



[Mona Hessing](#)
1931 – 2001

Mona Johnson was born in 1933 in Kurri Kurri rural NSW and went to Williams St Girls High Sydney when she was ten.

In 1948 she was awarded a scholarship to the National Art School at East Sydney Technical College where she graduated with the Bronze Medal for Highest Honours Diploma in Art in 1952.

She took up teaching art, design and ceramics as well as being design consultant, script writer and presenter of Interior design program on radio 2GB Sydney and teaching art.

She was married to Leonard Hessing from 1957 to 1967.

1963 She began full time work in her own studio with major commissions from architects for private, corporate & Government projects. Her large textile wall and floor pieces were purchased by the Powerhouse Museum, the National Galleries of Australia and Victoria, the Australian Council for the Arts and the Craft Board, Orange Civic Centre and Ararat Regional Gallery. They are also represented in Australian Embassies in New Delhi & Paris, the University of NSW, as well as private collections in Australia, UK, USA, France, Switzerland and India. Large works for theatres, universities and public buildings were commissioned at this time.

Mona is represented in 23 Australian & International publications on art and craft and from 1967-1996 she contributed to over 40 Solo, selected and Invitation Group Exhibitions including 3rd & 4th Biennale Internationale in Switzerland and the 1st & 2nd Biennale of The Craft Association of NSW.

1967 she travelled to study in Mexico, India, Spain & UK then later in 1969 she went to India to source raw materials and research traditional arts and crafts in North India as well as working on her major works with the collected materials. She returned to India and strongly identified with the spiritual and mystical aspects of Indian culture, which became and remained extremely important to her.

In 1973 she was awarded a Churchill Fellowship for 3 months study abroad and she travelled in Europe & USA extensively to conferences, exhibitions and to research textiles. In 1974 Mona was awarded the Meyer Foundation Grant to a research project in SE Asia as well as conducting Masterclass workshops in Toronto, Canada.

1976 She moved to Georges Plains in rural NSW to live and work – restoring an ancient farmhouse, managing major works and commissions as well as farming and breeding racehorses that satisfied her strong love of animals

1985 Mona moved to Wellington NSW and restored another farmhouse and became involved in land care, animals and tree planting as well as continuing to producing major works at the rate of one per year.

1988. She accepted no further commissions as she was so busy on the farm and was concerned with her mother's health, and she travelled back and forth to Tuross to take care of her.

In 1991 on the death of her mother she moved to Tuross on the south coast of NSW, where she lived and worked till the present time.

She helped with the establishment of and made considerable contributions to The Hidden Valley Gallery at Bodalla and produced works for three of the exhibitions there.

The Gallery at Ararat acquired an early work to complete their collection and she showed works at the first and second exhibitions at the Priory at Bingie. She was involved with the Canberra Museum/Gallery, during the last three years, workshops and exhibiting.

She was currently preparing ideas towards The Dog Show to be held at The Priory in November.

Mona was always involved with the people of the local community. She cared for her mother's older friends and was always available for counselling and help for anyone in trouble.

She studied Reiki and read the works of spiritual gurus and had a large collection of books on spiritual matters that she lent to people as well as giving hours of her time to help people. She had a meditation group that met at her home regularly.

She formed a liaison with American Dr Norm Sanders about six years ago which blossomed into a great relationship and gave both of them some of the happiest years of their lives.

To have had a world acclaimed artist living amongst us in her humble quiet way has given this community something to be immensely grateful for. At any gathering of people, her presence and style combined with her great beauty added a certain quality and charm that will always be treasured.

She leaves us all with a huge gap in our lives, her warmth, her friendliness and her genuine concern and care for us all will be sorely missed.

Application to Council have the Reserve named Mona Hessing Reserve

Dear Sir,

It is with regret that we inform you of the passing away of one of our community's internationally renowned and respected members. On Saturday the 21st of April, 2001 Mona Hessing, a much loved resident of Tuross Head, was involved in a fatal collision on the Kings Highway near Braidwood.

She will be sorely missed by her family, friends and the art world as was witnessed by those assembled at her memorial service held on the 30th of April in the peaceful gardens of "*Shimmering*", her long time family lakeside home on Trafalgar Road.

Following an eventful international career as a textile artist Mona returned to Tuross in 1991 to attend to her elderly mother Mona Johnston deciding to stay and renew her love of the area and of the old family home. "*Shimmering*" is secluded within the

bounds of the Tuross Lake foreshore to the west and a lush reserve to the north. Her dedication to building her garden over the years and the care of the wild residents of the neighbouring reserve were a constant passion as was her commitment to establishing an art presence in the Shire. She worked tirelessly at both. Hopefully, in years to come, new arrivals to Tuross Head will come to know of Mona's Hessing's contribution to the arts.

The reserve adjacent to "*Shimmering*" is presently unnamed and forms just another single line entry of "unnamed" reserves in your Plan of Management of Undeveloped Reserves. (please find an extract of the Plan attached)

Further to this please find attached a locality sketch showing the proposed Reserve to be comprised of : **Lot 1 DP 546850 and Lot 18 DP 22825.**

May I request you consider naming this reserve "Mona Reserve" as a tribute to the women who loved it so much. We refer to the reserve by the shared first name of "Mona" so that the residents in the community may fondly remember both mother and daughter as they pass.

We enclose a brief history of Mona Hessings' full life and hope that you might consider granting approval to our naming proposal (subject to public comment).

We look forward to your reply.....

MINUTES OF THE WORKS AND FACILITIES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 14 AUGUST 2001

MINUTE WM99

W2 NAMING OF RESERVE - TUROSS HEAD 85.3187

WM99 **MOTION** Councillor Vardon/Gough

THAT under delegated authority dated 29 February 2000 (Minute No 61) the Committee approve the following:

THAT:

1. The unnamed reserve adjacent to Trafalgar Road, Tuross Head be named "Mona Reserve".
2. A sign be erected accordingly after having consulted on the design with Mr Ivory and Mrs Romalis.

(The Motion on being put was declared **CARRIED.**)