

Keys to the collection— Faces

Dean Bowen

“Bowen’s bewitching characters twinkle with charm and personality. Whether sourced from memories of growing up in country Victoria, or informed by the experiences of living in the hustle and bustle of an urban city, his canvases, works on paper and sculptures are imbued with whimsy and an enduring appeal..”

—Dr Wendy Garden, *A Jar of Stars*, 2012

1957 Dean Bowen was born in Maryborough, Victoria where he spent much of his childhood admiring the surrounding flora and fauna of the Australian bush.

1976 Received a Diploma in Fine Arts from RMIT (Printmaking).

1989 Bowen became a full-time artist, going on to exhibit extensively both in Australia and Japan.

1993 Completed a Master of Arts (Printmaking) at Monash University.

1997 Bowen Won the Daikin Industries Prize at the Osaka Print Triennale, Japan.

1999 Received a PhD from Monash University (Extending Printmaking).



Man of birds—

Bowen’s whimsical characters are full of charm and personality. Some are inspired by childhood memories of growing up in country Victoria, others by living in a busy urban environment. His prints and paintings are fun and have a wide following in Japan.

The faces in Bowen’s ‘portraits’ reveal the person’s heart, too. While he deliberately makes his works of art look simple, each gesture—even the position of an eye—is a deliberate choice, to describe a character.

Birds can be found in many of Bowen’s artworks: they appear full of personality or help to tell a story. Bowen is known for his quirky and infectious sense of humour, and also his concern for happiness and deeper messages. His works of art have a Michael Leunig-like quality, in their character and world view.

**Geelong
Gallery**

Victorian Curriculum level 2 to 6
geelonggallery.org.au/learn

Dean Bowen
Man of birds 1997
colour etching, aquatint and
drypoint; edition 9/15
Collection: Geelong Gallery

G E E L O N G
E E L O N G
E E L O N G
L O N G
O N G
N G A L L E R Y
G A L L E R Y



Dean Bowen

Australian, born 1957

Man of birds 1997
colour etching, aquatint
and drypoint; edition 9/15
67.0 x 88.5 cm
Collection: Geelong
Gallery
Gift of the artist, 2002
Reproduced courtesy of
the artist

Questions

List the objects that are odd or unusual in this portrait. Explain why the artist has deliberately made these choices.

How is the person in the portrait feeling? Explain why you think this.

Research

Access the internet to research Dean Bowen's prints and choose one that you like. Explain why you like the print and the ways in which Bowen shows a deeper meaning.

Activity

Imagine you are an art detective. Look at *Man of birds* (1997) and search for the clues that tell us about its meaning. List the clues then write a paragraph to tell a story about who this person is. Think about how the person is feeling, where they live, what they do or like, what makes them happy or sad, their relationship with the birds and the artist. Give this person a name.