

# Order Out of Chaos

Clive Evatt explains the mysterious appearance of the wall sculpture on the Supreme Court building.

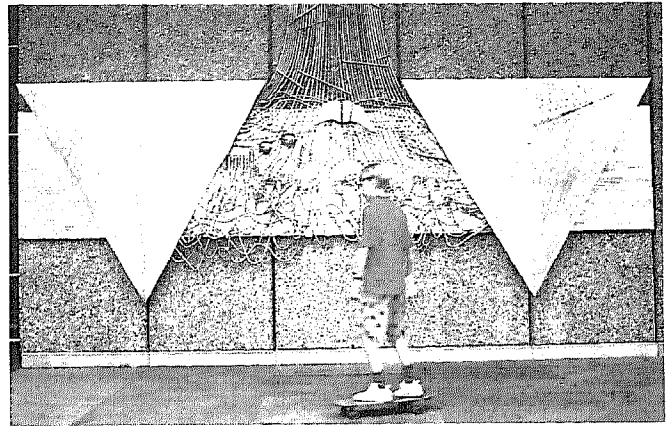
He who pays the piper may call the tune. Most art is influenced by patrons whether they be the Barbarinis or in this case a select committee of the Law Courts Building.

When the Courts were finished in 1977 it was intended to place a 3' by 4' bronze plaque on the southern facade to commemorate this historic event. A suitable 5" deep hole in the wall of these dimensions was left by the builders. Unfortunately no one could agree on the inscription of the plaque - which names were to be included and which left out.

The hole remained gathering dust over the years when it was decided a decent wall sculpture would look good and at least hide the hole. A competition confined to four of our leading sculptors was conducted. Each submitted a marquette and Robin Blau was declared the winner. His instructions were complicated. The sculpture had to be made of a graffiti proof material and should not protrude out onto the pedestrian corridor because the skate boarders who whiz up and down in weekends might be injured. It had to cover the hole. It was not to be figurative (i.e. blindfold lady) but abstract to give it a modern flavour. Finally, although abstract, it was to symbolise the relationship (if any) of law to the community.

Even Picasso would have despaired at such a brief. But Blau has triumphed with a unanimous verdict. His stainless steel sculpture is beautifully made with a finish most Aus-

tralian artists will not or cannot achieve. The test of a sculpture is it must look good close up as well as from a distance. Blau scores in both departments. The best view is from the steps of St. James Church but it can be seen to advantage as far away as Hyde Park.



Safe for skateboarders....

Unfortunately, facing south it cannot reflect rays from the sun but there are plans to illuminate the sculpture at night. I predict that even artificial light will give the work another vibrant dimension. Close up the figures and symbols are exquisite in their perfection. Blau was a jeweller before turning to sculpture and this shows in the intricacy of detail.

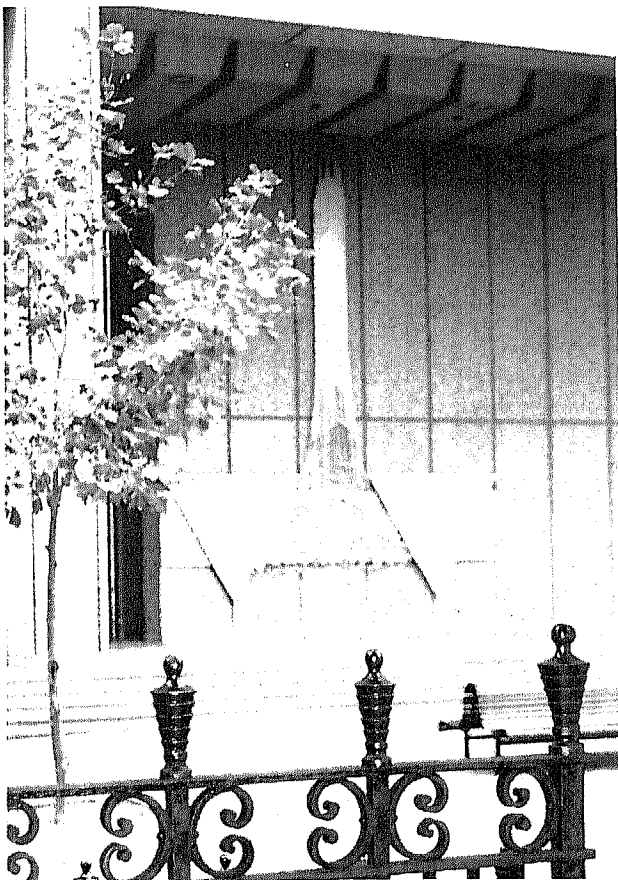
The work was unveiled on 1 February 1990 and Blau has called it "Order out of Chaos". He says "Historically the law has been expressed by the symbol of the balance" and that the community is portrayed in the foreground struggling "to develop into the symbol of order and form".

Blau is the creator of Australia's most publicised sculpture - the coat of arms on the Federal Parliament House. Most of us do not think of coats of arms as sculptures but they provide ample opportunity for creativity. Mike Kitching's coat of arms in the vestibule of the Supreme Court has as much movement and expression as a Bernini.

I cannot agree that Blau's work is abstract. It may be impossible for any sculpture to be so classified. The triangles at the base represent the scales and what is supposed to be chaos below changes to order at the summit, no doubt due to the application of the law represented by an open book. The problem is that Blau is too skilled a craftsman to do anything chaotic. Everything is so perfect it might have been better titled Order out of Order.

Like some briefs, this one ended up a financial disaster. Blau spent more making the piece than his modest commission. However he deserves full credit for a job well done and perhaps a small plaque somewhere with his name would be appropriate. As they also played a vital role in the design, the names of the members of the select committee could be added. □

Clive A. Evatt



"....not figurative.....but abstract"