

THE FIRST OF OCTOBER

After the devastating earthquakes, tsunami and nuclear disasters struck Japan earlier this year I, like what many others, no doubt, wondered what I could do as well as sending donations. Western artists owe so much to the Japanese. This painting grew out of my feelings at that time. It is different from my other work. I was trying to achieve the look of a background in a Miyasaki anime.

I have called the painting “The First of October” to place it firmly in springtime in the Southern Hemisphere to show that is a tribute to the Japanese from somewhere else. It was the actual date of a photo that I took years ago on the road into Mt. Beauty. For our family it has a special resonance as it is the birthday of our firstborn child. As such the title is to me a date that means the beginning of new life.

NIGHT FALLS ON THE JEWISH GHETTO IN VENICE

Venice is probably the most painted city in the world per head of population. There is not much new that can be said about the city pictorially that is not a cliché. However I have tempted fate and included two views of Venice in this exhibition.

The word Ghetto was first used in Venice. It is a mispronunciation of the word ‘getto’ meaning foundry. This was the industry on this island before the Jews were restricted to living there in the 16th century. In 1938 Mussolini’s race laws took away the rights of the inhabitants and in 1943 most of the Jews in Venice were sent to their deaths in Concentration Camps.

As we were walking around the ghetto at dusk I saw a line of washing strung across a canal. It seemed to me a scene imbued with poignancy as it resonated with images from that dark time.

We walked around another corner bumped into a young Jewish man. Now Venetians are not renowned for their tolerance of the hordes of tourists that clog their city but this man greeted us with a smiling ‘Buonasera’. It seemed to me a symbol of the capacity of human resilience.

