



**THE VICTORIAN
ARTISTS SOCIETY**
EST 1870

**THE
QUARTERLY
JOURNAL**



July - September 2016



**THE VICTORIAN
ARTISTS SOCIETY**
EST 1870

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Governor of Victoria
and his
Honour Judge Anthony Howard

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Joyce McGrath OAM FVAS

Nathan Moshinsky

Fred Toumayan

NON EXHIBITING

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Ron Smith

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Ray Wilson

OFFICE CO-ORDINATOR

Kate Galea

RECEPTIONIST

Chris Reade

Newsletters 2016

The VAS Newsletter will be pleased to consider publication of or photographic contributions on subjects of general interest.

Contributions will be published on a strictly honorary basis and no payment will be made.

July - September 2016

Newsletter Editor

Kate Galea

All correspondence to: the V.A.S Office
430 Albert St. East Melbourne 3002.
The VAS Newsletter is printed through
the Office of the Victorian Artists Society.

Opinions expressed herein are not necessarily
those of the VAS Council.



Since our last edition and change of season the Society has been staging non stop exhibitions and activities.

In July our galleries were enhanced with three excellent Chinese exhibitions two of which were of well respected Chinese resident artists. All representing their skills in watercolour and ink painting. These exhibitions were not to be missed.

I would like to remind members that this is your society and encourage members to enjoy and participate in society activities and exhibition openings. Check up with what's on and make it a place to visit regularly. The Victorian Artists Society has become a very active, centralised, art society for all to enjoy.

Congratulations to all our exhibiting artists for your participation in recent VAS exhibitions. It is your hard work and dedication to the society that has made it what it is today your attention to presentation of works has also assisted in the quality of all exhibitions. We can not hope to sell work that presents poorly.

The President's Message

Recent exhibitions of Winter, Student Teacher and Portrait have resulted in a high standard of work. It is also pleasing to see the number of sculptures being exhibited with the student teacher and winter exhibitions both presenting beautiful work.

Extra activities have taken place this year with one extraordinary weekend we experienced at the society when invited to take part in Melbourne Open House day. This takes place every July. I must admit we were not entirely prepared for the number of visitors. How remarkable the two days were with 1,400 visitors, many of whom had never entered the building before.

Merchandise items of coffee mugs and greeting cards are available at the office desk. All proceeds from sales are going towards our Building Restoration Fund. Members may wish to purchase these while still available.

I am pleased to be in the position of being able to donate a substantial sum of money to the Building Restoration Fund. This means we can now move forward with our plans of restoration

to the building. Over the years I have become aware of the significance of our building and what it stands for in the history of Australian art. Therefore, I am fully committed to the restoration of the building which is very close to my heart.

Stage two of our plan is on target with the first arch into the balcony under construction. The walls have been stripped back to the brick work and the ceiling replaced, now ready for replastering. The ceiling will be installed with an attic ladder. This will provide easy access to the roof space and onto the outer roof, via a roof hatch recently installed in the new roof. Gutters and rain heads can now be maintained regularly.

We have a number of wonderful people volunteering their time to various tasks required to work through the project of restoring our somewhat neglected building. Without their professional help this project would not be successful. However from a financial point of view we have a long way to go before we can look at installing that forever asked for "McGrath lift". Please consider A donation as every dollar helps.

Building Restoration – Update

The restoration project has been injected with considerable impetus given a recent generous donation of funds. There is still, however, considerable work to do with respect to fundraising.

Having completed the roof replacement and plumbing upgrades a new wireless smoke alarm system with the capability for back to base alarm has been installed.

We are powering ahead with the restoration of the gallery wings and

the balcony upstairs. We will be replastering the walls in both of what were the storage areas so that the hanging space continues into each of these alcoves. The balcony will be tiled, the doors and leadlights restored and will be easily accessed from either end of the south of the new expanded Hammond gallery space.

Under the guidance of an architect/mechanical engineers we are obtaining quotes and options for lighting for the upper galleries as well as heating/cooling for the whole of the building. These works will be undertaken in Jan/Feb/March 2017. Changed arrangements are necessary for the 2017 Bargain Sale - artworks will be displayed on the ground floor. Also, we are looking to paint the building

inside and out – with special attention given to the ceilings. Ambient lighting is also being considered.

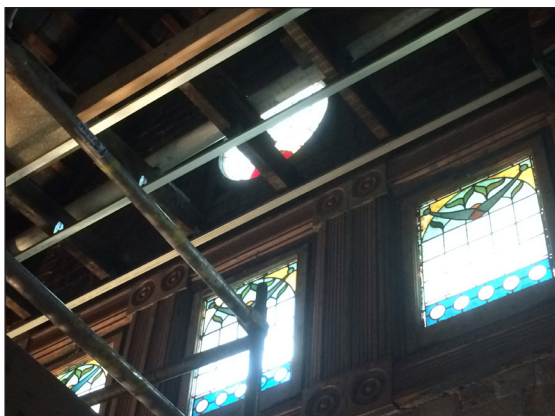
Subject to funding, further stages of the work will incorporate the installation of a lift, disability access and refurbishment/remodelling of the toilets. Consideration is also being given to the creation of storage space and the refurbishment of the kitchen to enable for small function catering. In addition the needs of studio artists have not been forgotten with attention to exhaust fans and ventilation. Other ideas in the mix are a café space and sculpture space in the courtyard. The Courtyard has been cleaned and refreshed due to the hardwork of member/student/volunteer Bob Young.



Damaged ceiling in Hammond storage space



Bricks cleaned back to original state in Hammond storage space



Leadlight windows also stripped back



Courtyard cleaned and ready for use during the warmer weather

2016 Winter Exhibition

The Victorian Artists Society Winter exhibition, the second select exhibition of the year with votes going towards the selection of artists eligible for the “Mavis Little Artist of the Year Award”.

Once again the gallery walls were decked with an interesting selection of work. Congratulations must go to all artists for exhibiting paintings of a very high standard giving this exhibition the excellence it deserved. Sculpture was also well represented with one of the finest number of entries exhibited in our select exhibitions.

This year the exhibition was judged by Christine Wrest - Smith. Christine is well known to the Society through

her teaching and connections she has had with the Society for many years. She has held 15 solo exhibitions to date and is currently working towards a major portrait exhibition in June 2017. She was awarded the Savage Club Art prize in 2010 and the Masterwork Contemporary Art Prize in 2011 with several portrait commissions her work is held in private and public collections. Christine was also awarded the Victorian Artists Society Artist of the Year Award in 2002.

The Winter exhibition 2016 opening and award evening resulted in a very pleasant evening with artists families and friends enjoying the evening. Awards were presented by the Judge Christine Wrest Smith and assisted by

VAS President Eileen Mackley. The Winter Exhibition Senior Art Supplies Award was presented to Marysia Jarosinska for her painting titled Memory.

Highly commended awards were given to :

Fred Toumayan
Erica Wagner
Jennifer Fyfe
Ben Winspear
Nell Frysteen
Des Parkin

The Sculpture Prize sponsored by By Land and Sea was awarded to Mike Ebdon with highly commended awards given to Judith Leman and Heather Ellis.



Judge Christine Wrest Smith & Robyn Barker one of our volunteers. Photo courtesy of Ron Smith



Public enjoying the opening night of the Winter Exhibition



Some of the excellent sculptures on display at the Winter Exhibition. Photo courtesy of Ron Smith

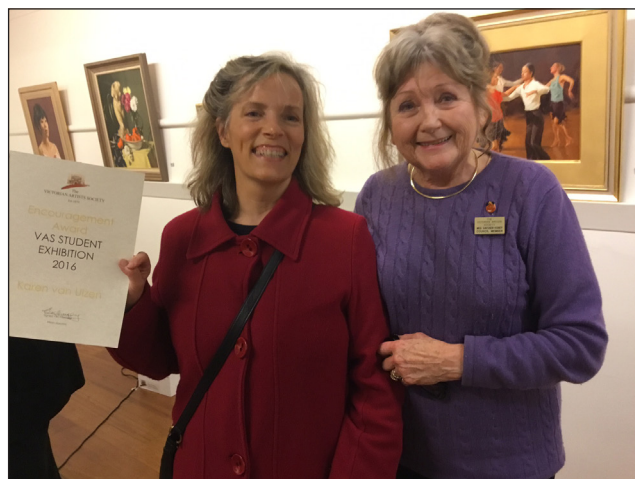


Winning entry - Memory by Marysia Jarosinska

Student & Teacher Exhibition



Encouragement Award Winners. Photo courtesy of Ron Smith



Karen Van Ulzen and Council member Meg Davoren-Honey. Photo courtesy of Ron Smith



Cody Wilson and Council member Meg Davoren-Honey. Photo courtesy of Ron Smith

The student and Teacher Exhibition opening and awards presentations were held on 29th July 2016.

The evening attracted 90 students, teachers, families and friends resulting in a very friendly and relaxed evening.

The works exhibited this year reached a very high standard of framing and presentation. It was also pleasing to see how well the whole exhibition has lifted in the quality of students work. Congratulations to Award winners and all who participated.

Hopefully this will encourage student members to enter their works in the Society Select Exhibitions.

Thank you to teachers who attended the evening and exhibited their

paintings.

The judging was performed by Meg Davoren – Honey, Nathan Moshinsky and Eileen Mackley.

Encouragement Awards

Oil Painting

No 38 - Cody Wilson, Back Study
No 110 - Karen Van Ulzen, Twilight City

Drawing

No 61 - Kath Pryer, Tiger
No 102 - Felicity Egan, Donkey

Watercolour

No 125 - Koaru Rauter, Fishing Boat
No 126 - Carole Smith, Mt Alexander

Pastel

No 19 - Suzanne Jackson, Blue Coat at Flam

No 66 - Elaine Haby, Spencer

Sculpture

No 136 - Allan Goedecke, Untiled
NO 139 - Andrea Stewart, Flora

Eileen Mackley FVAS
President Victorian Artists Society

Portrait Exhibition

Featuring the Nada Hunter Portrait Award of \$1,000 to the winner.

This year the portrait exhibition displayed an outstanding display of portraits .

Congratulations must go to all Portrait painters and portrait groups for their consistent work.

The judging this year was carried out by Jacqui Grantford. Jacqui is a Melbourne based artist who has won numerous awards with her paintings and portraits.

She is also a well known children's book author and illustrator. Through

her love of music she volunteers as a radio announcer on 3MBS fm a classical music station.

The opening and award evening commenced with an address by guest speaker Bill Shannon, Chairman of the Melbourne International Comedy Festival, Director of ACMI (Australian Centre of the Moving Image) and Chairman of The Shannon Company Advertising.

Bill explained how his company works on helping people change their lives and the challenges facing the world today, with the most successful way of tackling these challenges being

through behavioural changes.

Bill Shannon and Jacqui Grantford presented the Awards.

The winner of the 2016 Nada Hunter Portrait Award went to Rod Edelsten for a self-portrait.

Highly Commended awards went to

Elly Abrat, The Guitarist
Elizabeth Moore, Portrait of Anne Gwendoline Krummins, Study of Turkish Woman
Felix Atkinson, Untitled
Rachel Dettman, Portrait of Shay
Mike Ebdon, Djon



Judge - Jacqui Grantford



Rod Edelsten accepting his award



Elizabeth Moore Golding holding her Eckersley's gift card



Public enjoying the exhibition



Winning entry - Self Portrait by Rod Edelsten



Highly Commended - Djon by Mike Ebdon

Exhibitions & Awards

Awards for exhibitions have increased greatly over the past twelve months. The following information will assist members in preparing for VAS exhibitions in 2017.

The Bargain Sale in February 2017 will be reduced to four pieces per member.

This exhibition will be held in the Cato, Members room and foyer due to upstairs galleries being closed due to alterations.

The Contemporary Exhibition - held in March 2017 will have a new sponsor Mr Ian Hicks in memory of his father Mr George Hicks, past VAS honorary life member 1979 and a generous

sponsor. Mr George Hicks sponsored for twenty odd years our Seasonal Exhibitions. The Contemporary exhibition is to be named the Allied International Contemporary Award and is valued at \$5000 continuing yearly for the next 5 years. Members may enter up to 3 pieces.

In November 2016 the Artist of the Year exhibition will be held - this year will be the inaugural VAS Mavis Little Artist of the Year Award is valued at \$10,000 continuing yearly for the next 5 years.

This award has been sponsored in the memory of Mavis Little, a past

member who spent many hours at the VAS volunteering her time, by her son Paul Little and his family.

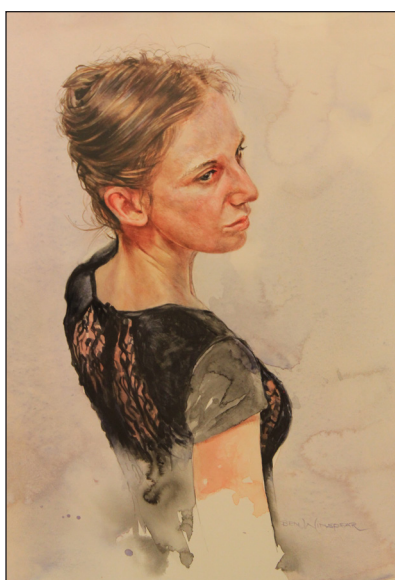
There has also been an increase in the sponsorship of the Gordon Moffatt Spring Exhibition Award and is valued at \$750.

The Portrait Exhibition has the Nada Hunter Portrait Award - (3 pieces may be exhibited) now valued at \$1000.

Our Biennial Norma Bull Naturalistic Portraiture Scholarship will be held again in 2017 - this is a scholarship for students working in the field of 'Naturalistic Portraiture' to the value of \$5000.



River Gums, Ray Hewitt - Spring Exhibition 2015



Emily in a black dress, Ben Winspear - Nada Hunter 2015



Stencil Study # 1, Sam Bruere - Contemporary Exhibition 2016



Portrait Study, Fiona O'Byrne - Norma Bull Scholarship 2015



Salty Decks and Sunshine, Jennifer Fyfe - A.O.T.Y Exhibition 2015

Open Day - Portrait Painters in Action!

With the postponement of the People Painting People event this year due to our busy schedule, it was decided by Council not to disappoint our portrait painters and organized their day, painting models in costume while demonstrating their skills to the visiting members, family and friends.

All artists were enthusiastic in getting settled before their easels for the day and slowly the images of their sitters started to emerge. Dressed in colourful costumes all sitters sat patiently, assisting the Artists who were deep in concentration on their subject.

Models dressed in costume were the French Maid ; Angysa Echeto , Asian Princess ;Michelle Riel, Spanish Dancer; Rosa Chiri, Scottish Laird ;Marcus

Byron, Medieval Swordsman; Justin Mackley and Fencing Master :Trevor Plant.

Costume mistress, Anne Scott-Pendlebury attended to costumes and supervised the staging and backdrops for sitters.

Gray Nicol, master in sculpture demonstrated his modelling skills working in the Members Room on the clay bust of Emma Stone, which attracted many admirers.

The portrait results were amazing with each artist interpreting their subject in various mediums whilst demonstrating the true art of painting a portrait .

Although a cool day those present

were soon warmed up with the aroma of hot sausages being BBQ'ed at the front door by Graham Galea, with all proceeds going to the building restoration fund.

Meg Davoren-Honey spent the day selling numerous second hand books to those who cannot resist a cheap book stall, while the Hampton Arts Supply installed a very interesting stand of art supply products for sale.

With afternoon tea supplied by the Society it all resulted in a very pleasant and enjoyable day.

Thank you to all members and volunteers involved in helping organize the day.



All the sitters - photo courtesy of Ron Smith



Gray Nicol sculpting Emma Stone



Justin Mackley & Keming Shen - photo courtesy of Ron Smith



Graham Galea on BBQ



Marcus Byron & Melanie Bardolia - photo courtesy of Ron Smith

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Bruce Thomas	Prudence Roberts	Famarz Mokhtarpou
David Lugeng	Venora Smith	Caroline Miley
Ann Ravenshield	Andrew Gibson	Thomas Bailey
Joe Whyte	Jonathon Gibson	Norma Neil
Carla Tucker	Kenneth Dang-lw	Stephanie Zhang
Loki Martin	Miroslaw Kurcki	
Xiang Meng	Adam Bushby	

CALLING FOR VOLUNTEERS

Not for profit organisations such as the Victorian Artists Society rely on Volunteer support.

The VAS remains in an enviable position having developed a workable Volunteer Programme which resulted in a strong team of supportive Members giving valuable time supporting the Society.

The time has come for us to refresh our team with Members who wish to help where needed.

Please phone the office on 9662 1484 if you can help.

Open House Melbourne Weekend

Since 2008 the event OPEN HOUSE MELBOURNE has been showcasing many of Melbourne's iconic and historic homes and commercial properties.

The City of Melbourne as well as many other organizations support this annual weekend of guided tours throughout well over 100 buildings, all especially spruced up and well lit and open to literally thousands of visitors over the two days.

It is one of the State's most widely attended and supported cultural events.

This year the VAS was invited to participate – a timely and welcome opportunity to show off our beautiful building, as well as welcoming hundreds of new visitors through our doors, just as we are in the midst of our Fund Raising campaign.

We hoped that our history and our heritage Galleries would create interest- but nobody dreamed that during the two days over 1400 people would enjoy a glimpse of how we operate and fill our donation boxes quite so generously.

In 2015, 40,000 people visited the various Open Houses - and this year numbers well exceeded that.

Our doors opened each day at 10.am – but people eagerly began queing well before 9.30, keen to be first in and look around in relative comfort.

Within the hour, dozens crowded the foyer and galleries upstairs- full of admiration and questions.

Over the weekend, we sold 13 artworks, many from the 'Student/ Tutor' Exhibition held upstairs.

Our staff and President spent many hours beforehand with planning and briefings and organizing volunteers for the two days.

Visitors were genuinely interested in our history and the building – and for so many it was a first time visit here – whilst a number of people admitted that our Albert Street façade had been an admired and familiar land mark for them over the years.

Of particular interest was our Studio and Eileen Mackley and Mike Ebdon very ably led dozens of groups through- often with people lined up waiting for the next tour.

On the Saturday, the usual life class was replaced with a costume class and the model was clothed in black ballet tights and leotard, taking up a number of short, dramatic poses. The studio was constantly full of people- revelling in the atmosphere and impressed with the commentaries offered by Mike and Eileen.

On the Sunday morning, instead of an empty studio, two artists ran an informal 'Open Workshop' –during which visitors were encouraged to take up a pencil or crayons and try their hand at sketching. Several willing models took turns to pose throughout the morning and even one or two children enjoyed putting pencil to paper.

It was a wonderfully interactive few hours, thanks to the inspired thinking of Council Member, Meg Davoren-Honey.

Upstairs, the balconies also drew a lot of attention and people appreciated stepping out and taking photographs of St. Patrick's Cathedral, enthralled by anecdotes of our 'Smoke Nights' held over 100 years ago.

Colourful stories were related of how our gentlemen painters used to enjoy a cigar, a glass of claret and the company of a 'lady friend' out on the

balcony on a mild evening, presumably admiring the view of the Cathedral spire illuminated by a summer moon.

The fact that Dame Nellie Melba was also a regular visitor to the Society and gave Master Classes downstairs in the Cato Gallery created additional interest.

By early evening on Sunday 31st, we had sold numerous mugs and postcards, received many generous donations towards our Fund Raising and added many fresh names to our data base

A very big 'thankyou' must be extended to staff Chris Reade and Sam Bruere, as well as to Eileen Mackley, Mike Ebdon, Shirley Fisher and Bob Young amongst others, as well as several Council Members who worked so hard on both days.

We are fortunate to have such a colourful history with which to intrigue visitors and proudly share with new members and we are pleased to report that we will be part of the OPEN HOUSE MELBOURNE Weekend next year.

Anne Scott Pendlebury



Charles W Gilbert pt 2

Throughout his career, portrait busts formed a major part of Web Gilbert's outputs and of the eleven Web Gilbert sculptures held by the National Gallery Victoria, seven are portrait heads. The most spectacular of these is the 1905 marble bust of Fred McCubbin. It shows McCubbin dressed conventionally in collar and tie, waistcoat and jacket, but swathed around the shoulders in neo-classical drapery reminiscent of that around Houdin's 1773 bust of Catherine the Great shown in the NGV recent Catherine the Great exhibition. It is a sculpture that looks backward to English and neo-classical precedents. It is a world away from his more modest 1907 bronze of McCubbin in the National Gallery of Australia, Canberra, and from his far more stylistically modern busts such as his 1912 bronze of Bernard O'Dowd in the NGV with its lively surface and books

modeled in bronze for a base or his lovely 1913 bronze, Dorothy, in the Castlemaine Art Gallery.

Portrait busts tie Web Gilbert to VAS in that as well as the two busts of Fred McCubbin already mentioned, he also produced a bronze of John Mather, a VAS founding member who was VAS President from 1893 to 1900, 1906 to 1908, and in 1911. Finally, there is our mystery bust in the VAS collection. Despite hunting through the on-line catalogues of the major Australian galleries and elsewhere for images of Web Gilbert's sculptures and for paintings or photographs of people reported to have been his portrait subjects, I have still not been able to identify the subject of our VAS plaster. If anyone has any clues about our subject's identity, please pass them on to the VAS office.

The final category of Web Gilbert's work is his more free and creative sculpture. The influence of Rodin and other nineteenth century sculptors can be seen in many of these pieces of which there are four in the NGV collection. Web Gilbert's pair of lovers embedded in a swirling cloud of marble, The Sun and the Earth of 1918 clearly shows his debt to Rodin and would not be embarrassed by being exhibited next to Rodin's Eternal Spring which was modeled in about c1881 and executed in marble in 1907. His other NGV marble, Nautilus 1906, was produced earlier has a very art nouveau naked figure rising from a shell but does not have the magic of The Sun and the Earth. More inspired are his two bronzes,

the folded nude of Fallen Idol, and the Dreamer which while nominally a portrait of a beautiful woman is more than just a bust. Both were produced in 1915 during his English stay. Sadly, after his return to Australia in 1920, this more creative part of his output was displaced by his extensive WWI memorial work.

One exception to this displacement is Web Gilbert's Matthew Flinders Monument 1923 – 25 situated in Swanston St outside St Paul's Cathedral. In an echo of his 1912 Bernard O'Dowd bust, mounted on the subject's books, Flinders is shown standing in the front of his boat with subordinate figures of straining sailors pulling the boat ashore.

Web Gilbert died from heart failure exacerbated by the physical demands of his work on the third of October 1925, only a month before the unveiling of Matthew Flinders Monument. The Argus of the 5th of October reported his death and concluded its notice with, "In addition to being a clever and original sculptor, Mr. Gilbert was a man of wide culture in art, and he was a diligent student of archaeology. His generous and genial disposition had made him very many friends outside the profession as well as in it who will greatly regret his premature death. He leaves a widow and three young children. The funeral will leave his house, 59 Gore street, Fitzroy, this afternoon."

Mike Ebdon



Tom Roberts Exhibition Catalogue

For the last 3 months we have been running a competition courtesy of Eckersley's Art & Craft Supplies.

Eckersley's contributed a hard cover catalogue of the Tom Roberts exhibition from the National Gallery of Australia.

This competition has now come to a close and has been drawn.

Congratulations to Claire Nicholson of East Melbourne.

Opening Nights - were you there...



VAS is a Very Attractive Setting for Functions and Receptions



Over 120 people attended a book-launch in the upstairs galleries on

Wednesday 17 August.

VAS member, Andrew Kennon, chose the venue for launching his book, *Bogong Calling Grounds – Selected Poems and Ballads*, as a fund raiser for the Building Appeal. Proceeds from book sales and donations raised over \$2,600 for the appeal.

Everyone agreed it was an ideal setting, including the caterers, waiters, musicians and others for the night of poetry recitals during the annual VAS Portrait Exhibition.

Andrew held the audience spellbound during his two recital sessions and the Sam Lemann String Ensemble filled the interludes with lovely improvisations on old favourites. The caterers excelled themselves and everyone felt inspired to imagine the much-loved building being updated

for 21st Century divas and other artists to present themselves in a new light.

Andrew said ‘legend has it that Dame Nellie Melba sang to the troops before they embarked for the Middle East in the First World War. Evidently they massed outside St Patrick’s Cathedral to hear the famous Soprano serenade, then from the VAS balcony opposite. It would be wonderful to see the balcony reinstated as part of the Hammond Gallery refurbishment with access to views over the city, the Cathedral and the Fitzroy Gardens.

‘As well as the continuing art exhibitions around the year, the VAS could become a by-word for the place to be at weddings, parties, anything, including a book-launch or moving display of human interaction’, Andrew said.

Lights, Cameras, Action!



On Thursday 25th of August our building became a movie set for the day. A Melbourne production company hired the ground floor to film 4 scenes for a pilot of an upcoming Television movie called ‘Sisters’.

This offered a fascinating ‘behind the scenes’ look at how a movie is created. Our building was transformed into

‘The Bechly Institute’ an IVF clinic! The foyer furniture was replaced with set furniture and the manager’s office was dressed with lamps and other props to give the impression that it was a medical consulting room set in the 1980’s. A crew of over 40 people including the director, actors, extras, set designers, sound recordists, cameramen and lighting technicians crowded in and created their magic. The first scene, a media conference, was set on our front steps and they had over 10 “takes” before everyone was happy with the scene! The subsequent scenes also took quite a lot of takes to get everything to the director’s satisfaction. It was a full day of filming for just 4 scenes, now we can understand why it takes so long to make a movie.

Our grand architectural details were beautifully enhanced thanks to the skill of the lighting crew. Exterior lamps were also set-up in the courtyard to create the effect of bright daylight streaming in through the windows.



The actors displayed great patience and humour re-shooting their scenes over and over again. Our art school students were very amused at walking into a ‘movie set’ to get to their class, and a couple nearly became part of the movie!



VAS EN PLEIN AIR

Winter Sunday Paintouts...and more



Our June paintout saw twelve hardy artists turn out on a biting chilly winter's morning at Eades Place Park in West Melbourne.

It's a small park at the junction of King St and Chetwynd St and has a good number of older buildings surrounding it. Quaint little Row Houses face the park at the south end of Chetwynd Street while the view from the north end of the park offers more substantial architectural subjects. The most imposing of these is a magnificent red brick former State School building on Eades Place.

A short walk up Eades Place brings you to the equally picturesque North Melbourne shops but most of us were content to linger in the little park and paint the day away.



July's destination was Half Moon Bay at Black Rock. There's a nice connection between the VAS and this location. Former President John Ford Paterson was a passionate advocate of en plein air painting and Half Moon

Bay was the site of one of his works, "Hauling the Seine".

This spot is a little gem for the painter with its small crescent shaped bay, sandstone cliffs, the scuttled HMVS Cerberus and a few colourful boat houses thrown in.

Thirteen painters attended and we all enjoyed the bright winter sun, calm conditions and the glistening emerald and blue of the water. What could be better?

With spring upon us, I'd like to encourage any members who have thought about attending our paintouts to come along and join in.

Over the long history of the VAS there have always been informal groups of members and friends who have met up on location to share the experience of painting outdoors.

The regular monthly Sunday paintouts as part of the VAS yearly calendar of events were initiated by Gregory Smith over two decades ago. It was considered a significant way of maintaining the connection between the Society and the great tradition of en plein air painting.

Of equal importance though, it is intended they provide an easy and relaxed environment for those members who are reluctant to venture out on their own to paint. It is remarkable how many painters find it difficult, for any number of reasons, to make the break from the studio.

Since my involvement in the planning of the paintouts I've realised there are a number of misconceptions about them among some members. With these in mind I'll take this opportunity to clarify some points.

- Firstly, there are no extra VAS fees associated with participating in the paintouts. They are a scheduled activity the Society provides to its members as part of their membership.
- There is no tuition provided at paintouts. There are however opportunities to learn from one another with the exchange of ideas. Of course the experience of painting from life in an outdoor setting can be a lesson in itself in many ways.
- Although we assemble at a pre-arranged location, each person generally finds their own little space to work in. There's little or no "looking over the shoulder" as you paint, as everyone is pretty much absorbed in their own work.
- There's no pressure to complete a masterpiece on the day! The essence of painting outdoors is the quick and spontaneous interpretation of the subject. Capturing the light, the mood, and your personal response to it in the simplest terms can be an end in itself. However not all painters see a painting through to completion during a paintout. Some set out to take a work as close to completion as possible with final tweaking done in the studio after a time of assessment and reflection. Both are equally legitimate processes and outcomes of en plein air painting.
- The public generally leave you alone.....this is the one exception to the "no looking over the shoulder" point made above. It's true that passers-

by will sometimes stop and chat or ask questions. But this is relatively rare and in all cases in my experience and those I've observed, people are very respectful of what you are engaged in... Genuinely interested in what we're doing and who we (the group) are.... Always an opportunity to promote the VAS!

- We can't make any guarantees about the weather. In selecting our paintout sites we try to take into account the possibility of bad weather. Ideally locations will have some nearby options for shelter from rain or at least the possibility of getting out of the wind if it really blows up. It's not always possible though, so rather than avoid an otherwise ideal painting site for this reason alone, it's wise to just accept that sometimes you might need to dive into your car for cover if it gets too bad. For your comfort we try to choose locations that have toilet facilities on site or nearby. It's nice also if there's a café or similar close by too but it's wise to bring some lunch and a thermos just in case.

How the day works:

Painting, painting, painting....that's pretty much all it is. Most people arrive and have a quick wander around the location to decide what they feel like painting and to say hello to those already there or introduce themselves.

Generally we have a lunch break about 1:00pm and usually gather at some central spot to eat and chat. We don't want to miss out on too much painting time so the lunch is usually about half an hour. Some prefer not to stop painting if they have some momentum going, lunching at the easel with brush, pencil or pastel in hand....and that's fine too.

Some will leave straight after lunch but most carry on into the afternoon with things usually wrapping up around 4:30 or 5:00pm.

I'm collecting the email addresses of those members who attend paintouts to create a Paintout Group Email List. I'd like to be able to communicate any updates to planned paintouts as well as facilitate discussion about possible locations, weekends away etc. It's my intention to send out a reminder about upcoming paintouts. When possible it will include a couple of photos of what the location has to offer and any relevant information about parking and facilities, etc.

If you're an existing participant and would like to be included on this list or would like more information about our paintouts please email me at: vas_paintouts@optusnet.com.au

John Hurlle.
Outdoor Activities Convenor.

One More Time Is Never Enough



It's always a pleasure writing a report after a 4 day painting trip especially when shared in great company with beautiful weather and a spectacular array of subject matter on offer. Our August trip to Maldon and district was a resounding success for the artists who were able to attend. New sites as well as some old favourites were visited and conquered in paint. Wattle and early blossoms stood out while all pastoral areas were blanketed in a carpet of green. With a weekend of no wind you couldn't have had

it any calmer and more idyllic for outdoor painting.

Venues we painted included Malmsbury, Maldon Township, Nuggety, Bell's Swamp, Eddington, Tarrengower, Railway Station and even the historic cemetery.



The accommodation at Eaglehawk Motel was as always superb and was ideal as a base for our daily outings. The nightly dinner at Wicked Temptations Restaurant was devoured and a great place to reflect on the day's creativeness.

It never ceases to amaze me how supportive people can be. Over all the years of participating in VAS paintouts, wherever we show up, whether it be farm people, shopkeepers, picnickers, railway volunteers or even international tourists, all think what we do is very special. Long may this encouragement continue!

Maldon is promoted as a historic gold mining town. We didn't find any gold but we did share many golden moments.

Signing off Co-ordinator
Gregory R Smith



Art and the Riddle of Beauty

The last decade has seen a dramatic increase in interest in visual perception and aesthetics. This has been driven by the impact of new brain scanning methods on the understanding of how our brain handles visual experiences. Does it assist in refocussing attention on painting and sculpture, and away from the distractions of the narrative based creations of post-modernism? Are we getting closer to a better understanding of beauty, ugliness and the emotional responses to sensory experiences? Does it take us closer to the elusive riddle of beauty?

We understand the world through our sensory organs where vision has some primacy. Although much of our modern communication is verbal, including this brief essay, vision is a much more ancient source of knowledge both in immediacy and in terms of our evolution. We capture reflected electromagnetic radiation from a world which to the best of our knowledge is both colourless and silent. Using just three wavelengths, blue, green and red we process this energy to deliver colour vision.

Our eye has some limited similarity to a camera. The camera lens, with its fixed point of view, delivers an image of a three dimensional world onto a two dimensional film or sensor. Unlike the camera, our eyes scan the visual field with fine 'saccadic' movements and focus an inverted image via the cornea and lens onto a two dimensional retina.

The physical process of vision has been extensively explored since the time of the Greeks who first established the anatomy of the eye by dissection. A number of scientists including Newton,

Goethe and Schopenhauer examined light and demonstrated the optical laws which underlie vision. The retina has photoreceptors which convert light energy to electrical impulses. These travel down the optic nerve to the visual or occipital cortex at the 'back' of the brain.

The visual process does not simply result in a mirror like reproduction of the retinal image. In fact it reacts to different stimulation. The retina responds to a point of light but not the visual cortex. Hubel and Wiesel won the Nobel Prize in 1981 for showing that many brain neurons respond to lines with a specific direction. This makes sense as the brain looks to identify shape and edges in the visual field.

Information from experiments in visual psychology suggests that the identification of shapes is dependent on several characteristics including edges, structural skeleton, colour, tone and movement. The brain makes sense of these shapes by reducing them to simple forms, particularly circles and squares.

These shapes or symbols are an entry point for our huge filing system of all the objects we have learned to identify. In a simplistic way this series of events might be like this. I see a shape which looks like a triangle. Is it an arrow head or a mountain top? We then transition from a simple shape to an identifiable object by a poorly understood process but one which is highly localized in the brain. The basic shapes or symbols appear to be fundamental and are shared with primitive man and higher animals. Perhaps they relate to the 'primordial images' or 'archetypes' of Carl Jung's 'collective unconscious.'

Information leaving the visual cortex exits in several directions. A lower or ventral pathway heads for the temporal lobe and has been called the 'what path'. This deals in a very

specific way with the identification strategies which have already been mentioned. Another stream exits in a higher or dorsal direction toward the motor cortex which controls movement. This is the so called 'where path.' This makes sense as before we move we must know where we are in space. This takes some effort as we start with a two dimensional image. Depth knowledge comes from the position of our eyes and binocular vision. This information is called proprioceptive. We also process clues from distant objects which relate to brightness and image variables such as obliqueness, convergence and size. Apparently colour plays little part in these judgements which is surprising as we know colour plays a significant part in aerial perspective for the artist.

This brings us to the new technologies and brain scanning. These techniques of which there are several provide a real time reflection of the patterns of brain activity which accompany the visual experience. They don't tell us what we are thinking, just the areas of electrical activity where things are happening. The capacity of time based analysis is so refined that it can separate immediate intuitive responses from delayed and more thoughtful activity. It has been shown that an object can be recognized in just thirteen thousandth of a second.

The scans which accompany looking at something not surprisingly show that the major activity is in the visual cortex at the back of the brain. However there is activity at other sites. In particular visual images from objects which have been characterized as beautiful show very specific activity in part of the frontal lobe. The frontal lobe is a controlling executive area which has many functions. This particular part of the frontal lobe called the 'medial orbitofrontal cortex' has been facetiously called the 'beauty centre.' It lights up with many pleasurable experiences including with

music and mathematics. Conversely ugly or so called negative aesthetic experiences produce a different activity pattern which includes a lateral aspect of the frontal lobe. Perhaps the frontal lobe has a 'nice or nasty' filter.

Brain scans which accompany perception of beauty light up areas of the brain other than the occipital cortex and frontal lobe. Some have speculated that this activity may be part of several fairly basic responses. Rats for example have a 'reward system,' driven by the chemical dopamine which triggers a series of structures at the base of the brain. Given the capacity to stimulate it, rats do so addictively to the exclusion of all other vital activities. Brain scanning shows that these same centres are active in humans experiencing pleasure and are highly activated in addictive states. The reward system has a survival advantage as it is linked to experiences such as sex and eating. It also lights up with the visual perception of beauty.

Another survival system is the 'flight or fight' response. Faced with a stressful situation we experience a dry mouth, rapid pulse and sweating due to a sudden discharge of adrenalin.

Some have suggested that the same dramatic response might accompany an image of overwhelming impact or the 'sublime.'

Does all the new information in Neuroaesthetics take us closer to the riddle of beauty? The answer is probably no. We appreciate that with the visual perception of beauty the brain moves information, but exactly what is the question.

Beauty is a subjective experience and philosophers since the time of Plato have sought to explain it. Kant categorized it in the class of things which were unknowable or metaphysical. For more than a hundred years experimental psychologists have sought to explain it in the responses to simple shapes and figures.

To a significant degree it falls into the category of "I can't explain it but I know it when I see it!" The Bloomsbury Group art critic Clive Bell described 'the aesthetic experience.' This he said was a response to a certain combination and arrangement of lines and colours which he called 'significant form.'

There I will let the matter rest.
To end with a cautionary quote

from Phillip Ball in an article entitled 'Neuroaesthetics is killing your soul.' "There are certain to be generalities in art and our responses to it, and they can inform our artistic understanding and experience. But they will never wholly define or explain it." We live in an era when we can identify where we are thinking but what we are thinking is just a bit more elusive.

Related reading

Art
Clive Bell
Stokes (1914)

Man and his symbols
Carl Jung
Aldus Books (1964)

Art and Visual Perception
Rudolf Arnheim
Uni. California Press (1974)

Inner Vision
Semir Zeki
Oxford University Press (1999)

Experiencing Art
Arthur Shimamura
Oxford University Press (2014)

Anonymous

Packing Room Prize



Betina Fauvel-Ogden & George Calombaris.
Photo courtesy of Ron Smith.

Fauvel-Ogden who entered the Archibald Prize for the first time has managed to walk away with the Packing Room Prize, an impressive feat. Betina immortalised George Calombaris of Master Chef for her entry.

The prize, awarded since 1991, is chosen by the packing room staff who receive, unload and hang the artists works.

A striking portrait with a strong likeness to George impressed the Chief Packer Steve Peters. As soon as it was unpacked he was taken by George's fierce gaze and powerful stance.

On behalf of all the staff, Council members, President and membership we would like congratulate Betina on an amazing accomplishment. Well done!

A big congratulations is in order to one of our members. Betina



THE VICTORIAN ARTISTS SOCIETY
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2017 ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION NOTICE/INVOICE

City Members	\$160	GST Inc
Country Members	\$135	GST Inc
Students (full time student, 25 years and under)	\$60	GST Inc
Donation to VAS Building Restoration Fund	\$	
(a tax deductible donation with all proceeds going towards the restoration of our building)		
TOTAL	\$	

Members are reminded that the VAS Office will close on Friday 16th December 2016 and will re-open on Monday 16th January 2017

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COMING TO VAS . . .

GREGORY R SMITH - A SIGHT TO BEHOLD

14 - 20 SEPTEMBER 2016



Gregory R. Smith invites you and your friends to come and view his solo exhibition of paintings.

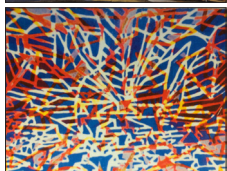
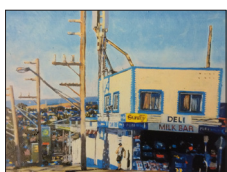
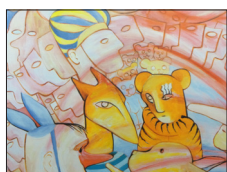
14 - 20 September 2016

Gallery: Cato

A select group of paintings from Gregory's 40th Solo show will be on display in the Cato gallery for one week. If you missed the main event you still have one last chance to view some of the artists work.

SEVEN MELBOURNE ARTISTS SHOW

7 - 18 October 2016



This show comprises 7 variously known, Melbourne artists working in various mediums.

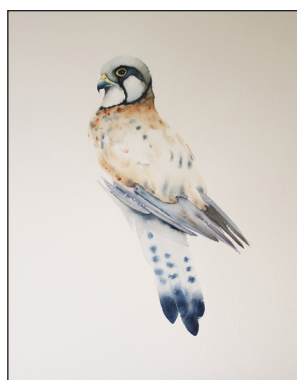
Raffaella Torresan - Brian Pieper - Domenico de Clario - Eros Anceschi - Jacqueline Mitelman - Nicholas Gray - Jonas Balsaitis

Opened by: Rod McNicol (artist/photographer)

Opening: Saturday 8th October at 6.30pm

Victorian Artists Society

430 Albert Street, East Melbourne



EBB AND FLOW - NADINE DUDEK 5 - 17 October 2016

Ebb and Flow is Nadine Dudek's sixth solo exhibition. The title reflects the way a body of work comes together, with the rise and fall of inspiration. Nadine's journey with watercolour, starting four years ago, has shown her this beautiful medium flourishes under a light touch.



2016 Paintout Activities

Sunday Sept 25 - 10am

EDINBURGH GARDENS

- FITZROY NORTH

Alfred Crescent. Opposite

Fitzroy North Primary School.

Melway Ref 30 B12

Sunday Oct 30 - 10am

NEWHAM - GENERAL

STORE & CORNER PARK

Woodend, Lancefield Road

Melway Ref 609 G9

Sunday Nov 27 - 10am

MT MARTHA - THE BRIARS PARK

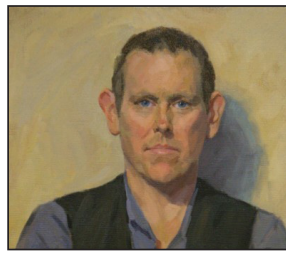
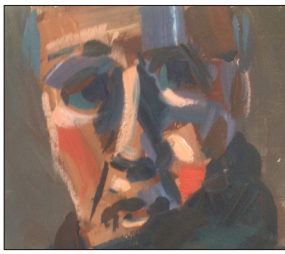
Nepean Highway, Mt Martha

Melway Ref 145 D11

MEMBERS & FRIENDS

**Please remember the Society
when forming or reviewing
your will or considering a
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Thank you



2017 SUMMER WORKSHOPS THE VICTORIAN ARTISTS SOCIETY

430 Albert Street
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Ph: (03) 9662 1484

Email: admin@victorianartistsociety.com.au

Web: www.victorianartistsociety.com.au

CLIVE SINCLAIR - OIL/ACRYLIC

Monday 2nd January - Friday 6th January M: \$415 NM: \$462

LEE MACHELAK - OIL PORTRAITURE (incl. model)

Monday 9th January - Friday 13th January M: \$487 NM: \$544

JULIAN BRUERE - WATERCOLOUR

Saturday 14th January - Sunday 15th January M: \$170 NM: \$190

DAVID TAYLOR - WATERCOLOUR

Monday 16th January - Thursday 19th January M: \$340 NM: \$375

AMANDA HYATT - WATERCOLOUR

Saturday 21st January - Sunday 22nd January M: \$170 NM: \$190

GREGORY SMITH - OIL PORTRAIT/FIGURE (incl. model)

Thursday 26th January - Friday 27th January M: \$200 NM: \$220

All workshops run from 10am to 3.30pm. Spaces Limited - bookings essential.

Each workshop will have a 1 hour lunch break.

Please bring your own lunch catering not provided.





**THE VICTORIAN
ARTISTS SOCIETY**
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2016

THE YEAR AHEAD AND DATES TO REMEMBER

SEPTEMBER	OCTOBER	NOVEMBER
<p>17 SPRING EXHIBITION SEND IN DAYS: 14 & 15 SEPTEMBER between 11.00am - 3.00pm</p> <p>21 COUNTRY MEMBER EXHIBITION SEND IN DAY: DETAILS AT THE OFFICE</p>	<p>4 SPRING EXHIBITION Collection Day: 4 October between 11.00am - 3.00pm</p> <p>4 COUNTRY MEMBER EXHIBITION Collection Day: 4 October between 11.00am - 3.00pm</p>	<p>19 VAS MAVIS LITTLE A.O.T.Y SEND IN DAYS: BY INVITATION ONLY</p> <p>19 SCULPTOR OF THE YEAR SEND IN DAYS: BY INVITATION ONLY</p> <p>30 LITTLE TREASURES EXHIBITION NEW DATES FOR THIS EXHIBITION SEND IN DAY: 30 NOVEMBER between 11.00am - 3.00pm</p>
DECEMBER	JANUARY 2017	
<p>6 VAS MAVIS LITTLE A.O.T.Y Collection Day: 6 December between 11.00am - 3.00pm</p> <p>13 LITTLE TREASURES EXHIBITION Collection Day: 13 December between 11.00am - 3.00pm</p>	<p>2 - 27 VAS SUMMER WORKSHOPS Details are online</p>	

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