

# Merry Sparks

## “Art – It’s Not Just About Pretty Pictures”

Australia and China share a common regional connection and as good friends and neighbours our relationship continues to grow. While the foundations of our respective societies are built upon differing philosophical principles, appreciation of the spiritual importance and relevance of art is common to us all.

“Art empowers, reflects and informs; it enables and motivates; and provides an insight into our past, our present and our future” says Merry Sparks (branded “Australia’s Andy Warhol and Queen of Kitsch”) as she brings Pop-Art into the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

“I see my role as being one of reflecting upon societal challenges we face through icons and humour, for it is through this medium that we can question what our leaders have done, what they are doing and what they may do into the future. Let us consider for example the events of 5 June 1989 in China and 9 September 2001 in the United States and 12 October 2002 in Bali - significant dates, which have shaped how our respective societies have grown, developed and responded.

For China, it was the day that not only China stood still, but the world stood still as we watched a defiant protester holding 2 shopping bags – 19 year old student, Wang Weilin – who stood before a column of Type 59 tanks in Beijing’s Tiananmen Square. There was a short pause with the man and the tanks having reached a quiet, still impasse.”

The man symbolizes the brave few among us: against all odds, having a voice and making it heard. The rest is history, so is the man...”

Sparks’ series “The Day China Stood Still” depicting the “tank man” before his captors and “Count Yourself Lucky” featuring the favoured kitsch cat with its pendulous arm, exude compassionate humour as she empathises and reflects on global icons; and how individuals can shape and impact so dramatically on their own environments.

“My audience today wants instant recognition, loud confidence, simple purity and colourful statements, art which doesn’t require a guide book to understand what the artist is trying to accomplish. Art today is all about now, living now, enjoying now, using the negatives from the past to ensure that we learn and grow.

Photography combined with a background in computer technology, a sharp eye for interior design and years of painting experience allow me to offer original artwork in various media to a contemporary audience, for whom brash is a compliment, individuality can be worn on a sleeve and life is meant to be alive and reflected.

Art is not just about pretty pictures.”

Sparks says that she wants her works to communicate what is happening now in our societies, to challenge and question but more importantly to have fun. Her iconic works about Australia: “Australia’s Favourite Spread”, “The Dingo Did It” and “How Much Can A Koala?” (to name a few) invites the world to come on Down-Under, throw another Prawn on the Barbie, enjoy some Vegemite thickly spread and cuddle a Koala. “Being an artistic ambassador for Australia is my passion because I love this sunburnt country with its land of sweeping plains. I count myself lucky to live where I do, when I do.”

Refer to [www.merrysparks.com](http://www.merrysparks.com), and all social media to connect with Merry Sparks.