

Welcome speech by Jonathan Wenig, Arnold Bloch Leibler partner, at the Yering Station Sculpture Exhibition & Awards media launch.

Good morning and thank you for joining us. I'm Jonathan Wenig, a commercial partner here at Arnold Bloch Leibler. It is my great pleasure to welcome you today to the media launch of the 2007 Yering Station Sculpture Exhibition & Awards.

Arnold Bloch Leibler began its association with this event in 2005 and we are delighted to be assisting Yering Station again as they open their wonderful venue to the exhibiting artists so they can share their works with the community.

I stand here with all the authority of a person who knows very little about sculpture – which of course doesn't stop me from expressing an opinion. But I think that's the wonderful thing about art. On some level, what really matters is what you like, what your eye finds pleasing, and what fulfils some function in your life – be it practical, aesthetic, social or emotional.

It's a bit like the story of the old art collector wandering down an old cobbled street in a European city, when he sees a mangy cat standing in a doorway licking milk out of an exquisite ceramic bowl, which the art collector recognises instantly as being immensely valuable.

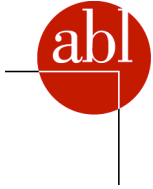
Sensing an opportunity, he pokes his head into the doorway and asks the gentleman standing there, whether he could buy the cat for 50 euros. The gentleman looks very pleased and says "Sure – no problem – take the cat." The art collector gathers up the cat in his arms, starts to leave, and then turns around and says, "You know what, the cat seems to like that bowl, why don't you throw the bowl in with the bargain – saves me having to go out and buy a new one."

"Don't think I can do that", says the gentleman. "You see, that's my lucky bowl – I've already sold 15 cats this week!"

Fortunately, there are various people here today who are far more qualified to discuss sculpture than I am to speak to you shortly about this year's exhibition. They include: principal award judge and Director of the Geelong Gallery, Geoffrey Edwards, and participating sculptor and Chair of the Sculptors Association, Julie Collins.

I would also like to welcome our other award judges, Kelly Gellatly, Contemporary Art Curator at the National Gallery of Victoria, and Vincent Alessi, Managing Curator of the LaTrobe University Art Museum and Collections. A special welcome also goes to many of this year's participating artists.

Our first speaker however is Ann Rathbone, Director of Yering Station. Here at Arnold Bloch Leibler, we are privileged to enjoy a long-standing relationship with the Rathbone family, at both business and community levels. The Rathbones have been ABL clients for over 25 years, and we are very pleased to be able to continue to support their community contributions through the Yering Station Sculpture Exhibition & Awards.



Another reason we are supporting this initiative is because giving back to the community has always been an essential value at Arnold Bloch Leibler. Today, we operate a dedicated public interest law practice that offers pro bono advice to more than 100 organisations and causes across Australia. In the last financial year, we undertook over 4000 hours of pro bono work for a diverse mix of public interest law clients. In addition, we support a large number of causes in other ways, including through financial assistance and expertise on boards of management.

So why do we make such a large contribution? Because we believe our support of these charitable and not-for-profit organisations and causes benefits the firm, all those who work within it, and also our clients. It's also the right thing to do.

From now until the end of October, we are also privileged to host a concurrent exhibition of sculptures by some of the artists chosen for this year's award exhibition. As usual, the concurrent exhibition has generated much discussion and interest amongst our staff and clients.

After the formal part of this media launch is concluded, please feel free to wander through the public areas of our office and have a look at the works. They offer a small taste of what is to come when the Yering Station Sculpture Exhibition & Awards open on Sunday, 14 October.

The Rathbones have been involved for some 20 years with LARCH, the Leukaemia Auxiliary of the Royal Children's Hospital. LARCH and the Yarra Valley Arts Council are the recipients of commission proceeds from the sale of the exhibited sculptures. Ann will tell you more about LARCH and the great work it does.

Please join me now in welcoming Ann Rathbone.

For more information, or to arrange an interview, contact **Clare Kennedy**, Marketing Communications Executive, (03) 9229 9715 or 0405 941 658 or at ckennedy@abl.com.au.

About Arnold Bloch Leibler

Arnold Bloch Leibler is a leading commercial law firm with offices in Melbourne and Sydney. The firm represents a wide range of individuals and corporate clients, including high-net-worth individuals and entrepreneurs, large family businesses and blue-chip corporations. Arnold Bloch Leibler also has a dedicated pro bono practice providing advice on social, environmental and cultural issues to more than 100 charitable and not-for-profit organisations.

Arnold Bloch Leibler is particularly known for its expertise in commercial law, litigation and dispute resolution, taxation and property. The firm also has an expanding presence in trade practices law. In these areas, the firm has been involved in many landmark matters and transactions.