

**Rona Sissons
R.I.P.**

Proposal for a sculpture for inclusion in HIDDEN: A Rookwood Sculpture Walk 2011.

In my recent work I have explored the world of animal imagery. Increasingly I am drawn to anthropomorphic traits in animals, the attribution of human characteristics to non-human creatures and beings. Most cultures possess a long-standing fable tradition with anthropomorphised animals as characters that can stand as commonly recognised types of human behaviour. The animal that I find most easily displays anthropomorphic characteristics is the humble (and ubiquitous!) rabbit!

For HIDDEN, I propose to enter a sculpture that can be interpreted on more than one level. The basic format will be a headstone in wood bearing the epitaph, R.I.P., not however as in “Requiescat In Pace” or “Rest In Peace” but rather “Rabbit In Peace”.

a b b i t !
R. I. P.

The meaning being that rabbits are at peace in Rookwood, not in the sense of being deceased but rather that Rookwood represents a beautiful peaceful haven for all sorts of wildlife in the middle of urban Sydney.

The headstone will have at its base a reclining rabbit reminiscent of the reclining effigies seen in churches from medieval times but lying on the grass thus introducing an element of ambiguity, is the rabbit simply resting?

Surrounding the headstone, climbing it, leaning on it, peering over and around it, will be other rabbits, unquestionably “alive”. Additional rabbits will be frolicking in the grass surrounding the headstone thus embracing the viewer’s space as a celebration of the continuation of life.

The headstone will be made of wood with the letters burned onto it. It will be sealed with heavy duty outdoor varnish. Approximately 70 cm will protrude above the ground with about 10 cm embedded in the ground for stability.

The rabbits will be fired ceramic slightly larger than life sized rabbits, their surfaces will be finished with vitreous slips and left unglazed thus contrasting sharply with the wooden headstone. Some of the rabbits, such as the ones climbing the headstone will have to be glued permanently in position, but the others will be free to be repositioned both around the headstone and in the surrounding landscape and this I positively encourage the viewer to do. Thus the sculpture will incorporate a living kinetic element.

**My proposal was not accepted
but I still liked the idea
and made it anyway!**