



Art for uncertain times

My childhood was spent (centuries ago), on a property in the far west of Victoria without television. My mother was a teacher and had lots of fascinating and inspiring books about art and artists. When I wasn't outside, I was reading or drawing and despite life and my career taking other directions, I often returned to drawing, painting and print making.

Then in March 2020, when Melbourne is in Lockdown, I am struck by the unusual calm of the CBD, the empty spaces that are normally churning with humanity.

I start doing quick watercolours to record the images, trying to develop my technique as well as injecting some of my feelings about what I see. Very soon I am hooked and painting most hours of every day.

Living right on the site of the State Library Metro Tunnel works, I have a connection to the Metro/Cross Yarra Partnership creative team and I was pleased and surprised when they decided to enlarge images of a few of my paintings to display on the hoardings of the Franklin Street East Shed.

I love living where I do. Sometimes it feels more like a village than a big city and never more than now. Most of my friends and workmates have been to look at my work in the Franklin street walkway and the workers at the Metro tunnel site have been smiling and joking to see one of the paintings is of their friendly traffic controllers.

This pandemic time is so difficult and challenging for city businesses and for those forced out of work. I'm very sorry for anyone having hard times or illness. I feel a bit guilty for loving the quietness and clear light of early winter in the streets, the market and our public areas. I hope that one day this series of paintings will make people smile and reminisce about a strange but fleeting time.

I am a committee member of Residents 3000 which is a social and community activity group for those of us who live here in the CBD and they have been so interested and supportive of this project. Special thanks to our president, Raf, for encouragement and for posting a lot of my work including the hoardings images on Residents 3000 social media sites. Thank you too Artur, for showing me how to make and lay out my own Instagram page. It is "tonim_art" if anyone is interested

I am going to continue painting no matter what happens. I aspire to making a record of this city through the seasons, the good and bad times, the quiet and crazy times and I hope that people will enjoy my work as I go!

Toni Magor, Committee Member, Residents 3000.

