

Huge Jiujiang response to six down under artists

'Wild Dogs from Down Under' recently returned from an artistic cultural exchange in Bao Bao's sister city of Jiujiang, China.

Members of the Jiujiang Six Down Under group, Kerrie Warren, Leanne Ryan, Eileen Murray, Jerry Murray-Arnes, Louise Collins and Gary Miles, said they were overwhelmed by the welcome and involvement of the Jiujiang people and their government.

The group was in Jiujiang with their touring exhibition titled 'Gipsyland', which over the last 17 months has been exhibited in the West Coastland Arts Centre, Mackenzie Gallery, Barrow Gallery and in Melbourne.

The artists also spent several days after the exhibition discussing the gipsy/cultural exchange for their upcoming exhibition at Arts Regional Gallery in Dunedin. "The exhibition 'Gipsyland' was an incredible audience of generally interested people," said

artist Kerrie Warren. "Many locals visited including art students, artists, young and old all came through and largely in Chinese. It was in Chinese Mandarin with very minimal English. It was an incredible experience and the words of art did not seem to matter as they crossed all language barriers."

The artists and exhibition featured on the front page of two newspapers and were interviewed for television news during their stay. They also signed hundreds of certificates and took photographic thousands of views.

"Approximately 500 Wild Dogs from Down Under" visited the whole city of Jiujiang (47 million people) as they were staying in the overpopulation and admission statistics were more about us," said Mr Warren.

The artists had little time to relax after flying into China, going straight to work setting up 'Gipsyland' in Mr Cao Mo Gallery. Each day in outside of the exhibi-

tion, local residents passed through the door to see the artwork and meet the artists with assistance of interpreters from the Jiujiang Municipal People's Government.

The Wild Dog artists and Bao Bao, Kevin Curran delegation were officially welcomed at a formal reception by Vice Mayor Li Wu on the night of their arrival in Jiujiang. At around 8 was a very special night, with the artists introduced to Jiujiang artists, government officials and interpreters.

Artistic adviser, public administration, Chinese press, Wang and then to especially from Shanghai along with other Agency officials in, for a part of the ceremony and from the artists.

The following night the artists formal reception ceremony, hosted by Mayor of Jiujiang, Mr Wang Ping.

"It was quite an experience when we were not in time for meeting during our joint photo," said Mr Warren. "We

Wang Ping was warm, sincere and welcoming, meaning to visit Bao Bao Story in the past but with a dedication of artist."

The only negative experience from the exhibition was that Leanne Collins' work was not included by Shanghai City and as a result didn't make it to the exhibition.

Following the exhibition, the artists were invited to attend Bao Bao's restaurant at the Redbird Factory, Jiujiang traditional Chinese garden. To Murray, Leanne Collins, Eileen Murray, Jerry Murray-Arnes and Gary Miles.

Mr Murray and his colleagues were both excited about work to present to the artists in 2008.

The artists then visited and explored the Jiujiang River, watched several live performances in the lake, visited traditional events and shows, attended to the Jiujiang Art Centre and were treated as special guests at a variety of dinner parties where they learnt more about the Chinese people, culture and customs.

"The Wild Dog artists have accepted many hot gifts and showed their skills to meet the demands and give their part in a cultural exchange in their sister city in China - an exchange which was understood completely by the people of Jiujiang" said Mr Warren.

"To visit a sister state of mine, the artists and their partners have many that friends and they have agreed to meeting those again when they will be back in Bao Bao and present their own feelings about 'our place' through art."

For further information on Wild Dogs from Down Under, visit www.wilddogartists.com.au.



Making artwork traditional Chinese painter Mr Fu Mengyao (third from left) and his wife Mrs Fu Mengyao (second from right) are members of 'Wild Dogs from Down Under' including Eileen Murray, Leanne Ryan, Kerrie Warren, Gary Miles and Jerry Murray-Arnes.



Local artist Kerrie Warren and Bao Bao's chief executive Gina Patterson discuss art with Jiujiang Mayor Mr Wang Ping.



At a formal reception to welcome 'Wild Dogs from Down Under' to their 'Gipsyland' exhibition in Jiujiang, China are (from left) Bao Bao's Chief Executive Gina Patterson, Jiujiang Mayor Mr Wang Ping and Bao Bao's CEO Kevin Curran.

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