndoo for 30 years, but, more recently, has started creating skincare products from the rich milk.

[dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color: #DC943C;"] W
[/dropcap]hen you climb into the bath with a goat's milk soap made by **Sharyn Carmichael**, you will know whether you are lathering up with Charlee, or perhaps Tahli, because it says so right on the label.

It is this personalising of the product that says so much

about how Sharyn, together with her husband Trevor, run their business – the goats always come first.

Sharyn has been breeding Anglo-Nubian goats for 30 years and began with a herd of just six animals that has since expanded into about 100 head that make up the **Glenafton** stud at Woorndoo, between Mortlake and Lake Bolac.

“I grew up in the Mallee and had severe asthma as a child where I nearly died a couple of times and once my parents had reached the limit of what traditional medicines could do, they bought a goat – ‘Nanny’ – to try goat’s milk, which reduces the inflammation of the throat,” Sharyn explains.

Goat’s milk helped to significantly reduce Sharyn’s asthma – and possibly even saved her life – so it is not surprising that she has always had enormous respect for the animal.

This respect, coupled with an interest in genetics and breeding, led her to start her own small stud of Anglo-Nubians: the breed with the gorgeous Roman noses and long, floppy ears that makes them look like they are wearing a winter hat with ear-flaps.



[dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color: #DC943C;"] N
[/dropcap]ot only are they very personable creatures, with distinct personalities, but Anglo-Nubian does are also known for their long, high-quality milk production.

Hence, if you were to visit Sharyn's stud website, you will see a lot of robust, shaved udders that have drawn high praise – and awards – from the experts who judge such things.

The Glenafton herd also includes descendants of the first Anglo-Nubians that were imported to Australia 50 years ago, keeping an important lineage alive.

Sharyn's goats have been sold around Australia and exported in limited numbers overseas to hand-picked clients, but in more recent years, Glenafton has moved into creating skincare products from the herd's milk.

What started as an unexpected off-shoot has continued to grow to about 60 lines, including lotions, scrubs, lip balms and 30

different varieties of soap. The home-based business has been so successful, in fact, that Sharyn gave up her “day job” of working in a bank about 18 months ago to focus on Glenafton full time.

“I didn’t set out to get into skincare, to be honest, but when I was working in the bank, my hands really suffered from handling money all day – which is very dirty – and I was always washing them,” she said.



Tahli the handsome Anglo-Nubian doe: she is one of 100 head on the Glenafton farm.

[dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color: #DC943C;"] S
[/dropcap]haryn made a lotion using her goat milk, which is rich in minerals and butterfat, and an entirely new career was born. She now spends her days creating her products and selling them to more than 30 outlets that have all come via

word-of-mouth or customers who have met her on the market circuit in South-West Victoria.

Not only do many of her soaps have pet names on the label, her skincare products contain ingredients that are all sourced locally or through local farming connections. Even the lotion bottles are sourced – and made – in Melbourne, not overseas.

It is overseas, however, that is coming to Sharyn. She has recently been approached to consider exporting to Asia, but admits she is cautious about rushing into a much larger market.

“I am a very measured person and I need to do things slowly and carefully, so nothing will happen quickly, but if it does, I want to feel comfortable that I will be able to manage it here (on the farm) ... the goats always come first,” she said.



Tahli the soap. Okay, maybe it is not a direct likeness, but her milk is in there!

[box] Sharyn Carmichael was recently nominated for a Telstra Business Award. (We hope she wins!) In the meantime, you can

[visit her website](#) and find her at a range of markets around Port Fairy, Warrnambool and districts. You can also order direct via scarmichael@optusnet.com.au[/box]



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Abb, art and the immigrant journey



Abb Marzouk at home in his Warranambool studio from where he still sells his sculptures. Art has remained a defining and comforting force in his life.

[dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color: #DC943C;"]
A[/dropcap]rtist **Abb Marzouk** represents all of the mental, physical and emotional challenges that face people who come to Australia in the hope of building a better life.

Not that 81-year-old Abb, of Warrnambool, intends to be a spokesman for the immigrant experience, far from it: he would prefer to talk about his art.

But the two cannot be separated – the art and the experience – and when Abb sits down to talk about his sculptures and paintings, he finds himself talking about growing up in Egypt, where he was an outsider, and emigrating to Australia in the 1950s, where he was even more of an outsider.

It is a painful and difficult story that pours out of him and, even after more than 50 years in Australia, Abb still

struggles with finding a firm sense of identity and belonging.



Abb prides himself on his highly detailed animal sculptures like this armadillo.

[dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color: #DC943C;"] A [dropcap]bb is a third-generation Egyptian, but he came from European ancestors who moved to Egypt when it was under colonial rule, so Egyptians of Arab descent considered his family to be Europeans.

"It didn't matter that we had three generations born in Egypt, we were classed as European. But we weren't considered by Europe to be European, so my family was stateless," Abb explains.

Because of his heritage, Abb suffered constant bullying as a child, but it was as an adult, with a fine art degree under his belt and running his own tapestry design business, that the ground shifted under him.

The Egyptian revolution in 1952 saw Egypt shift from a monarchy to a republic and Abb's status as an "outsider" was confirmed as the new government introduced crippling new laws that froze bank accounts and made it almost impossible for "Europeans" like Abb to make a living.

"I had a visa to go to America, but the Ku Klux Klan was on the rise there and I didn't want to go to such a racist country. I decided to try Australia instead," Abb said.



Although he has lived in Australia for more than 50 years, Abb's Egyptian roots continue to provide inspiration for his sculptural work.

[dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color: #DC943C;"] I [/dropcap]t took more than two years to secure an Australian visa, but Abb and his wife Sylvia arrived in Sydney with hopes of Abb using his fine art degree to teach, as his immigration officer had suggested.

Instead, he found himself in a country that was openly hostile

to “wogs” and the only jobs he could find were cleaning and labouring.

“I would cry all the time. The discrimination was terrible. I wrote 63 letters trying to get work and there was nothing, so I took whatever I could just to make money,” Abb said.

It wasn't until many years later that Abb, who has two sons, finally secured a teaching position as an art teacher, but the subtle and not-so-subtle discrimination and bullying continued. An angry jibe by a colleague about Abb being paid more than he finally sent him over the edge.

“I had a complete breakdown. I had to leave the education department after 25 years, without my super, without any of those things,” he said.

“It took me four years to come out of that depression and I still suffer from depression occasionally now.”

Abb never worked again, but found solace in his art. His intricate animal sculptures are exquisite, as are his mosaics. And in 2011, he was awarded the Warrnambool Art Society's Judith Watson Trophy for best painting, for a *Truck Full of Refugees*.

The painting depicts a group of African refugees fleeing with whatever possessions they can carry.

On first glance, they look like a mound of rubbish, but on closer inspection, their faces emerge: staring out into an unknown future with a heart full of hope. And that, of course, is the message.



Truck full of Refugees: the painting that took out the top prize in 2011 at the Warrnambool Artists Society annual exhibition.

[box type="bio"] If you are interested in visiting Abb's studio, please contact him on (03) 5561 2131.[/box]



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