Entry type: Person
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King, Inge

(1915 - 2016)

Born	19151126, Berlin Germany
Died	20160423, Melbourne Victoria Australia
Occupation	jewellery designer, Lecturer, Sculptor

Summary

Inge King was one of Australia's most prominent sculptors. A foundational member of the Centre Five artist collective, King contributed significantly to the development of non-figurative sculpture in Australia. Best known for her large-scale public sculptures, King's work is held in private collections in Australia and overseas and in various public collections throughout Australia, including the National Gallery of Australia, the Art Gallery of New South Wales, the National Gallery of Victoria, the Queensland Art Gallery, Artbank, Sydney and Parliament House, Canberra.

Details

The youngest of four girls, King was born amid the First World War into a middle-class Jewish family. She studied at the Berlin Academy for one year, from 1937 to 1938, but was forced to flee Germany for England in 1939. In 1940, she was accepted to study at the Royal Academy School in London on a scholarship, but it closed shortly after her arrival on account of the German bombing raids in London at the time. King then moved to Scotland to study sculpture at the Glasgow School of Art from 1941 to 1943. In 1947, she moved to the United Kingdom to live at the Abbey Arts Centre, a small artists' community just outside of London. After her first solo exhibition at the London Gallery in early 1949, King left the United Kingdom to spend time in Paris and in New York which she found especially inspiring.

In 1951, she and her husband Grahame King moved to Melbourne and settled in Warrandyte, where they built their Robin Boyd-designed home. Shortly after moving to Australia, King designed and made jewellery to supplement the family income. In 1953 and 1955, she exhibited as part of the Group of Four artist collective. In 1959, with two new additions, the collective exhibited again this time as the Six Sculptors. In 1961, the collective re-formed again, changing its name to Centre Five. As a collective, they aimed to bring contemporary Australian sculpture to a wider audience. In 1959 King started working with steel, a medium she favoured and used to make maquettes for larger-scale projects. In 1971 she was commissioned to design two sculptures: the RAAF Memorial in Canberra, and the Fred Schonell Memorial Fountain at Queensland University, both of which warranted collaboration with engineers and fabricators.

King was well known for her large-scale public sculptures and was commissioned to design many throughout her life, including the monumental *Forward Surge* (1974-1981) by the Victorian Arts Centre. Other major commissions include works at McClelland Gallery Sculpture Park, Melbourne; the University of Melbourne; Woden Valley Hospital, Canberra; Heide Museum of Modern Art, Melbourne; the National Gallery of Australia, Canberra and La Trobe University, Melbourne.

Since the 1940s, King has exhibited regularly in solo and group exhibitions in London, New York, Australia and New Zealand. She was celebrated with two retrospective exhibitions during her lifetime at the National Gallery of Victoria in 1992 and 2014, as well as at the National Gallery of Australia in 2015. Alongside her career as an artist, King worked as a lecturer in sculpture at the School of Early Childhood Studies from 1961 to 1975, and at the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT) from 1976 to 1987. She was awarded numerous prizes and honours, including a Member of the Order of Australia (AM) in 1984 for her services to art, the Visual Arts Emeritus Award in 2008 from the Australian Arts Council and honorary Doctorates from Deakin University (1990) and RMIT (1993). Her work is held in private collections in Australia, Europe, the UK and the USA, and in regional and state galleries throughout Australia. Inge King died in April 2016 at the age of 100.

Published resources

Edited Book
Heritage : the national women's art book, 500 works by 500 Australian women artists from colonial times to 1955, Kerr, Joan, 1995

Website
The Work of Grahame and Inge King,
https://igking.info/

Biography
Inge King,
https://www.artgallery.nsw.gov.au/collection/artists/king-inge/

Article
Inge King (1915-2016) Tribute, Eckett, Jane, August 2016

Inge King, one of Australia's most significant sculptors, has died aged 100, Grishin, Sasha, 27 April 2016,
https://www.theage.com.au/national/act/inge-king-one-of-australias-most-significant-sculptors-has-died-aged-100-20160427-gofu

Book
The Art of Inge King: Sculptor, Grishin, Sasha, 2014

Archival resources

National Gallery of Australia
James Gleeson interviews Inge King

Papers of Inge King

National Portrait Gallery
Portrait of Inge King by Mark Strizic

Author Details
Evangela Lines-Morison

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