

*the generalist*

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# BIBBENLUKE LODGE: LUCY CULLITON'S COUNTRY MENAGERIE

Category PEOPLESACES

Words KAREN COTTON

Photography CONTENT AGENCY



RENOWNED ARTIST LUCY Culliton loves her life in the country and admits to waking every morning excited about the day and always plan a very busy day which starts with a pot of tea,” she says. “Then I’m greeting and feeding my family of animals.”

After breakfast Lucy paints. “Painting is my job, and I love my job”, she adds, “and later in the afternoon I cram in all my other interests.” There’s Walter the horse to ride, a garden to tend, lawns to mow. “By the end of the day I’m exhausted and usually

disappointed that I haven't managed to get everything done."

Since 1999 Lucy's been represented by Ray Hughes Gallery in Sydney, she is a regular finalist in the Archibald, Wynne and St Prizes. Her work is represented in the collections of the National Gallery of Australia and Parliament House, Canberra.

Lucy and her menagerie took up residence in an old fishing lodge in the tiny village of Bibbenluke located on the Bombala Riv Snowy Mountains region of NSW around six years ago.



"I was living in Sydney at the time but I was looking to move to the country, I was thinking of building my own house at my property at Hartley in the Blue Mountains when by chance I found this place".

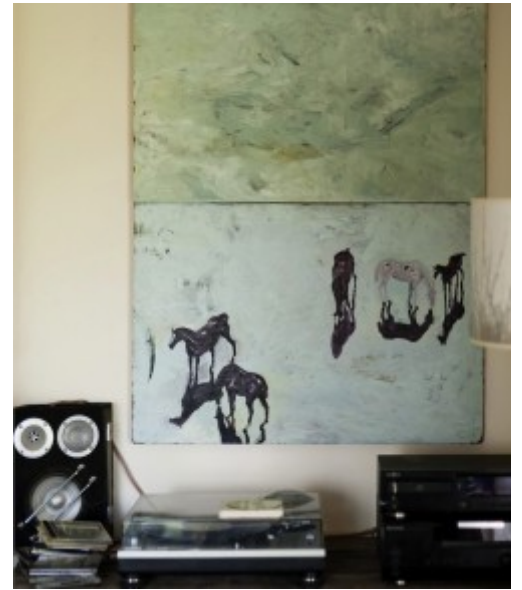
Set on 60 hectares The Bibbenluke Lodge had been built in 1937 after the property's original farmhouse had been destroyed by a bushfire. The lodge was a well-known trout fishing spot the lodge boasted beautiful gardens, with generous verandahs perfectly sited to take in the magnificence of the surrounding landscape.

Most of Lucy's energy has gone in to the other buildings on the property while the lodge remains in its original state except for the removal of old carpet to reveal the timber floorboards.





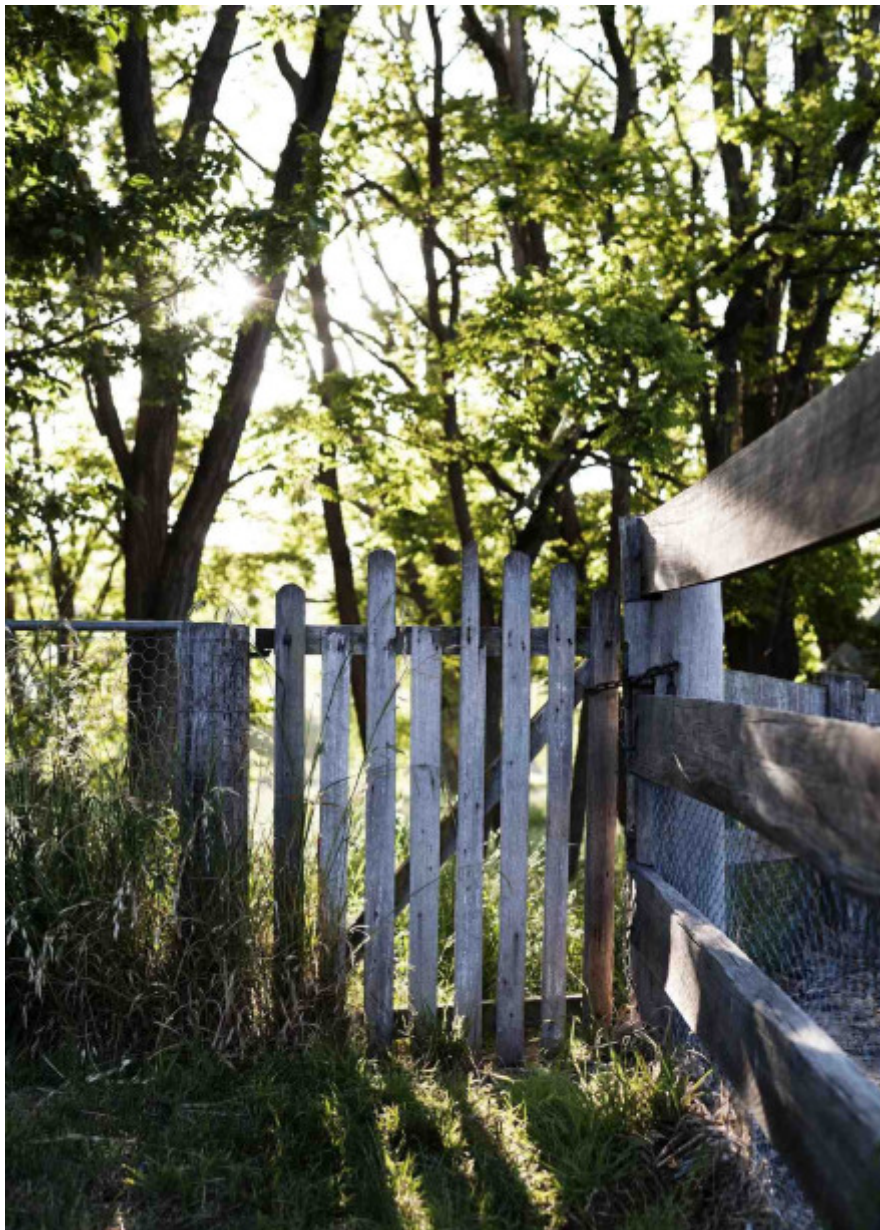
*Lucy and her menagerie took up residence in an old fishing lodge in the tiny village of Bibbenluke, on the Bombala River, around six years ago.*



An old barn was converted into a painting studio with the end wall knocked out and replaced with clear plastic sheeting allowing natural light and giving the artist views of the paddocks filled with her collection of horses, pet sheep and chooks. A ramp was built to the entrance so that Tristan the pet pig and Lucy's posse of dogs and a favourite duck named 'Cuddles' can follow her in and out while she paints. A greenhouse that was used by the previous owners to house lavender is now the home to an impressive succulent collection. An old tool shed makes a perfect home for a flock of pigeons.

Inside the main house meanwhile, the walls are hung with a mixture of Lucy's paintings – old and new – as well as artworks by friends and contemporaries-Maclean Edwards and Guy Brown. Delicate glass sculptures by fellow Hughes Gallery artist Tom are displayed in 'the good room'. This is the living room that is designated for humans with the dogs having their main space in the hall, although it is the beloved dogs that seem to have all the best 'spots' stretched out on huge worn-in sofas while Lucy and her partner Jamie perch on the less comfortable furniture.





Dotted around the house are ‘cabinets of curiosities’ – vintage display cabinets housing quirky collections of knitted animals and objects collected by the artist who has used them as subjects for her work.

All of the home’s furniture has been ‘pre-loved’, foraged from junk shops or handed down by family, such as the day bed in the room that Lucy remembers from her childhood visits to her grandmother Biddie’s home in Sydney’s Roseville. A 70’s kitchen is the ‘stage’ for a classic brown laminex table and vinyl chairs found by Lucy’s sister Anna in an op shop in Lithgow.

Lucy plans to one day update the kitchen and add a wood burning stove which will heat the house-but for now there are other priorities.



A local handyman-“Tiger Bobbin” is employed on a regular basis and his ‘old school’ skills and craftsmanship have seen the addition of beautifully detailed handmade gates, doors and window frames which replace the originals lost over the years. Lucy likes to think of herself as one of the many in a long line of care-takers, “It’s just my turn”, she says with a smile.

Close friend and neighbour Pam Scott has guided Lucy through the process of restoring the magnificent garden to its former glory. The garden along with the old lodge and the surrounding landscape have been the subjects and inspiration for the artist’s work and will continue to be.

It seems that waking up every morning in this place that she loves so much surrounded by her best friends is really the only inspiration this artist needs.





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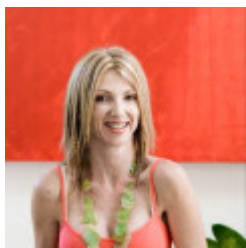
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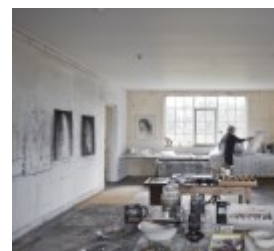
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