

Portfolio



Kim Perrier

Text: Kylie Byfield Photographs: John Green

With a wry smile and a mischievous twinkle in his eye, sculptor Kim Perrier tells the tale of 'The Walls'.

He painstakingly pieced together his lounge room walls from stone found on his Bridgetown property. Like a giant jigsaw puzzle, the walls gradually took shape - giving the room the cosy, rustic atmosphere Kim was seeking.

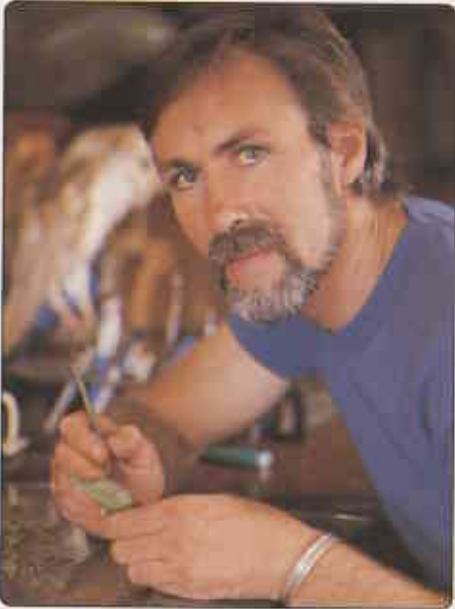
Imagine his horror when an elderly visitor innocently inquired: 'When are you going to whitewash the walls?' 'When I finish paving the paddock!' came the unspoken reply.

Kim's sense of humour frequently bubbles to the surface, belying the seriousness with which he tackles his work. And he is a natural in more ways than one. He loves the country life, has abundant natural talent and, these days, uses that talent to create realistic sculptures of Australian wildlife and landscapes.

His skill has not gone unnoticed. His works are displayed in the National Gallery in Canberra and the Western Australian and Northern Territory State Galleries. Other pieces have been bought by the Whiteman Collection and the Christensen Foundation Collection, both housed in Perth.

Canadian born Kim spends countless hours perched in the top floor of his studio, which is littered with discarded sculptures and all manner of paraphernalia. It is here, and downstairs in his workshop, that Kim embarks on his creative adventures.

He is an artistic explorer, constantly searching for new materials and innovative techniques in a bid to produce something different. And he has made some exciting discoveries. Take his dolphins, for example: Kim has these finely crafted pewter animals surging out of a brilliant blue acrylic ocean.

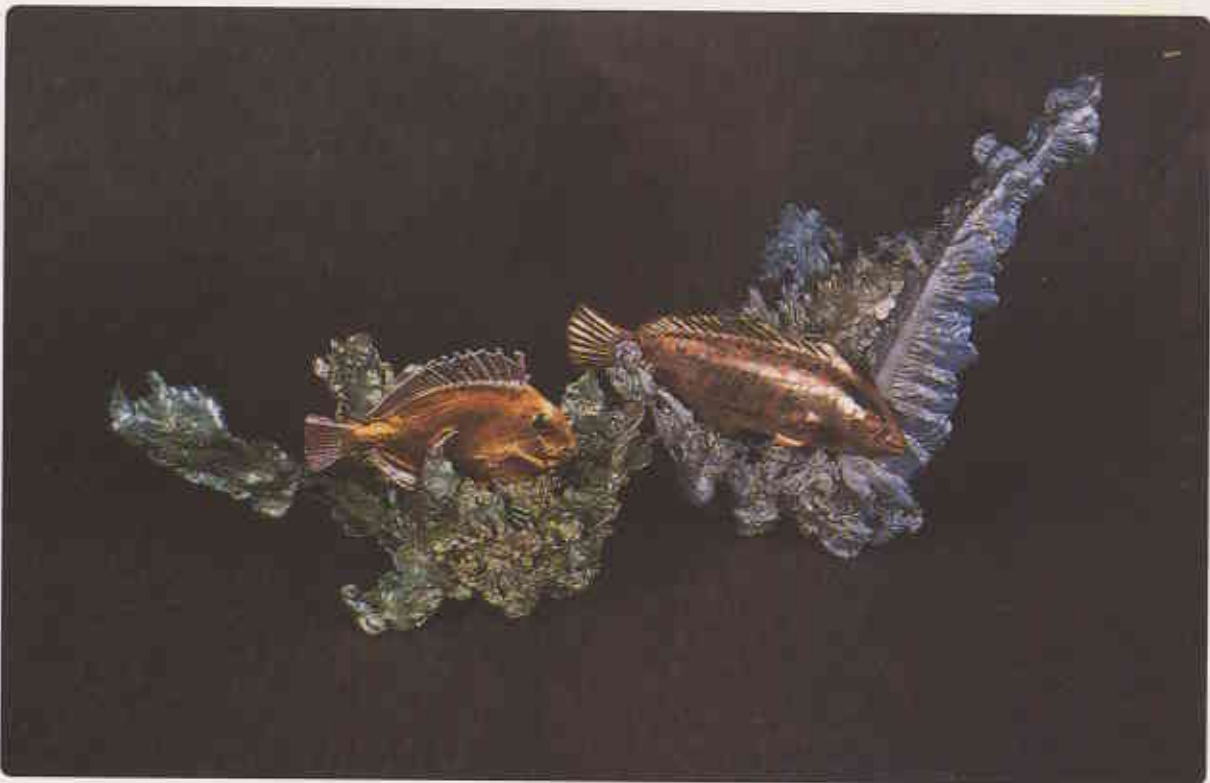


Skilled sculptor Kim Perrier has a serious, and a silly, side (above).



Kim's metal-colouring techniques lend a strangely life-like quality to these pewter fish (above and below).

His 'Terra Australis' series, created from the unusual combination of pewter, crystals and gemstones, captures the colours and textures of Australia's coral reefs, deserts and rugged outback. A realistic wildlife sculpture is thrown in to complete the picture. The finished product may, for example, resemble inquisitive tropical fish swimming lazily through a clump of brightly-coloured coral. (See pictures this page and previous page).





It's time for the popular Bush Babies to grow up. Now, Kim wants to produce life-size sculptures (above).

These frogs have leapt out of Kim's imagination rather than a lake (right).

For this series, Kim experimented with an electroplating process traditionally used for jewellery. By dipping a solid material into an electroforming fluid - which contains copper, nickel, brass, silver or gold - Kim can 'grow' sculptures into a variety of interesting shapes and textures.



Such a discovery keeps his adventurous spirit alive. 'I am always exploring new avenues,' he says. 'I want to use both traditional and new materials in a way they have never been used before. I would also like to design special sculptures for groups or individuals raising money for specific conservation causes.'

The animals include the green tree frog, echidna, an infant crocodile, kangaroo, koala and brushtailed possum. These bush dwellers are first meticulously carved in wax to capture their unique postures, movement, features and special characteristics.

But, while his spirit may be healthy, Kim reluctantly admits that he's had to become more commercial in a bid to keep wife Marie and three daughters alive as well. His most successful series to date is 'Bush Babies' - a collection of Australian animals cast in pewter or bronze and weighing up to 2kg each.

Now, Kim wants his 'Bush Babies' to grow up. 'I would like to do life-size sculptures in bronze for display in public places,' he says. 'Imagine the impact six bronze kangaroos in full flight would have on passers-by. I think it would lift people's awareness of and appreciation for animals. There is a culture in sculpture.'

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EDITORIAL

A prerequisite for the successful management of land and wildlife is an understanding of the processes that drive ecosystems, and managers who can manipulate these processes.

In Western Australia, we are fortunate that we have a wealth of talent in different government agencies, tertiary institutions and private companies who can provide these research and management skills.

Of course, obtaining a perfect understanding of ecosystems and ways to manage them brings to mind the frog who wants to reach a creek, but can only jump half the distance every time.

But it is not the complexities of understanding or managing ecosystems which provide the greatest difficulty.

Social and political factors are far more difficult to accommodate.

All the scientific and managerial skills in the world are worth nothing if the community and, often more importantly, selected constituencies within the community do not support the management strategies.

Unfortunately, there is often an inverse relationship between a scientist's or manager's skills in his profession and his capacity to handle social and political factors in the community. This is not surprising, since most scientists and managers have received little training in basic communication skills, let alone community politics.

CALM is attempting to address this problem in a variety of ways. But the people who should know the most about how to obtain community support for public land management strategies are the public. *Landscape* readers are an important and influential constituency. If you have thoughts on this issue we would like to hear from you.



What a sterling idea! A new management plan for CALM's South Coast Region - page 28.



Are insects gradually eating away our jarrah forests? Turn to page 18.



What lies beneath the waters of Marmion Marine Park? See page 25.

COVER



A rose by any other name... Does its name detract from the beauty of the common eggfly (Hypolimnasthetys bolina)? Photograph - Jiri Lochman

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