



Newsletter

MAY 2015 / ISSUE 80

President's letter

Dear Members

Easter and another great exhibition with so many top quality works as usual. I really think we are so lucky with the calibre of our artists and the wide variety of styles and mediums employed. There is always so much to enjoy and to provoke thought.

Thank you again to everyone who participated in any way at all to make the exhibition such a success. From the artists who participated to all those who helped in so many different ways from putting up signs, to catering and sitting, hanging and preparing the studio, distributing flyers etc. – all your efforts were greatly valued. A few people need to be mentioned by name for their extraordinary achievements. First Susie Harris our Exhibition Co-ordinator, who spent hours ringing people, organising every section of administrative detail needed to make the exhibition happen and then spent significant time at the studio during the Exhibition to ensure all ran smoothly. Thank you so much Susie. And Adele



Bruens, our treasurer, who was a fabulous assistant as ever, giving wonderful support to Susie and always ensuring the studio was open or locked as required and that the money side of things was taken care of.

Nadège Lamy did a fabulous job of curating the Exhibition, as she always does. She has a real flair for this and we are so lucky she is prepared to put in the time and energy with the assistance of her team of hangers. So thank you Nadège.

Our First Prize donor, Aline Richards of Richards Financial Services in Katoomba, handed out the prizes. George Vergotis of Blackheath Automotive Services donated the second prize once again. We are very grateful for the generosity of these local business people and hope as many of our members as possible will support them in return.

I am delighted to announce

that the judge for the Winter Open will be the wonderful and extraordinary Bernard Ollis, former director of the National Art School. What an honour! First prize this year will be generously donated by Maurice Cooper OAM of Bygone Beautys, and second prize by Stephen Williams of Century 21 Blackheath. The form for the Winter Open is with this newsletter – and the closing date is only a few weeks away (**22 May**) so I do hope you've got some entries ready!

For some time I have been thinking about plein air painting. I had hoped to do some in WA when I spent Christmas with my son and his family. Not a hope! Despite everyone exclaiming with joy over what a cool Christmas it was (the coolest day was 29 degrees!) it was too hot for me to attempt any outside activity before dusk, apart from an early morning coffee at the Sorrento Surf Lifesaving Club with the locals and their dogs while Nich and Sam pounded the pavement for 8 km. And being a watercolourist, I suspect the paint may well have dried on the brush between palette and paper it was so extraordinarily dry.

Dates for your Diary

Workshop closing dates:

Len Metcalf,
Still life and portraiture:
17 May

Ruth Dengate,
Watercolour:
5 June

Jan Melville,
Printmaking:
26 June

Geoff Hayes,
Oil Painting:
24 July

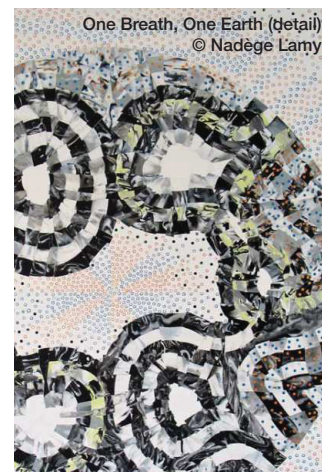
Winter Open Exhibition

Entries close:
5pm Friday 22 May

Reminders

Are you receiving us?

Please let us know if you change your email or mailing address so we can keep our lists up to date.



There was also a malicious wind that blew morning and night that dessicated the entire being – including the lungs – it seemed. Then I arrived home to torrential downpours day after day! Great for the garden but no good for all fresco adventures I felt.

But now I am put to shame and my wimpiness revealed as true cowardice. David Middlebrook's installation at the Cultural Centre is truly remarkable. 450 drawings all done in situ, every one of them different and each taking exactly one hour. And John Caldwell's sketchbooks, preparation often for studio works, are open there for all to see. (Go quickly before

the exhibitions close if you haven't yet seen them).

There is clearly an energy and immediacy that is achieved when painting outside (or drawing, photographing or sculpting – there's no limit on plein air media). Possibly something to do with trying to capture that very elusive and ever changing light at just the right moment. And when you work with others, it is interesting to see how each person interprets the scene. There was a group of three women painters in the recent 'The Moderns' exhibition at the AGNSW, who had all painted the same French village at the same time and yet

their approaches were quite different – one close up, one middle distance and one seemingly far removed. I liked the close up version best but perhaps on another day, one of the others might have pleased me more. Who can say? We have a wonderful range of scenes to choose from here, from mountains to valleys, waterfalls to tiny creeks or dams and lakes reflecting huge skies. There are folksy villages and, in Lithgow, rather majestic industrial ruins. And then there's the humble backyard, which is not to be sneered at either.

So with the advent of more predictable weather and spurred on by David

Middlebrook and John Caldwell's examples, I intend to spend time outside drawing in the hope it will improve my powers of observation and help me focus on the essentials as well as developing better drawing skills. You will be able to see if I have achieved even a small modicum of success in the next exhibition. So I hereby challenge you to do the same and who knows what all these plein air efforts will lead to. We may even bump into each other and develop our very own 'school' that will be discussed with great admiration by artists in the future.

With best wishes

Libby Sayers

Easter Exhibition

As Libby mentioned in her letter, our Easter Members' Exhibition was another great success. We hung 105 works in total, including some 3D works – which has prompted some thinking (see page 7). Eight works sold and the visitation was good, despite a rather wet weekend. The food hamper raffle was won by a local resident, and People's Choice went to Helen Hudson for 'Kangaroo Valley Mood'.

A big thank you to the people who made it happen: our curator, Nadège Lamy, and her team of hangers; the studio set-up group of Dirk Romeyn, Denis Gallagher and Jeanne Rudd; the receivers, Margaret Aalders, Libby Sayers and Carol Smallwood; Robert Simmonds who did a marvellous job with the catering, and all the members who sat the exhibition. Finally, I'd like to thank Adele Bruens for her generous support, which made for a smooth-running show.

This year saw the inaugural Encouragement Prize, a \$100 prize donated by Robert Hutchison to a member exhibiting for the first time with us. We had a small hiccup with this – the winning artist confessed to having exhibited with us before, and so the award will now be given for the first time at next year's Easter Exhibition.

This year's judge was Jane Raffan who did a splendid job and prizes were awarded during Meet the Artists on Saturday afternoon by Aline Richards of Richards Financial. The winning works, with the judge's comments, are below and can also be viewed on our website. Thank you to Jeanne Rudd for photographing these and for being so prompt in getting them on the website.

Susie Harris

Exhibition Coordinator



Winner – Jennifer Gabbay



Judge – Jane Raffan

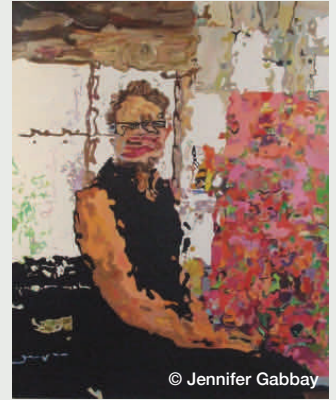
First Prize

Jennifer Gabbay – *Fragments of Myself*, (Oil on board)

Portraiture is a fascinating genre with an enormous range of approaches, most commonly variants on realism. All great portraiture engages the psychological, the impetus for which may be generated by sitter, artist or viewer.

Fragments of Myself is a magnificent example of a portrait that balances the solid realism of a figure in defined space with a powerful sense of the fragility of self, and indeed, the fragility of pre-conceived realities.

This duality is emphasised by the artist's technique, where expressionistic elements vitalise the work, and yet are mostly restrained. This tension builds the work's frisson, which didn't abate after several encounters.



Second Prize

Margaret Maguire – *Mystic Morning*, (Sumi-e ink on rice paper)

Mystic Morning exhibits a very delicate touch and deep sensitivity to its subject. The artist is in complete control of the media, for which mastery is required to produce the kind of subtleties at play in this work.

Depth of field is often difficult to achieve with this medium, and here the artist has rendered space with remarkable clarity, considering the intended outcome is a depiction of a clouded or misty landscape.

The imagery is obscure and yet immediately evocative of a familiar landscape, and this has been achieved with a mellifluous incorporation of formal compositional and design elements.



Highly Commended – Alphabetical Order

Anastasia Flanagan – *August Winds*, (Mixed media)

August Winds is an enchanting work, both ethereal and elegant. Mixing iconography seemingly drawn from fantasy with a depth of surface detail, it belies first impressions.

The largely monochrome design is brought to life by strong compositional devices that anchor the foreground and backgrounds. The collage elements invigorate the picture plane and add weight and depth to the image, and the artist employs really lovely subtle gradations in tone and markings throughout that creates a rich and serene image.



People's Choice Award

Helen Hudson – *Kangaroo Valley Mood*, (Oil)

The dramatic engagement with light and shadow in this work, in particular blackness, is used to great effect in creating a highly formalised landscape within a classic pictorial tradition.

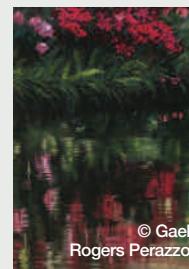
Across many overlapping vertical and horizontal planes, converging compositional elements and effects of light are exploited by the artist with finesse to draw us progressively deeper backwards into the heart of the valley: the foreground focus of sky reflected in pond amid deeply shadowed stands of trees adjacent; another dark forest flanking a sunlit meadow that stretches across the middle picture plane; a stand of poplars punctuating the middle distance where various compositional elements converge; and the far distant pale hills dissolving into the bright sky of the background.

This work offers more than a painted mood, I really wanted to journey though this landscape.

Gael Rogers Perazzo – *Reflecting on Rhododendrons, Blackheath*, (Pastel)

Pastel is employed with incredible subtlety in this dark introspective scene. The highly detailed and dense imagery of flowers and ferns at the top of the picture plane slowly dissolve with lovely nuance into their watery reflection of broken colour.

Capturing colour and effects of light in dark compositions is extremely difficult, as is the delineation of fine details using pastel, and this work demonstrates the artist's confidence as well as her absolute finesse with the medium.



Victoria Shenow – *Still Life*, (Oil)

Still Life is hugely popular genre, with an almost endless capacity for storytelling and reinvention. This Still Life is a wonderfully engaging composition. I was immediately drawn in by the work's bold, warm colouration and richness of surface texture.

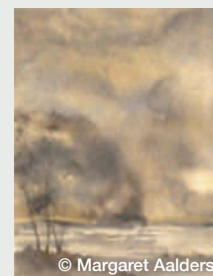
The painting also exhibits a lovely balance between decorative and formal elements: patterns and shapes are highly complementary, the way the artist shifts between flatness and depth of field, and the use of hard edges and softer renderings all work to keep one's eye moving around the picture.

Commended – Alphabetical Order

Margaret Aalders – *Storm*, (Watercolour)

In Storm, the artist exhibits a light touch in her control of the medium, employing a delicate balance of subtle shifts in tone throughout the work to clearly depict demarcations in space and yet set a strong mood.

Although the foreground is strongly defined and grounded by the tree, the real focus and compelling aspect of the work is the presentiment of the approaching distant storm.



Joy Myers Creed – *Aqua Botanicals*, (Acrylic collage)

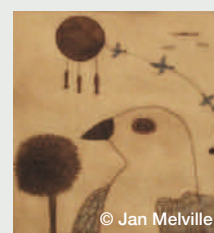
Aqua Botanicals immediately took me to another space, and by this I don't mean place. When faced with abstraction one often tries to make sense of a work – and by that I mean we try to find obvious ways in which the image might mesh with our visual lexicon and experience in some way.

I wasn't affected in this way. My response was emotional. Its co-mingling of colours, shapes and depths beckoned, offering quiet and calm. Aqua Botanicals' attraction is the lure of sensory and emotional rewards with prolonged, immersive or meditative engagement.

Jan Melville – *Unravel the Sun*, (Drypoint)

Prints and drawings are wonderful mediums in which to explore the graphic and/or emotional power of 'the line', and drypoint enables artists to employ texture and density with a lightness of touch.

Unravel the Sun is a highly individualistic work of great charm and whimsy employing a delicate use of line, along with textural warmth, while maintaining a strong formal balance.



Judith Russell – *Arnhem Land*, (Fused slumped glass)

Arnhem Land is colloquially known as Stone Country. I was struck by the artist's rendering of geological weight and the patterning of the rock shelf strata in such as fragile medium. The work seems top-heavy, with the dense coloured glass seemingly floating – and to some this might seem like an inverse rendering, except that Arnhem Land escarpments invariably loom overhead on close approach.

Rock faces are patterned with natural pigments leached out of their strata over millennia. Arnhem Land is ancient geology patterned with the allure of Indigenous colours of country presented in a contemporary and novel manner.

Patti Skenridge – Outback, (Oil)

Outback is a fine example of an abstract depiction of place that is strongly representational. Its geometrical painted forms call to mind ranges, crevices, gorges and canyons found across this vast country.

The artist has also produced a palpable sense of place, and by this I mean place as a realm in our cultural imagination rather than an actual physical location – the interior, 'outback', with its depth of earth colours, as well as the radiating heat from sun-baked rock and the intense bright light of Australia's skies.



© Patti Skenridge



© Geoff Smith

Geoff Smith – Windfarm, (Photograph)

Windfarm is sublime. Romantic landscape painting made the god-given sublime an ongoing focus in the visual language of painted landscapes. And this was carried through to photography, most notably by the great American documenters of the nature-as-sublime, such as Ansel Adams.

Humankind has, however, been altering the landscape long before picturing it became a past-time. In Windfarm, the majesty of nature is not impaired by the presence of man – the turbines – quite the opposite. The works' formal concerns are in complete harmony, and the landscape, bathed in a romantic glow from the cloud-break, is a picture of pure poetry.



Longbeach NSW (detail)
© Annie Joseph

Get your studio time in!

Our purpose-built studio is at 139a Station St Blackheath, behind the RFS building. **Studio groups** meet weekly, and welcome new members. Studio fee is just \$3 (life drawing is \$10 including studio fee). There is no formal tuition at these groups, just good creative company!

Monday

Life Drawing: 1–3pm

Contact: Diana Dwyer 4758 9897

Please call Diana to check available spaces if you are new to the group.

Tuesday

Watercolour: 10am–2pm

Contact: Susie Harris 0428 828 405

or Libby Sayers 4757 3415

Sunday

Printmaking: from 10.30am

Contact: Les Love 6355 2815

or Adele Bruens 4787 5540

Start and finish times may vary, so please call Les or Adele to confirm.

Open Studio

Wednesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturdays

Contacts: Ulla Heckel 0425 226 875

or Susie Harris 0428 828 405 (Thu)

Workshops

JO ERNST – WHAT A WONDERFUL WORKSHOP!

Jo Ernst has a reputation with BAS for running very successful workshops and this one was no different. We listened, we worked hard and we learnt absolutely heaps. And despite staggering home exhausted each day, we loved it.

Jo's focus in this life drawing workshop was as much on composition as on the figure itself, so we were obliged to think about placement of the figure and surrounding objects for maximum effect. She stressed that we were looking for unity in a work and discussed the principles of line, shape, tone and colour.

Jo suggested we carry a notebook with us everywhere and make small sketches throughout the day and to reinforce this, after a series of 10 second and slightly longer warm-up sketches intended to capture line and movement, we moved on to tiny sketches in our notebooks. At this stage we were using pens so there was no going back to adjust something we might not have been happy with.

As the weekend went on, the issues of contrast, movement, repetition and focal points were all discussed and reinforced within our own work. On the Saturday we worked entirely in pencil, charcoal, ink or pens in just black and white or sepia while on the Sunday we moved into colour.

One exercise which was tremendously successful was a two minute sketch on our own work, then two minutes on the next person's and so on around the room. On the Saturday we were mostly pretty tentative about taking on someone else's drawing but on the Sunday, each with a different coloured pastel or crayon (so more identifiable than we might have liked), we just went for it and could hardly wait to see the end results and take on our own redacted work again. It was very freeing.

This was the second workshop I had done with Jo and I really liked the focus on composition which made it very different from a straight life drawing workshop and had a much wider application. She is not only very talented herself but is an excellent teacher and her energy and enthusiasm are infectious. If you get the chance to learn from Jo, take it without hesitation.

I would suggest that anyone with even a passing interest in any of the workshops coming up gets in and enrolls. Two days of straight learning and working in a particular medium or with a particular focus can be very beneficial. Much more is achieved than spending the same number of hours spread over a week or a term. And getting out of your comfort zone and trying something entirely different is also very productive in my experience. Plus you meet the nicest people!

A workshop participant

Upcoming workshops

As you will have read in the article to the left, our first workshop of the year was very successful and of enormous benefit to those who attended. Jo Ernst really is a marvellous teacher and we're grateful and honoured to have got 2015 off to such a good start with her workshop.

Next up is Still Life and Portrait Photography with Len Metcalf on 23rd and 24th May – and you still have time to get your application in. There are a few places left, and the extended closing date is 17 May. (We did try to encourage early applications by having earlier closing dates for this year, but the experiment hasn't really worked so closing dates will go back to two weeks before the workshop – apologies for any confusion).

Also enclosed with this newsletter are application forms for the next two workshops:

- **Painting in watercolour in impressionistic style using wet and fast technique with Ruth Dengate**
20th and 21st June (closing date: 5th June)
- **Printmaking without a press: linocut with Jan Melville**
11th and 12th July (closing date: 26th June)

The following workshop form will be sent separately, once we have finalised details:

- **Oil Painting with Geoff Hayes**
8th and 9th August (closing date 24th July)

Remember to spread the word among your friends about workshops – non members are welcome to attend, and most workshops are suitable for all levels, including beginners. Why not bring someone along with you!

I'd also still welcome any suggestions for workshops in other mediums – there is still time to add workshops to the schedule towards the end of the year.

David Wardman
Workshop Convenor

What's on

MAY – JULY

Gallery Blackheath

Autumn Exhibition 8 May – 5 July

Blue Mountains Cultural Centre

Journeys: John Caldwell *until 24 May*

White Out: Tamara Mendels 16 May – 28 June

Strange Embrace: Curated by Rilka Oakley
30 May – 19 July

Bathurst Regional Art Gallery

Sacred Footsteps From the Roof of the World Tour:
Tibetan Monks Sand Mandala 9 – 14 June

BRAG 200x200 *until 14 June*

Your Friend the Enemy 19 June – 2 August

Harrie Fisher: Dark Horse 19 June – 2 August

Orange Regional Gallery

Milk & Honey: Recent Works by Michael Coyte
until 7 June

Memorate.com.au: An Installation by Victor Gordon
until 24 May

Creative Power: The Art of George Baldessin
until 24 May

Double Vision: Tony and Sylvia Convey
30 May – 5 July

Tim Winters: The Poetry of Space 13 June – 16 August

Cowra Regional Art Gallery

Caleen Art Award and Central West Regional Art
Award: *until 14 June*

Maitland Regional Art Gallery

Just Paper: A festival of 8 exhibitions including the
work of more than 250 artists, over 100 events, 2
public art installations and 1 big party! *until 21 June*

Michael Bell and Menno Fahl: Krazy Kunst
27 June – 6 September

Power + Colour: Pat Corrigan Indigenous Collection
27 June – 20 September

Art Gallery of NSW

Matisse and The Moderns *until 25 October*

Ronnie Tjampitjinpa *until 1 November*

Mad Through The Darkness:
Australian Artists and The Great War *until 9 October*

Bathurst Arts Trail

Artists open their studios on the first full weekend
of each month. Check www.bathurstartstrail.com
for more information.

Have your say – 3D works

There is a diverse range of practices among our members, and lately we've been seeing some 3D works entered into our exhibitions – indeed, one of Judith Russell's beautiful glass pieces was awarded a Commended in the Easter Exhibition.

We have now added a line to the exhibition entry form that states 3D works may be accepted at the discretion of the Exhibition Coordinator – as you will know if you've been to an exhibition, there aren't many places we can position plinths and 3D work safely and without getting in the way of either visitors or hung works.

All this has prompted some discussion in the Committee about how and when we exhibit 3D works, and we'd like to hear your opinions on the matter. With the availability of space in mind, we have come up with three practical options:

Option 1: Officially include 3D works in our usual exhibitions (Easter Members', Winter Open, Blackheath Art Prize). Due to space considerations, works would be limited to a fairly small size and to one 3D work per artist.

Option 2: As Option 1, plus an ad-hoc Group Exhibition for 3D works, perhaps staged with works-on-paper artists. This would be organised by the artists and would not carry prizes.

Option 3: A fourth annual BAS exhibition focusing on 3D works. This would carry prizes, and would allow us to include 2 or 3 works per artist at a larger size than in Option 1. We would also allow works on paper, but these would be limited (perhaps to 1 work per artist), so that the focus is on the 3D work. This could take place over the weekend of the Blackheath Rhododendron Festival in November.

We've created an online poll at:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/3TMYB8G>
– cast your vote and let us know what you think now.
Or, you can write to us at: PO Box 224, Blackheath
2785, or email at info@blackheathart.com.au

Your opinion is valued and needed – we want to support our 3D artists in a way that the majority will be happy with, and the only way we can do that is to get your opinion. The poll will close on June 30, so get your vote in soon.

Susie Harris

Exhibition Coordinator

Welcome to New Members

It is with very real pleasure the Blackheath Art Society welcomes the following new members:

Jennifer Edwards, Susan Roxon, Jennifer Seale, Hannah Surtees and Wendy Trankels (Blackheath); Rory McGregor (Leura); Chris Brown, Margaret Maguire, Rebecca Teakle and Sharyn Wright (Katoomba); Kerrie Mills and Sarah Tesch (Wentworth Falls); Annie Joseph (Lithgow); Murray Tangye (Sunny Corner); Gary Levin (Leichhardt).

New key-pad for studio

As most of you know, we installed a new key-pad lock to the front door of the studio earlier this year. This system now allows access to all members, as required in our constitution, and has eliminated the need to issue and track keys. It also means the door locks automatically when it closes, which means it's less likely the studio will be left unlocked by accident.

All are welcome to come to the studio outside group times and work – the fee is just \$3. The code will be changed every year at the end of January, so you will need to request the code again when you renew your membership. Please email Brian Bright, the Secretary, at info@blackhearthart.com to be given the access code.

Expressions of interest

Hand building in clay

Jo Chipperfield, our newsletter editor, is interested in forming a new Studio Group for hand-building using clays, including air-drying clays, plastic sculpting mediums, oven-hardening clays (such as Fimo) or even Plasticine – the aim of the group is to have some fun sculpting, building and moulding with our hands.

Jo has also assured us that she will ensure that the group keeps everything neat and tidy at the studio. The group is likely to meet on a Wednesday evening, probably around 6-9pm.

If you're interested, please send Jo an email at newsletter@blackhearthart.com.au

A note from the editor

Just a reminder that I'd love to hear from any members who would like to contribute articles to the newsletter. We also would love to hear any of your good news, like exhibitions or prizes won, so that you can share them with your fellow members. Drop me a line with articles, news or reviews at newsletter@blackhearthart.com

Jo Chipperfield

Newsletter Editor

Committee

President	Libby Sayers
Vice President	Helen Gillam
Treasurer	Adele Bruens
Secretary	Brian Bright
Members	Robert Simmonds Jeanne Rudd Suzie Harris Denis Gallagher David Wardman Jo Chipperfield

Contact us

Email	info@blackhearthart.com
Website	www.blackhearthart.com
Post	PO Box 224 Blackheath NSW 2785
Studio	139a Station Street, Blackheath
President	Libby Sayers 4757 3415
Exhibitions	Suzanne Harris 0428 828 405
Workshops	David Wardman 0418 965 071
Website	jeanner@optusnet.com.au
Newsletter	newsletter@blackhearthart.com

www.blackhearthart.com

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**Closing date for next issue:
15th July 2015**