



Cecile Galiazzo

The Altenburg Gallery is in new hands

I moved to Braidwood in 1982 with my young family, and it was here that I met Christoph Altenburg through Mary Bonds, an artist from Sydney who had moved to Braidwood for 'the quiet life'.

Mary started teaching painting and life drawing classes, and the 'Academy' as it became fondly known, formed. Many of its original members are living and practicing in and around Braidwood to this day. It was Mary who encouraged

me to pursue my passion and attend art school.

With a nursing background behind me, I moved to Canberra and completed a BA in Visual Arts at the ANU in 2000. Looking for an alternative to health service work as my children grew up, I taught papermaking at the ANU, managed the Print Studio and Gallery at Megalo Access Arts Canberra, taught printmaking at TAFE Illawarra and worked at The Goulburn Regional Art Gallery.

TODAY

& OLD NEW

More recently I've taught art in remote communities in the Northern Territory for Charles Darwin University.

What I've noticed over the years is the increasing number of artists, writers and crafts people also moving to Braidwood 'for the quiet life'. Far from being the quiet, sleepy country town that we moved to decades ago, Braidwood is now a thriving tourist destination and the arts community is flourishing.

When the opportunity came up to take on the Altenburg, it seemed like a natural progression. Christoph had been a great mentor and friend, and I have exhibited in many of the exhibitions here curated by him and Kirsty.

My vision for the future of the Altenburg is to carry on the tradition of providing a space for emerging and established artists and fine artisan craft.

In 2018, Altenburg Gallery awarded four ANU School of Art and Design graduates exhibition spaces for its upcoming programme.

Supporting young artists is important and vital; it was done for me and so now I can return the same. Taking over the reins from Francesca in December saw us working together on the summer exhibition 'Close to Home' – showcasing 38 Braidwood based artists which ran until January 20.

The summer show has traditionally had a significant Braidwood theme and content, many locals and visitors alike have purchased some very fine works. The current exhibition is 'Songs from the Woods', new work by local ceramicist Gwenna Green.

The show opened on Jan 25 and runs until Feb 24.

Altenburg Gallery is also available for book launches and private functions. Services include curatorial support, gallery hire, small art handling services and conservation advice. Exhibition proposals for 2020 can be emailed to: altenburg.gallery@gmail.com ■

BECOMES YESTERDAY



CHRISTOPH AND KIRSTY WITH FRIENDS AT STUDIO ALTENBURG IN 1987. [RIGHT] CHRISTOPH DIGGING THE FOUNDATIONS FOR THE ALTENBURG'S KITCHEN EXTENSION THAT LATER BECAME CAFE ALTENBURG.



Studio Altenburg

Kirsty Altenburg remembers

Christoph and I returned to Braidwood in 1974. We built a workshop beside Rose Cottage in Lascelles Street, where Christoph designed and made silverware and jewellery. People were invited to come to the workshop and the earliest Studio Altenburg exhibitions were held there. By 1978 our family was growing and we saw an opportunity to move the business to Wallace Street when the Commercial Banking Company of NSW building came up for sale. Although rather derelict, the handsome building with the banking chamber, manager's office, attached residence and rear stables provided space for a retail shop, Christoph's workshop and living space for the family.

By November 1978 we'd restored the old bank and opened Studio Altenburg.

Later changes included opening the front rooms of the building to gallery spaces, converting the stables to a residence and finally in 1985 moving out to create Café Altenburg. This was the best decision — with Natalie Densley,

Jenny Tozer and Angela Marshall creating great food, endless discussions and boundless laughter.

Studio Altenburg showcased Christoph's jewellery and silver and the work of local craftspeople and artists including weaver Solvig Baas Becking, potters Richard Murray, Merrie and Greg Sugden, Sandra Hand, John Godfrey and ceramic animals by Victoria Clutterbuck. Where there was no local craftsperson or artist, work was sourced from elsewhere — glass from the Jam Factory in Adelaide, Nick Mount from Victoria, glass engraver Helmut Hiebl from Murrumbidgee, hand carved wooden birds from Brian Eves.

A continuous exhibition program showed the work of local and regional artists, many of whom have continued to exhibit their work in Altenburg & Co throughout the first 40 years of the gallery's operation. In addition to exhibition openings in the courtyard there were book launches, poetry readings including by Judith Wright, Leslie Lambert's jazz nights and more.

Christoph was invited to exhibit his work in the Crafts Council Expos held in Sydney and Melbourne, and during the 1980s Christoph and I exhibited at the Craft Shows in Sydney and Canberra, taking Christoph's silver and the work of local craftspeople, wanting to promote Braidwood as a place for fine craft and the arts.

Studio Altenburg stimulated the emerging arts community and became the focal point, fostering and contributing to the strong arts culture with an interesting and diverse group of people that is here in Braidwood today.

Studio Altenburg was sold in 1997 and since June 2012 our daughter Francesca has managed the gallery as Altenburg & Co. She continued to exhibit the work of generally local and regional artists who sought to exhibit their work in the gallery.

Forty years has been a wonderful journey for us, encouraged by the support of the Braidwood community, the artists, craftspeople and so many others who have become friends over the years.

Francesca built on a reputation established by her parents and is looking forward to the future of the gallery and shop with Cecile Galiazzo as the new owner. ■