



L-R: Howard Hurst, Kerry Collins, Irmi Hastings, Deborah Illingworth, Phil Jordan and Lois Templeton

"Flying the Coop"

30 April 2010 - 13 May 2010

Flying the Coop! Pollok Arts and Crafts comes to Pukekohe.

Iconic Awhitu Peninsula art group, Pollok Co-op, have decided to come to town. The six members of the group made the decision early in the year to mount an exhibition of their own original works in the NZ Steel Gallery, Pukekohe. 'We wanted exposure to a wider audience', says member Phil Jordan. Now in their third year of operation, they have watched the business grow with tourist traffic on the increase to the beautiful bays on the peninsula, and while pleased with progress, they have always thought that their unique brand of art ought to be shared with their closest neighbours. 'When we talk to visitors to the gallery, they have often come from Auckland; or from points south. Not a lot seem to come from Franklin. Maybe it's that old problem of taking your own neighbourhood for granted', commented member Lois Templeton.

All six members also agreed that the decision was a much needed spur to getting new work out into the public eye.

In coming up with the whimsical title for their exhibition, 'Flying the Coop', there was one rather amusing, if confusing consequence. As Kerry Collins recalls, 'We did an article in the 'Peninsularama', and started getting phone calls from distraught locals who thought the Co-op was moving lock, stock and barrel to Pukekohe.'

Far from it, the exhibition will open on Friday, 30th April, and will run for two weeks, ending Thursday, 13th May. Visitors are welcome to the opening at 5pm, where there will be wine and snacks available.

As an eclectic bunch of artists, the group will be presenting a wide variety of styles and media. Lois, Kerry and Irmi Hastings will be offering a range of fabric artworks, including some stunning quilts, as well as bead work, and ceramics. The fourth female of the group, Deborah Illingworth, will be showing some new examples of her much praised oil paintings, including a portrait recently accepted for the National Portrait Competition in Wellington. The two male members, Phil Jordan and Howard Hirst, jokingly call themselves the 'hackers and whackers' of the group. Howard makes wood and stone sculptures, while Phil likes to work kauri, stainless steel and MDF into pleasing 'sculptural pictures'. All six gain their inspiration from living in the unique environment of the Awhitu peninsula, and hope to transfer some of their passion to the people who live on its doorstep.



Phil Jordan and Irmi Hastings discussing a work at the Exhibition Opening