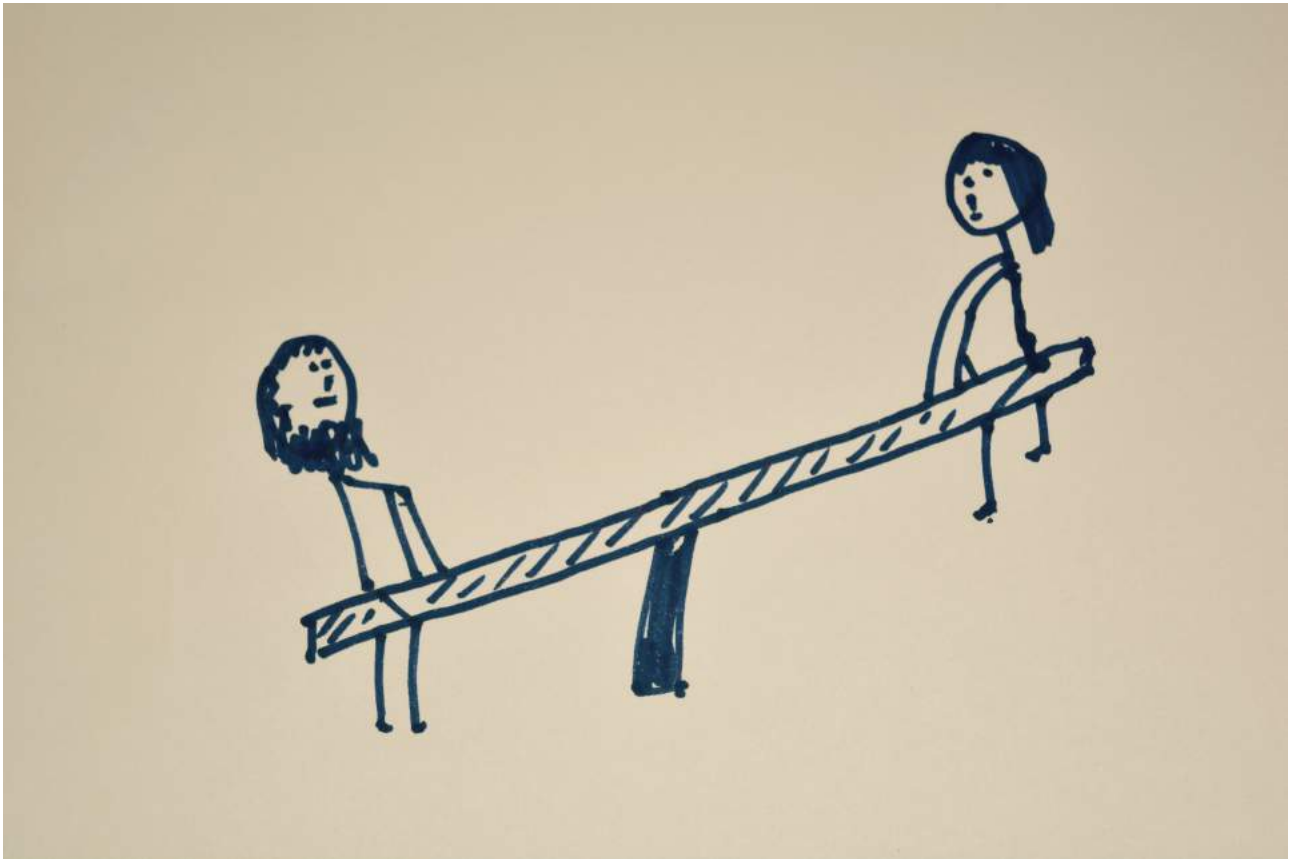


# ***A Literature of Equinox***



*Equinox = Balance*

**Desert Equinox Solar Art Prize, Broken Hill  
March 18-27, 2016**



Broken Hill  
Art Exchange



**MTJT**  
*More Than Just Talk*

## First Word

Founded in 2001, the Broken Hill Art Exchange is a non-profit association operated by volunteers. Its aim is to promote and support the progress of art and artists. BHAÆ provides a trans-disciplinary international artist residency along with workshops, exhibitions, consultancy and project management. See more at [www.brokenhillartexchange.com](http://www.brokenhillartexchange.com)

The Desert Equinox Solar Art Prize was initiated by BHAÆ with major sponsorship from AGL Energy. Held from 18-27 March 2016, this event is a Prelude to the future Broken Hill Biennial of Art. As the first event, Solar leads into other preludes later in 2016, focused on the ancient elements of Earth, Water and Air. See more at <http://bhaeinc.wix.com/desertequinox>

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Graeme Gibson and Meg Bishop have been partners in the personal and professional realm for more than 20 years.

In recent years Meg has focused on furniture restoration, upholstery and textile art. This brings together her passion for recycling, fixing things up and being creative. Funky, is Meg's way of describing the work she best likes. See more at [www.facebook.com/MUPfurniture](http://www.facebook.com/MUPfurniture)

Graeme has been writing and regularly presenting writing workshops the last several years. Most of his work is non-fiction. Drawing on his background in adult learning, community development and the environment he has developed Little Literature – poetry or prose that responds to art, place or events. See more at [www.morethanjusttalk.com.au](http://www.morethanjusttalk.com.au)

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This booklet presents the exhibition that brought Meg and Graeme's work together, including the making of Little Literature before the exhibition opening and then during the period of the exhibition. The booklet closes with an invitation extended to readers to share any thoughts or suggestions on Little Literature.

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## ***Equinox = Balance = Comfort***

This was Meg Bishops and Graeme Gibson's exhibit in the Desert Equinox Solar Art Prize. The exhibit is in two parts – a pair of armchairs and a literary component. It was exhibited in the Broken Hill Town Hall Facade.

Meg found the armchairs on a roadside at Huskisson NSW. Removal of several layers of dark lacquer revealed the timber to be silky oak, a valuable cabinet timber. The chairs were rebuilt, re-upholstered and embroidered with the Yin Yang symbols.

**Yin and Yang – two halves that together complete wholeness. In Chinese philosophy Yin and Yang describe how opposite forces (light and dark, fire and water) are complimentary, interconnected and interdependent.**

Installed adjacent the very comfortable armchairs is a literary component based on Little Literature.

The poster for the 'Desert Equinox Solar Art Exhibition' features two wooden armchairs with cushions. The left chair has a black cushion with a white Yin Yang symbol, and the right chair has a white cushion with a black Yin Yang symbol. The background is a light-colored wall with a subtle texture. The text on the poster reads: 'Desert Equinox Solar Art Exhibition', 'EQUINOX = BALANCE = COMFORT', 'An exhibition inviting community input by Meg Bishop & Graeme Gibson, it's an opportunity for poets, writers and anyone interested in playing with words to participate. Open from dusk to 9pm each night at the Town Hall Facade, 256 Argent St.', 'For more information ring Graeme : 0408 676 550', and '18-27 March 2016'. Logos for 'Broken Hill Art Exchange' and 'SIAGL Energy in action' are visible in the bottom right corner. A small caption at the bottom of the image reads: 'The Desert Equinox Solar Art Exhibition is open for night viewing from dusk to 9pm each night with various artworks displayed throughout the city. Catalogues and maps available at the Visitor Information Centre, Regional Art Gallery, Town Hall Facade and participating venues.'

This is participatory or performative art. You never know what you are going to get until you get it. It needs a clear process, faith in the process and a steady nerve.

Some of the contributors to this exhibit think of themselves as poets or writers. Others like playing with words. Some were just plain curious and wanted to be involved. Participation is at the heart of Little Literature meaning all contributions are equally valued.

## Making Little Literature

On Friday March 18, just hours before the exhibition opening, 12 people joined a tour of the AGL solar plant. During this a number of things were learnt:

- The plant supplies all of Broken Hill's energy needs, with a large part being exported to the grid
- The plant consists of 670,000 panels, making it about half the size of the solar plant at Nyngan
- The largest solar plant in the world, in the United States, is nine million panels
- The plant requires a very small workforce to maintain.



*Some of the participants on the Solar Plant tour. The peaks in the background are known as "The Pinnacles." Significant landmarks in a flat landscape*

On returning from the tour nine people spent a couple of hours developing a literary response – poetry or prose – to the solar plant tour along with issues of balance. Equinox, after all, is same length day and night. Or black and white. Or balance.

Over that period 14 pieces were produced and installed adjacent the two armchairs. These are shown below. There was no time for other than handwriting, although this illustrates the immediacy and authenticity of the work.

Who would have thought,  
650,000 advanced thin film  
photovoltaic modules,  
just outside Broken Hill.

Providing enough energy for the town,  
with plenty left over to share.

When will the rest of Australia  
catch up?

Broken Hill Balance?

Broken Hill has  
"Perfect light  
By day the sun, and  
At night the stars"  
So say the tourists, in awe

Broken Hill is

Red sand, golden sun, cobalt sky  
Sage scrub black headframes  
And silvered metal rooves  
That glitter like ore

Broken Hill needs

Water, from iron grey clouds  
That tame our angry solar god

M. Clark

We hate the sun - yet love it  
We need its light but it hurts our eyes  
We need its heat but sunburn pains  
We hate the sun but need it.

We love the sun, yet hate it  
It dries our waterholes right up  
And makes us long for cooling breeze  
We need the sun, yet hate it.

But open your eyes and see the life in the desert  
The mulga, the flowers, the lizards and the birds  
And see the insects that thrive in the heat and dryness  
Life that is more precious than simple words.

See the emus tending their chickens beside them  
See the Sturt Ped, red and shiny black  
They have learnt to live with the sun in the desert  
Like the wallabies dancing down a desert track.

For 40,000 years the land  
Supported those who loved it  
We too can love the sun and sand  
We too can learn to tend it.

Lois Eaton, B.H. 18-3-16

"They paved paradise and  
put up a parking lot,"  
so sang Joni Mitchell.  
Was she thinking of the  
Broken Hill Town Hall Facade?

Humanity's limited vision,  
Some would say dystopian,  
Leads to some awful imbalance.

Something old, something new,  
Something borrowed and  
Something blue.

Old school, new school,  
Let's unite.  
Find a new way.

Cheryl, Graeme, Maura

Cinquains, by Anne Gordon.  
18-8-16

① Balance

Night Day

Working Playing Resting

Equal time for all

Equinox

②

Broken Hill  
Remote Timeless  
Struggling, fighting, Surviving  
will be here tomorrow  
Home.

Australians All

Black or white

Who owns this land?

Perhaps the land owns us

And does it even matter?

Somehow we all pay

In some way or another

Communities are made up

of families,

neighbours,

you and me,

black and white.

M. Clark

Light on black gives light  
And we don't make poisons.  
Heat on glass gives heat  
And we're poison-free.  
We can embrace the light  
And we don't get cancer  
We can embrace the heat  
But no burns we see.

Photons, after a long 8-minute journey  
Land on the solar panels at Broken Hill  
They dance all over the atoms inside the panels  
Till they find a place to rest, calm + still.

The excited atoms embrace the willing photons  
Like marriage in the land of chemical wizardry  
And straight away the breed electron children  
Who take up the dance with a yearning to be  
free

plot 2

Then they in turn get other electrons  
moving -  
And Broken Hill just made electricity.

Light on black gives light  
And we don't make poisons  
Heat on glass gives heat  
And we're poison-free  
We can embrace the light  
And we don't get cancer  
We can embrace the heat  
And no burns we see.

Light on black gives light.

Lois Eaton, Broken Hill, 18.3.16

plot 2



*"Light on black gives light," Lois Eaton*



- Reflect  
Timeless place Broken Hill  
Shadow, Outer Space,  
Dawn  
Sunrise / Sunset  
DUSK.  
Balance equals even weight  
Warmth, energy equals comfort  
Weightless, Heaviness  
Wholeness, Emptiness.  
Equals Tipping Point,  
Balance Point?  
Life Movement  
Work, Rest and Play  
 $8+8+8 = \text{Balance}$ .  
Solar = lights on  
Light / Dark  
Let the sunshine in.

Flat out = balance  
Moonlight = Moonlighting  
Bright lights on  
Sunrise / Nightfall.  
Solar energy  
Black or White  
Play, Rest, Work = Balance.  
When the lights are on nobody  
is Home!  
Let the sun shine on you  
Always look on the bright  
side of life.  
Looking forward, looking back  
look forward, not back.  
Paperless / Penless  
Next generation  
The secret is out  
CHANGE is enforced.

Bubbles of life  
Don't bust my bubble  
Broken Hilliers  
Balance, is looking good  
together.  
Cheryl Holmes  
③

Everyone knows,  
Renewables are the way.  
Tony's gone,  
Malcolm's number one.  
Time for leadership.  
Please.  
Graeme  
Gibson

I liken the solar plant and the juxtaposition of the water shortage to the Yin Yang of the sun supporting Broken Hill in times of need.

The analogy of Greek mythology, Homer's Odyssey, where Persephone was the daughter of Zeus and Ceres - the Goddess of Harvest and Crops - and was abducted to the underworld.

It came about that she would spend six months on Earth with her mother and six months in the darkness with her husband Hades. That she embraced the darkness was a surprise to her mother.

This gives us our seasons - summer and winter - which is the light and dark. The solar plant is the light to support Broken Hill during this (hopefully) short time of darkness.

Paula Williams



*Meg Bishop with the Yin Yang chairs and the installation of literary work*

Work, rest and play,  
Glowing and fading,  
Light and dark,  
Bright and dull,  
Life and Death,  
Love and peace,  
Harmony.  
A question of balance

Georgie Watts

What is generated must be expended  
We save energy to work hard  
We work hard to save money  
We save money to rest and restore  
We rest and restore to save energy  
What is expended must be generated

Heather Mergentime

Shadow of light,  
Black or white,  
Grey in between.

Red earth, dust above,  
Blue skies, water below.

Cheryl Holmes

Doom, gloom.

"We'll all be ruined,"  
Said Hanrahan.

Mines closing, downsizing.  
Jobs leaving town,  
is the constant threat.

Rivers in deep trouble,  
lakes are dry.

Barely a drop to drink.

Why don't we talk the  
success story,  
that is the Broken Hill  
solar plant?

Where's Charles Rasp when  
you need him?

G.G.

## Little Literature – during the exhibition

Visitors to the Equinox = Balance = Comfort exhibit were invited to sit and contemplate balance and what it means to them as individuals, for their families, their community and the broader Australian society.

This is an important issue that few people take time to reflect upon. Visitors were then invited to leave a response on a flip-chart. Community engagement like this extends the exhibit and the concept behind it beyond the formal exhibition.



*Artists Monica Rudhar and Mitchell Thomas*

A simple conversation starter was provided, along with prompts on the flip chart:

**Balance is not just what keeps us upright.  
Balancing work, rest and play add meaning to our lives, creates a sense of wholeness.**

A range of responses were recorded following these prompts, some philosophical, some light-hearted, even whimsical. Some early responses are shown below:

AND ... being able to contribute to the community, family and friends brings balance to our lives

AND ... the world is currently out of sorts. It needs rebalancing

AND ... I think the man who went to the ATM over the road was worried about his balance

AND ... Even physicists know that the smallest molecule can have the biggest impact. It's a matter of time, distance and perspective

AND ... Balance is achieved not only from opposite forces (good Vs bad, black Vs white) but through the spectrum that connects the two. There is always a spectrum

AND ... Balance is always fluctuating, requiring constant adjustments to maintain  
AND ... I word too hard (but I'm not complaining, usually)  
AND ... If you tip the balance in your favour is it still balanced?  
AND ... I'd say no, even if it doesn't influence other people, I'd say no, it's not  
balanced  
AND ... Maybe we need to think about the impact of our behaviour on other people  
AND ... Darkness cannot exist without light  
AND ... Prince of Darkness (Hades) and Queen of Light (Ceres) join together  
breeding electron children  
AND ... Balance is having a little bit of everything you love in life  
AND ... And a lot of some really special things that you love  
AND ... Balance the self; feminine and masculine sides; my adult life and inner child



*Self-explanatory*

These responses were then provided to people with an invitation to respond through either: ten minutes of free writing (stream of consciousness) – using the creative right-side brain, turning off the left-side brain inner critic and self editor; *OR*, a thoughtful and considered piece, taking as long as needed, but with a limit of 500 words.

A further eight works were received through to the end of the exhibition. These are reproduced below.

**Balance is not just what keeps us upright.  
Balancing work, rest and play adds meaning to our lives,  
creates a sense of wholeness -**

and allows us to exist between white noise and dark silence  
in the reflection of self  
only squandered time will throw us off kilter  
shade by shade we will sift black to ash  
searching for a neutral space in which to grow  
freestyle - bending and aching  
towards un-meaning things  
in and out of unquenchable dreams  
as worldly impulses stretch beneath the skin  
at the edge of chaos  
adjustment intersects purpose  
tilts the focus back  
to steady taps against the chest -  
an equal beat of light and shadow.

Barbara De Franceschi

**Juggling**

Balance can be a constant juggling act. Sometimes we can lean too heavily on one or two particular issues and neglect what others may consider more pressing matters. To a free thinking person this can lead one into a 'trap' - not because they should be doing what others think they should be focused on, but one's response to their concerns. It is when we let ourselves get into this frame of thinking that our lives do become unbalanced. Unbalanced to the point where one tends to question one's own set of priorities in order to please others. When this occurs, find a quiet place to sit, shut out the outside world and rebalance inner thoughts. Remind yourself, life is really about being who you choose to be and not a process of trying to adapt your life to fit in with other people's concepts of who you should be.

Peter McGlinchey

**Darkness cannot exist without light**

Light cannot exist without dark  
Dark in the nightfall  
Daylight until dark  
Dark side of the moon  
Moonlight until light fall  
Shades of lightness  
Lightness falls into darkness  
Sunlight sun brightness  
Bright lights until shadow falls  
Shadow of light  
Light, dark, moonshine  
Sunlight sun falls  
Brightness to dark side



Darkness to Brightside  
Black, white shades of grey  
Nightfall day less times  
Forget black or white... shadows fall  
Inside, outside... outside in  
Bright light, starry nights  
Light on night time falls  
Broken Hill... dawn falls  
Sunrise, Sunset, horizon nears  
Horizon in the distance  
Below & Beyond, forever near  
Faraway distance is near  
Black, White, red, blue beyond  
Faraway is so... near  
Tears fall, dusk blows beyond our distance  
Faraway you become, but so near far away

Cheryl Holmes

### **Balance/unbalance**

Balance is fine when we are dealing with gravity. It stops us falling over. But between light and dark? Should we be aiming for a perpetual grey? What if I like blue more than red? Does that mean my paintings and clothes are out of balance? And if you like red more than blue is one of us 'right' and the other 'wrong'? When we think that light is taken to be 'good' and dark 'evil' - (in almost all cultures) surely balance between good and evil is not what we want, but the total elimination of evil, and the total advancement of good?

When the temperature is 46 degrees centigrade and the water supply is seriously threatened, then it is easy to think of light as bad and dark as good. The last thing we want is elimination of dark. So I suppose that it all depends on how good and evil are defined. The cultures that define men as good and women as evil certainly need to find balance, or they will die out. But then again, maybe some cultures need to die out - or at least change somewhat.

How do I balance work and play if I consider my job in the 'play' category? And how do I balance work and family if the only reason I go to work is to support my family? If life can be compared with climbing a mountain, from birth at the base till we reach the summit and are promoted to another, better world, then balance is all about staying on the path we are called to walk on.

If an avalanche is threatening to knock me off the path, then balance is about finding a way to survive the avalanche, get back on my feet, and keep plodding on. If distractions are calling me off the path then balance is about focussing.

Mechanically, balance is all about having the center of mass directly over a stable point. So life's balance is about being centered in safe situations. But then how do we grow if life is not challenging us? Of course, if keeping that point where it is supposed to be is difficult, then that is all the challenge we will need.

The greatest reason for finding balance? The balanced gymnast can support others, lifting them up higher. That is why we need to find balance. So that we can lift others up. The balanced gymnast can move freely and energetically around others without hurting them, or tripping them up. The balanced gymnast can flow with others and create beauty.

Lois Eaton

### **AND ... the world is currently out of sorts. It needs rebalancing**

This response really struck me, because I've been thinking about this for a while now—the 'out of sorts' world we currently live in, and the great deal of readjusting it needs. As technology improves and the human intelligence continues to grow, our overall perspective on life is changing and becoming askew. Our lives revolve around computers, phones, robotics, the internet. We are losing our ability to interact with one another and to form real relationships with people, animals, and the natural world around us. The more our perspective on life becomes unbalanced, the more our world becomes unbalanced.

We grow up thinking we are all unique individuals fighting for the lightness against the darkness, success against failure, riches over poverty, for life against death. This battle is an illusion because the idea that we are all separate individuals is an illusion. We need to take a step back from all of this fantasy that we have created for ourselves and realize that all human beings, plants, animals, and elements are one and the same, and that we cannot exist without each other. What is a person without land to live on or living beings to love and interact with? Our world is falling out of sorts because humanity is falling out of sorts. It needs rebalancing indeed.

Heather Mergentime

### **Balance is...**

Finding the balance within, finding time for all aspects of your Self.  
Dressing up my feminine side with glitter and eye liner and letting my masculine side out hunting.

Keeping my appearance in line with what society approves of by covering my tattoos and taming back my hair and letting myself rebel by donning an outlandish outfit or wearing a costume for no reason.

Being the adult and taking care of what we must through diligence and doggedness and then just rolling on the floor with the dogs.

Balance is...

Bianca Miani

## **The world is currently out of sorts. It needs rebalancing ...**

While there have been undeniable improvements to the human condition – many (but not all) live longer, happier, more productive lives – there is a need to rebalance.

Considering the environmental, social and economic impacts of policies and major decisions was called the triple bottom line. It was meant to guide us to a better future. It has failed on all three fronts.

When humanity uses resources at a rate greater than they can be replenished it is not sustainable. To claim it to be so is dishonest.

Throughout Australia levels of inequality are widening. The greatest determinant of health, educational and social outcomes is postcode.

Gross Domestic Product is a poor indicator of human wellbeing. The rich get richer while maintaining hand-on-heart solidarity with the notion of trickle down.

This is a wonderful world populated by people of immense potential. Dominated by myopic leaders focused on election cycles and corporate profits.

The world is currently out of sorts. It needs rebalancing ...

Graeme Gibson

## **Balance**

As I sit and ponder, gaze out and look around,  
I realize balance keeps our world alive, it's part of all surround.

All on earth needs balance, for our well being it is essential,  
and decisions made with a balanced mind, are ones made with full potential.

The balance of the seasons, from summer through to spring,  
enables our world to encompass nature, and all the good things it will bring.

Have you ever seen a one winged bird soar smoothly in the sky,  
all things above need balanced wings, to enable them to fly.

Ever seen a three wheeled car being driven down the street,  
or had a chair with a broken leg and tried to take a seat.

And all of us earthly beings, who have this great planet to share,  
need constant balance in our lives, as much as we need our air...

Jan Dening

## Last word

This is for you to make note of any ideas or particular thoughts you have on reading this booklet. If you feel like sharing please send to:

[info@brokenhillartexchange.org.au](mailto:info@brokenhillartexchange.org.au) and [graeme@morethanjusttalk.com.au](mailto:graeme@morethanjusttalk.com.au)

This will help us do better in future.

Thanks for reading!

