

Doug Spowart and Victoria Cooper

Doug and Victoria conducted their residency titled 'Nocturne Grafton' from 1 to 30 September 2013.

If a picture is worth a thousand words – how do you gather the 1,000 words from a community by showing them pictures of their town? Artists **Victoria Cooper** and **Doug Spowart** explored this question as they worked on their residency, consisting initially of photographs of buildings and locations within the Grafton region.



Doug and Victoria made their photographs at dusk using the afterglow of sunset and streetlights to create an unusual image of the locations. This 'nocturne' light often requires long shutter speeds allowing the blurred movement of people and vehicles to be recorded. They enjoy photographing the visual effect of colours in different light conditions: ambient daylight, artificial lighting, car head and tail light trails. As artist Victoria commented, 'in nocturne light there a sense of drama or a setting for a movie scene – a place where stories are told or evoked'.

Making the photographs is only the beginning of the project's activity; the next part involves the collecting of stories. As Doug explained, 'the photographs were posted on social media sites including Facebook for members of the Grafton community to tell us their stories or experiences that connect with the places photographed'.

They then called upon the Grafton community to share their stories of each place photographed including their everyday and meaningful experiences by connecting with the project's Facebook and Blog sites. As part of the residency they displayed photographs in the studio space at the Gallery, and there were opportunities for interested Grafton people to call by and talk with them about the project and to assist in the uploading of stories.

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