

Braille inspires work

"That Blind Woman" Julie Woods has two men to thank for igniting her passion for art — husband Ron Esplin and Louis Braille.

Woods is one of more than 30 established and emerging artists who have contributed works to Otago Access Radio's fundraising art auction, to be held tonight at the Community Gallery.

Esplin, who is chairman of the Otago Community Broadcasters Society and convenor of the auction, is a watercolour artist.

"When he's creating, I want to create," Woods said.

"Previously, the art world wasn't part of my world at all. Likewise, the blind world was not really part of Ron's. We now share those different worlds," she said.

After going blind in 1997, Woods learned braille and became fascinated with the life of Louis Braille, the inventor of the system of raised dots that enables blind people to read with their fingertips.

In 2009, Woods travelled to Paris to celebrate Louis Braille's 200th birthday with the international blind community.

Since then, she has gone on to create numerous braille art works including an edible montage, entitled "Fifty Shades of Braille", for the Dunedin Fringe Festival 2013.

In one of two works up for auction on Thursday, Julie has combined the historic braille code with new age text language, using white embossed dots



Art for a cause . . . Julie Woods holds her braille work *LOL* and husband Ron Esplin his watercolour *Grand Canal Venice* ahead of tonight's art auction fundraiser for Otago Access Radio.

PHOTO: SUPPLIED

on a black background to create an art work that reads "LOL" or "Laugh Out Loud".

Proceeds from tonight's art auction, which will be held from 6pm tonight at the Community Gallery, will enable Otago Access Radio to move ahead with after school programming for young people.

An exhibition of works included in

the auction will continue at the gallery until Saturday. Other contributing artists include: Anni Watkins, Emma Milburn, Pauline Bellamy, Ewan McDougall, Lindsay Crooks, Janet Weir, Robert Scott, Emma Chalmers, David Corballis, Gay Webb, Janet de Wagt, Simon Kaan, Heather Dunkley and Manu Berry.



AIR CON

You can read past editions of
The Star online

www.thestar.co.nz