



**THE VICTORIAN  
ARTISTS SOCIETY**  
EST 1870

# THE **QUARTERLY** JOURNAL

SEPTEMBER - NOVEMBER 2015



“There is no other place in Australia where you can be surrounded with the spirit and history of the beginnings of Australia’s Art”

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**THE VICTORIAN  
ARTISTS SOCIETY**  
EST 1870

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# The Victorian Artists' Society Is for all who love Art! A new era for the Victorian Artists' Society.

The Victorian Artists' Society had its beginnings in 1870 when a small group of artists and lay persons met in magistrate James Robertson's house at Blessington Street, St. Kilda, to form the Victorian Academy of the Arts – the direct ancestor of the VAS.

Among the founders were Louis Buvelot, J A Panton, Thomas Clark and Hubert de Castella. This heavyweight group were instrumental in not only securing the Crown Land Grant on which our building now stands, but in the early establishment of the Society as a legal entity.

Immediately following the grant of land in Albert Street in 1873, a small bluestone building was erected, which although almost totally subsumed by the present building, still serves both as a studio and a reminder of our colonial past.

In 1886 the professional artist members, led by Arthur Streeton,

Tom Roberts and Charles Conder broke away and formed the Australian Artists Association. This split did not last long and in 1887 talks commenced to reunite the two groups, and in 1887 the Victorian Artists' Society was born of this union.

It is within these walls that young artists including Arthur Streeton, Charles Conder, Tom Roberts, Walter Withers, Frederick McCubbin, and many others, commenced their journey of brushstrokes, which today form the foundation of Australia's major art collections in national galleries across Australia.

Many of these works were purchased from members' exhibitions, a process which continues today as the Victorian Artists' Society, with members from all walks of life and all levels of skill, continue to learn to paint and exhibit as the Society heads towards its 150th anniversary in 2020.

This building is a public asset and learning centre for following generations, and is open to the public and all of those who love art.

The Victorian Artists' Society needs to ensure this important historic building that has played an important part in the lives of significant and ordinary Australians, from the time it opened its doors in 1892, continues to evolve.

The Victorian Artists' Society is taking action to raise funds, however, on behalf of the community we will need some assistance to ensure future generations will be able to walk in the footsteps of some of Australia's most significant artists and citizens.

President and Council  
The Victorian Artists' Society



## CHAMBER MUSIC FEATURING HORN & VOICE

A program showcasing Australian and English works, Tim and Alison are joined by pianist Megan Steller and violinist Katriona Tsyrlin, for the world premiere of a composition by Warren Lenthall, commissioned by Ensemble Goldentree. The Ensemble invites you to experience characterful minatures and evocative storytelling, surrounded by victorian artworks in the Hammond Gallery.

**Sunday 25th October 2015 at 5.00pm**  
**Victorian Artists' Society**  
**Adults: \$20 Con: \$15 Children under 12 FREE**

**For more information [www.ensemblegoldentree.com.au](http://www.ensemblegoldentree.com.au)**





## Presidents Message September 2015

The arrival of Spring has seen the gallery walls displaying creative works of colour and design. The Norma Bull Portrait Scholarship exhibition also on display left visitors with a very positive feeling about the Victorian Artists' Society.

Visitors and Members entering the building will recognise changes to the office staffing following the employment of Chris Reade at reception, which gives Kate Galea her own space in the back office as Office Co-Ordinator. Both desks are extremely busy with the development of our new systems and activities.

If you have not met Chris please make yourself known to her.

Sam Bruere will become Gallery Assistant, involved with installing and dismantling larger exhibitions.

Along with Ray Wilson's strong hand as Manager it is so pleasing to see the new team networking so well.

Progress with restoration of the building continues and I am happy to report a full VAS Restoration Project Scope Management Plan has been prepared by Mr Jeff Prentice to assist with our development.

Repair work on the front guttering

and rain heads has been completed.

A full scope of the roof has been undertaken and hopefully repair work completed before the end of the year.

These works will complete the first stage of our restoration project.

Sealing the building off from the weather has been paramount before we attempt restoration on the interior.

This is all about restoring our decaying building.

Design work has also begun on promotion material for fundraising which will be launched in the new year.

We are rebuilding our website with a new design and hope to have that up and running before the end of the year. Once again our staff are working on this project bringing us up to -date with today's digital world.

Members exhibitions have been very well supported with an excellent standard of work entered.

The Student / Teacher exhibition entrants increased this year making a great show and encouragement for all students.

En Plein Air painters and Country members also exhibited works in the Cato Gallery during July and August.

Chinese Exhibitions, the Melbourne Society of Woman Painters and Sculptors and Gregory Smith have enhanced our galleries with outstanding work during August and September.

Gallery space for 2016 is at a premium with a number of weeks being hired by non- member groups.

Although we have introduced new art classes this term, we expect to extend on these next year to satisfy the waiting lists we have.

Thank you to all art tutors for being consistent in their teaching and encouragement to students seeking further tuition.

It is an exciting time for the Victorian Artists' Society with many projects in hand.

Eileen Mackley FVAS

# Artist or Art Student? - Art or Artifice?



The catalogue from the celebrated Misty Moderns exhibition held at the McLelland Gallery at Langwarrin in 2008 is an excellent publication with good reproductions as well as very interesting text. Part of the text is taken from 'The Triad' which appears to have been a newspaper published in Sydney in the 1920's and it quotes Max Meldrum as follows:

**“Yes, I have often heard of that imaginary stage where the student leaves off and the artist begins. But in the sense in which the words “artist” and “student” are generally used it might be said that the majority of great artists never became “artists” at all, but remained students from beginning to end. Take the case of Corot, for example. His early efforts tell us that he was attempting to arrange nature on his canvas in such a manner as would raise it from the mere “study” to the picture or work of art (or what was understood to be the work of art). In his later works he has become less the “artist” and more the simple student. There is no further attempt at conventional picture-making, at composing, changing, distorting or in any way tampering with nature. Rembrandt is another famous example of this seemingly paradoxical progression from artist to student”.**

The world of art has changed much since Meldrum penned those words

but I feel that in some areas nothing changes. So much these days is determined by taste rather than consideration driven by observation. There is still a great difference between objective painting and picture making. Alan Martin who was a protégé of Meldrum called the picture makers ‘manufacturers of wall furniture’.

Comments like that these days will not win many friends in the world of art but I think it is necessary still to differentiate between the “artist”, and the “painter” who remains a student of nature and attempts to depict her warts and all in a truthful manner.

Formulaic painting using variable focusing, adjusting of colour values and various other artistic gymnastics can produce wonderful images, but when represented as nature these images are as false as corsets, coloured contact lenses or dyed hair on a human being, male or female. They may enhance the final image but are untrue.

The jaded eye of the art buying public must be exhausted from the constant bombardment of imagery which assails it on a daily basis in magazines and on television etc. Much of this is heavily modified through editing and filtering, which gives a false image of both the constructed and the natural world.

If any art lover required some rest from this avalanche of artifice they would have benefitted from a trip to Langwarrin to meditate on what the Meldrum group saw as reality in the early 20th century. The natural world has not changed since those days and these painters celebrated nature, as we should today.

I remember reading in the Spectator Magazine, Alan Massie’s regular column Life and Letters in which he

discussed Evelyn Waugh’s classic novel Brideshead Revisited and the fact of its being made into a feature film having already been a highly successful television series. He goes on to discuss the relative merits of each version of the story and in the last paragraph he says something which struck me as quite profound about the paradox of art being “..... that whatever its ostensible message, the true work of art enriches our experience of the world we live in and, in doing so offers delight. Something to remember in our time, when so many self-styled artists set out to shock rather than to please.’

Our constant quest as students of the arts makes us ask what art is and whilst Massie’s statement may not exactly define it, it gives a pretty good definition of what it should do and it will suit me as an explanation of the paradox until a better one comes along.

Don James

Editor’s note: How appropriate, considering the VAS’s current teaching offering.

(painting by Clarice Beckett)

# Spring Exhibition Awards



Winning Painting - 'River Gums' - Ray Hewitt



Highly Commended - 'Otway Landscape' - Clive Sinclair

Winner Gordon Moffatt Award - 'River Gums' - Ray Hewitt - Spring Exhibition 2015

The following artists were Highly Commended:

Paul McDonald Smith - The Ingredients

Jennifer Paull - Fishing Boats, Brittany

Yan Huang - Springs Charm

Clive Sinclair - Otway Landscape

Jennifer Fyfe - Sketch of a Muso

Marysia Jarosinska - Hanging in There

Sculpture Prize - sponsored by By Land and Sea - Manfred Tursky - Dragon Teapot (Working Teapot)

Highly Commended - Ivan Horacek – Samurai



Highly Commended - 'The Ingredients' - Paul McDonald Smith



Ray Hewitt receiving his award from Margaret Cowling



# Norma Bull Portraiture Prize 2015

The Winner of the Norma Bull Scholarship judged by exhibiting members of VAS Council is Fiona O'Byrne.



Fiona O'Byrne with her award winning painting 'Steve'



Fiona O'Byrne receiving her award from Eileen Mackley President



Visitors admiring the Spring Exhibition

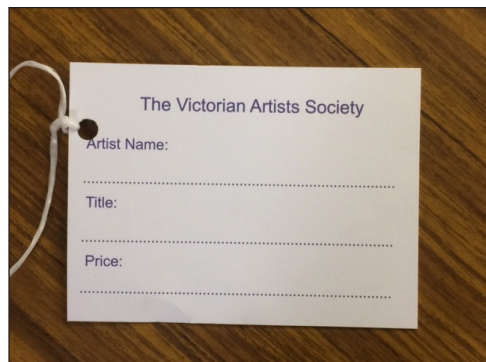


Viewing of Fred Toumayan's painting



Adam Mackley working the bar

# Everything you ever wanted to know about our "Swing Tag" System but were too afraid to ask...



Let me take the mystery out of our 'swing tag' system used for all our exhibitions. I hope the following explanation will be helpful for all members – particularly our new members.

Once each painting is placed on the wall on hanging day – we try not to remove it – unless we are doing final positioning. We take each swing tag from behind the painting and hang it conveniently beside the work. When we are ready to catalogue and do a walk around placing the numbers beside each entry and getting the artist's details – we simply refer to the tag on the end of the string. This holds all

the information we require for the catalogue.

Artists name – Title of Work – Price

Often a signature on a painting can be difficult to decipher – without the swing tag – that work would have to be lifted off the wall and we would have to check on the back of the painting for identification. If the information was not there – we would then have to go to the office and check the registration form. All time consuming on a busy hanging day. Also, each time a painting – or piece of sculpture is handled – the frames, mounts, material and glass are vulnerable to finger marks, and pastels and clay are particularly susceptible.

So you see – these little swing tags, eliminate a great deal of additional handling by the hanging crew and assist in keeping entries looking clean and fresh. Once catalogued – the tags are tucked behind each painting – and removed from the

sculpture exhibits. A simple system – but effective and a very practical one.

So:

**HOW** – Attach a metre of string with a small square of cardboard at one end – and secure to each entry. Tie on to the hanging wire – or firmly secure with cellotape. For sculpture exhibits, attach the string loosely. We will remove it once the entry is in place in the gallery.

**WHERE** – To the back of each painting.

**WHY** – For identification/cataloguing and minimisation of handling.

Anne Scott Pendlebury

## How the Artist of the Year (AOTY) is selected



**Spring**). These are called 'selected exhibitions' which means each exhibition is appraised by exhibiting members of the VAS Council.

At all three of these exhibitions members have the privilege of voting for the 5 artists of their choice and if exhibiting in the exhibition can also cast a vote for themselves (see article on Voting). Each of these 5 votes has an equal weighting of 1 vote i.e. you receive one vote whether you are listed top, bottom or in between. Those votes by members not exhibiting in these 'select exhibitions' are used to

determine the Design Framing of Essendon Award announced at the AOTY exhibition opening.

Most importantly, the votes of members exhibiting in these 3 selected exhibitions are used to determine the top 30 (approximately) artists who will be invited to exhibit in the AOTY exhibition in November. Note also they must have exhibited in at least 2 'selected exhibitions'.

Voting at the AOTY exhibition is only available to those artists invited to exhibit at the AOTY exhibition and voting is preferentially

The Society stages three major member exhibitions each year (**Autumn**, **Winter** and



weighted: 3 votes; 2 votes; 1 vote in order of preference.

These votes are then added to votes accumulated during the “selected exhibitions” giving us the winner of AOTY.

It is therefore important to enter

your best quality work to get selected to the AOTY exhibition and to maintain that quality in the AOTY exhibition to maximise your chance of being awarded the AOTY.

Ray Wilson  
Manager



Julian Bruere 2013 AOTY winner



Ray Hewitt 2014 AOTY winner

## Members are you voting correctly?

**A**s a staff member of the Victorian Artists' Society I have many roles amongst these, I am the person responsible for collecting and collating members voting forms for the 3 selected exhibitions (Autumn, Winter & Spring). This is a very important process as it determines who will be showing in the Artist of the Year Award Exhibition at the end of the year.

We have tried to simplify the wording on the voting form, but there still seems to be some confusion. In writing this short article I hope to make this process clearer to our members.

We encourage voting at the selected exhibitions by all members,

exhibiting and non-exhibiting.

Who is an exhibiting member? An exhibiting member is a member who has work hanging in a current selected show.

Who is a non-exhibiting member? A non-exhibiting member is a member who does not have work hanging in a current selected show.

### VOTING INSTRUCTIONS (Autumn, Winter & Spring)

**Exhibiting Members Voting**  
Exhibiting members who have work hanging in a current “selected” exhibition may cast FOUR votes. The FIFTH vote is for the exhibiting member voting (please print your name in the FIFTH vote).

(votes go towards Artist of the Year Award)

**Non-Exhibiting Members Voting**  
Non-Exhibiting members not hanging in a current “selected” exhibition may cast FIVE votes.

(votes go towards Design Framing of Essendon Award).

All members voting (exhibiting and non-exhibiting) must sign their voting form for it to be official.

Please remember if you have any questions I am very happy to help.

Kate Galea



## New VAS Tutor - Linda Weil

### What is your background in drawing?

Drawing is my first love. I cannot remember a single day of my life when I have not drawn something. As a child growing up I was always drawing – starting with my bedroom walls, much to my Mother’s consternation! By the time I was 8, I was travelling on a cross-town bus to attend a drawing class run by a local artist in my home town of San Jose, California. I was one of ‘those’ kids who when asked what they wanted to be when they grew up never hesitated about saying ‘An Artist’. Being told that this was not an ideal choice for a girl didn’t stop the dream.

The realities of having to earn a living from art my steered me into a career of Illustration and Graphic Design. I studied Graphic Design and Illustration at RMIT. The design course in the 80’s focussed on illustration techniques, creative and mechanical drawing, anatomy studies, life drawing and print techniques. It was a very inclusive art discipline and I enjoyed the study. Once I achieved my diploma I started work in the media industry settling into magazine design, art direction and illustration. I liked the work and became Art Director for Your Garden magazine for a number of years. This was fantastic because each month I was asked to create botanical style drawings to support the editorial. Working in the print media really honed my skills in

detail watercolour, pencil and ink. I learned that often in a drawing less is more. A limited palette can capture the essence of the subject. It doesn’t pay to get too fussy in an editorial illustration, detail needs to be carefully considered. This lesson has carried over into the art I exhibit.

Inspiration: I guess it is fairly obvious from my work that I have been heavily influenced by a detailed and realist style of art. As a child I loved looking at my father’s old copies of The Saturday Evening Post magazine covers and wished I could learn to paint and draw like Norman Rockwell. I discovered Durer as a teen and this lead to Vermeer, Bruegel and other Dutch Renaissance artists. I suspect that today you can see a touch of Heironymus Bosch in some of my more fantastical works. In the late 60’s my father took me to an exhibition of drawings and lithograph posters by Toulouse Latrec held at U.C. Berkeley. Lautrec’s work taught me the power of line.

Australian Artist Peter Trusler has been a mentor, friend and advisor to me for a number of years. He has encouraged and helped me to develop my own style and gain confidence in my technique. Another contemporary artist whose work I enjoy is John Wolseley. His use of expressive abstraction combined with detailed minutia is inspiring. John’s current exhibition at NGV

should not be missed.

As well as these more accepted artists and art forms, I also have a great fondness for the Graphic Novel (or call it a comic book if you will). I love English artists like Jamie Hewlett, Ian Gibson, and Carlos Ezquerra and am still seen buying their comics and graphic novels. Yes, I am a Banksy fan as well. Most of the works and artists I have admired and tried to emulate over the years have been printmakers, draughtsman or illustrators – and if the artist likes to look at the world sideways, even better!

Awards/achievements: After some 20 years in the print media, I decided to start exhibiting some of my private drawings of nature studies, animals and plants. To begin with I joined the Wildlife Art Society of Australia and exhibited in their annual exhibitions. I was encouraged by a Highly Commended award the second time I exhibited with them and so began exhibiting more widely in various Rotary Art Shows around Victoria. My first major award was Best Drawing at the 2005 Hamilton North Rotary Show. This has been followed by many other drawing awards since then, including most recently a Best Drawing at the Heart of Kingston award in 2014 and Best Drawing award at the 2015 Bright Autumn Exhibition. A complete list of awards can be seen on my website.

In 2008 I was contacted by Walter Foster Publishing through my website and asked to write and illustrate a 'how to' book on Drawing Lifelike Animals for their 'Drawing Made Easy' series. I remembered using Walter Foster books in that first drawing class when I was 8 years old so it was great fun to create this book. Sort of completing a circle. I really hope some other young artist picks up my book and is helped by it and inspired to draw. The book was a great advertisement for my drawings both internationally and within Australia. I was commissioned to draw a series of works to help promote Derwent pencils. You can see several of my drawings on the current tins and printed on the literature within. Art societies around Australia often ask me to teach at their workshops. I get a great deal of pleasure and inspiration for working with art students – sometimes I don't know who learns more, me or the person I am teaching! Workshops introduced me to the larger community of professional artists in Australia and I have formed many friendships. Two of these new friends, Amanda Hyatt and Clive Sinclair sponsored me as a member to the Victorian Artists Society. This gave me the opportunity to exhibit my work recently in the Members room and the possibility of teaching a drawing class next term here.

### What do you like to draw?

I like detail! I enjoy animal work, nature studies and flights of fancy. Graphite pencil is my preferred medium, often using a limited colour palette of pencils or wash. But I play around with charcoal, inks and pastels as well. I love how tone and a simple line can express so much. Sometimes too

much colour seems to just get in the way. But with simple tone and line you can capture the essence of a landscape, the structure of building, the mood of still life or the personality and character of any animal from a mouse to a lion. When I draw I get engrossed in detail and subject matter, but as I work I like to think about the hidden meanings my chosen subject represents. I like to allow a drawing to break out of its boundary, to create drawings within drawings and invite to observer in to see the hidden thought.

### What are you currently drawing?

Bugs. All sorts of bugs in small drawings. Cicadas, grasshoppers, bees. Christmas beetles are favourite. Dragon/damsel flies are fun too. At the moment they are just 'spot' drawings, little studies. I am waiting for them to crawl off the page and lead me to the next idea.

### What can students expect from your drawing classes?

I enjoy drawing and enjoy teaching people how to draw. In my classes and workshops I explore various different drawing mediums and techniques. There are a lot of great new mediums out there, things like water soluble graphite and inks, different pencils and types of charcoal that are all great fun to use and mix together. A typical class will begin with exploring a medium, testing it out, experimenting and playing with it. As I specialise in drawing animals and nature studies the subject matter is often an animal or found object. Subject matter is not limited to animal drawing but can include still life, botanical, interpretative and life drawing. Although photo reference may used,

I do not teach how to 'copy' a photo. I explore how to create a drawing from various types of references; how to create a composition that understands the subject and translates it to paper.

Photography and a variety of 'found' natural items that may include feathers, plants, shells, seed pods, the odd animal or human skull are used to create compositions and familiarise students with the different mediums and techniques. Reference photos, if required, are supplied and will be discussed in depth - or students may bring their own reference material if they wish. Class always include handout sheets and detail demonstrations. I like to listen to the student and help them achieve the drawing they desire, so if there is a particular subject the student wishes to draw this can be worked into the class structure. I am a very experienced art tutor and show the techniques I use in an easy to follow step by step approach: from tonal sketching to blocking in basic forms, how to approach colour using a limited tonal palette, adding layers tone or line to create realistic textures, to the all-important highlight and character that breathes life into your drawing. Hands on demonstrations and one-on-one tuition are a feature of my classes. To see more of my work, visit my website. Just 'google' Linda Weil Fine Art and you will be directed there.

Interview by Ray Wilson  
Manager



3 Wise Bettles



A Welcome Lunch Break





## Fiona Valentine and Colour In Your Life

VAS member Fiona Valentine made a TV episode with Colour In Your Life that went to air last February. You can see the episode, which features some beautiful street shots of the VAS, via the home page of her website [www.fionavalentine.com](http://www.fionavalentine.com). Members may be interested to hear in more detail about the filming experience from her perspective.

“Initially, Graeme contacted me via my LinkedIn profile and explained he had seen my website and invited me to be on the show. I was really excited about the opportunity as I had discovered the show a few months before and enjoyed it. He encouraged me to look into grants and sponsorship to help with the cost, which I did and received an Arts & Cultural Grant from Knox City Council and sponsorship from Nic Jones at my local art shop [www.theartshop.com.au](http://www.theartshop.com.au). I also approached Radio Eastern FM and had a live 20 minute interview about the upcoming show which was a wonderful experience. The host, Tricia Ziemer, was so interested, she signed up for one of my workshops!

I loved the film day – Graeme & Sophia were such fun to work with. Painting while smiling at cameras

and answering questions was NOT easy, but they were very helpful. My studio is too small to squeeze in a film crew, so we filmed in the hall at St Peter’s Eastern Hill, just across from the VAS. This enabled me to highlight the wonderful art history associated with this corner of Melbourne with the VAS, The Legend of Fire mural, St Peter’s stained glass and the direct teaching connections from Frederick McCubbin down to living artists including Joe Attard.

Sophia filmed and edited the episode so beautifully, I was really impressed when I saw the final product. I had put a lot of thought into planning and ideas about how it might go and she not only listened, but brought the ideas to life with wonderful imagination and skill. Graeme called me right after the episode went to air to say “congratulations” – he also messaged me during the week to say the show was repeated on the Sunday and the Wednesday, which was a nice bonus!

Doing the show has been a catalyst for other opportunities. Because of the grant application, I have a connection with my local council now and am invited to paint at local events, which helps me become better known. I’ve been recognised

several times by people in my community who stopped me in the street to say “Didn’t I see you on Colour In Your Life?” which was surprising. TV is a medium that people feel comfortable with, so it makes it easy to speak to a wide range of people about my painting in a whole new way. I now have a great marketing tool in the Youtube links and DVD’s of the show. Tricia at Eastern FM and I are talking about doing a regular monthly radio Art program and my daughter’s school have offered me an exhibition as a guest artist in May. These, along with other opportunities, make me feel this has been a worthwhile investment in my fledgling art career.”

Fiona Valentine

## Anchored to the easel



and harbour is still very apparent today.

An amazing array of craft are moored there, from flash new cruisers and yachts to beautiful and elegant older boats, some of them built by the local legend Jack Pompie who established his business on the banks of the creek in 1914.

22 members enjoyed the get together with a nice variety of study's being produced. The day started out cold and grey with a fairly stiff breeze coming off the waters of Port Philip Bay but fortunately it abated and we were even blessed with a bit of winter sunshine later in the day.

A café was close at hand and the option of fish and chips or a hotdog and coffee was very welcome for those who wanted it.

The destination for June's Paintout was Mordialloc Creek. Rusty mooring bollards and tatted rope. Grey weathered timber and ramshackle slipways. There's nothing quite like a small vessel harbour for providing a wealth of evocative maritime subjects and Mordialloc Creek has them in spades. The evidence of its history as a boat building precinct

Mordialloc Creek has been a popular venue for VAS Paintouts for many years. Most visits have focused on the older moorings and small jetties to the east of what is now known as Pompie's Bridge. This year, for a change of scenery, we set up on the west side nearer the mouth of the creek and Mordialloc pier.

A warming lunch, good onversation, a fascinating location and the opportunity to paint it....what could be better on a Sunday afternoon in winter?

John Hurlle  
Outdoor Activities Convenor

## en Maldon Air



Yes, there are times when we get cold, wet and shiver our way through paintings, but generally you know you're alive.

The visual lessons received by working direct from life are simply endless and that's why each month artists and friends of the VAS gather and share the great outdoors.

The many and varied painting sites that cater for groups of 2 dozen or so are almost perfect in some cases. Superb rustic settings abound and, more often than not, the striking focal point will be one of the beautiful buildings, imposing or modest, so typical of this part of Victoria.

The experience and stories that come from painting alongside good friends on location is special enough but to come away with artwork that has captured some of that is so wonderful.

There seems to be an unwritten list of the hundreds of reasons not to paint outdoors. I've experienced them all over the years. But for those among us who can't resist en plein air there are many magical reasons why we do.

The second of our 4 day trips for 2015 was another resounding success. The district up and around Maldon has never let us down over many visits before. Enough shelter when needed and easy access to all facilities makes this lovely historic township a magnificent place to plant an easel.

Highlights and places painted this year were Maldon township, Loddon River at Baringhup, Newstead township, Lake Cain Curran Hildene and Castlemaine Gaol.

Gregory R Smith  
Outdoor Co-ordinator





## En Plein Air Exhibition in Cato

16th July - 28th July 2015

This is an exhibition of work by the VAS members who get together once a month on a Sunday to paint at different locations around Melbourne. The number of artists who meet varies and sometimes even members from other societies join us. This activity is open to all members and any enquiries about it can be directed to John Hurle via the office.

Everyone who came in to see the exhibition seemed to enjoy it. I believe that the artists who do have a go and come along to paintouts

whether they are experienced or newbie's have great fun and enjoy the experience. In this exhibition, most of the work has been done on the paintout days and so many of the same subject can be seen however "no two works are alike because of the various strengths and styles of the artists and the delightful subject matter" (Anne Scott Pendlebury).

There were 31 artworks on display depicting a variety of interesting locations in and around Melbourne including Lorne, Maldon, Malmsbury, Mornington,

Williamstown and Yarraville.

The locations for next year's paintout's are already being planned by John Hurle and Greg Smith. I am looking forward to see what exciting places that have come up that will inspire works for next year's exhibition.

Ann Jolivet

## Painting with a Captured Audience

Every now and then the Outdoor Activities program throws up a venue with a difference.

The July paintout was a day spent at Melbourne Zoo, where the VAS members were allowed free entry thanks to Hans Van Weerd.

Hans is an artist/member who works at the Zoo and had pre-arranged a VAS visit back in 2014. The decision to have our event in July was in hope that there may be less of the public to contend with. This proved to be correct, but it may also have had something to do with the weather. It just happened to be one of Melbourne's coldest days for 2015.

Despite the forecast, 24 artists attended and certainly made good use of the sunny morning.

As most of us had spread out throughout the Zoo in search of our ideal subjects, it wasn't until lunchtime at the main café, when we were able to catch up with each other.

Not all had chosen to do animal studies, in fact some of the garden settings within the grounds are very picturesque and were painted on the day. Some of us found the Japanese Garden quite delightful.

Although I didn't get to see a lot of what was achieved on the day, I heard some very interesting tales about tails.

Sadly, come 2pm the weather changed and got colder and wetter. Other than those sketching in sheltered spots, many headed home early to the warmth of their own enclosures with preparation for appropriate feeding times.

The general public were well impressed by the VAS as well as the other animals on show.

Gregory Smith  
Outdoor Co-ordinator



# Cape York Adventure



In July I had the good fortune to be invited to the Laura Indigenous Dance Festival and to be taken by a blue eyed Aboriginal man to see 40,000 year old rock paintings. Laura is inland from Cooktown so in the rented Britz van we set off to overnight at one of the free camp sites at Mt Malloy then onto the arena just outside of the town.

event.

Mobs arrived from the Torres Strait Islands, from the tip of the Cape and all the way down to Cairns. They came in trucks, vans, boats and assorted transport. Sadly some didn't make it because of breakdowns, flooded water ways or unpassable roads. It is quite a feat to make it.

Heat, and thick bull dust which by the way was a pure white dust was flying until the water trucks arrived and damped down the tracks.

Let the dance begin with thumping drums, click sticks and the drone of the didgeridoo. The graceful, the fast, the warlike dances all made for the most exciting 3 day

The joy of performing was evident, even the little kids of about 4 were knee whacking to the utter excitement of the crowds.

On the final day the winner, the Lockhart River Kawadji Wimpa Dancers was announced and to celebrate we were all invited to dance the bird dance with them.

It was one of the most memorable events I have been to and believe me I have been to a few, but this was so pure and full of joy. The event was so well run by the Cairns Indigenous committee and thanks to them it was a drug and alcohol free event.

In 2 years' time the gathering of the mobs will again be amassing at Laura and I highly recommend anyone with a van, 4 wheel drive or caravan to get yourself up to Laura and experience an event to remember.

Meg Davoren-Honey OAM VAS

## The Maritime Exhibition

24th June to 7th July 2015



This dramatic exhibition featured a variety of marine inspired paintings of the sea, ships, liners, barges and birds, lots of water and cloudy skies.

The Thomas Sommerscales Award was presented to the winning entrant painted by Ray Hewitt,

Peoples Choice Award – Julien Bruere, John Lam

# Man Weiqi Exhibition

24th June - 7th July 2015

This Exhibition in the VAS upper galleries showcased influential shanshui paintings by Chinese painter Man Weiqi. Shanshui painting is a traditional form of Chinese painting that focuses on the raw natural beauty of China's landscapes.

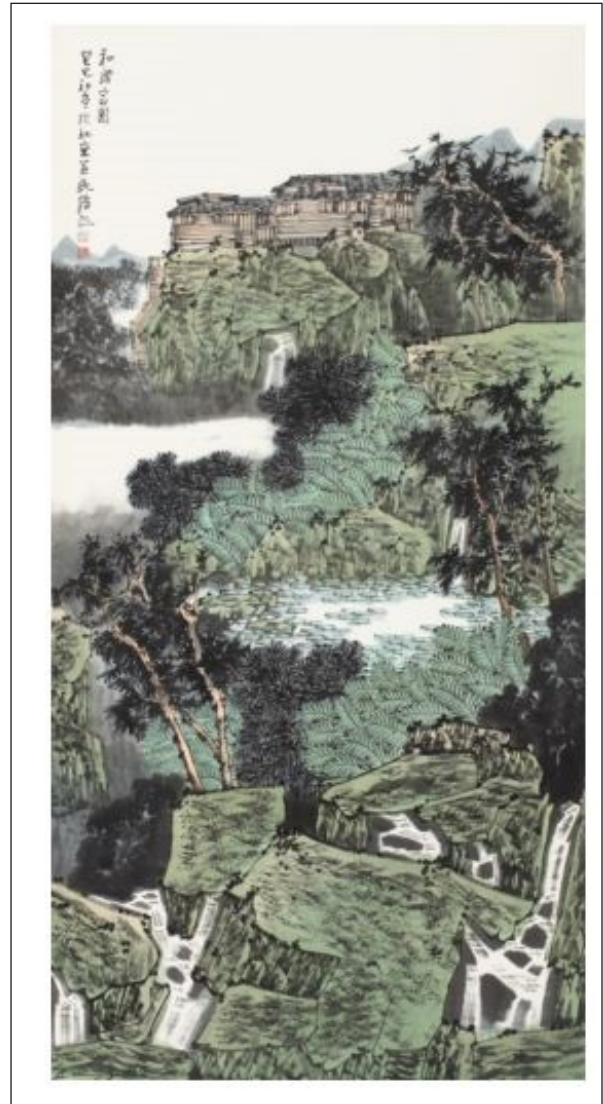
Mr Man Weiqi is widely considered one of China's great contemporary artists for his groundbreaking works in shanshui landscape painting. He is the Executive Vice-President and Master Tutor of the Chinese Painting Academy in the Chinese National Academy of Arts.

Mr Man Weiqi graduated from the PLA Academy of Arts, and is now a National Level Artist. His other positions include Executive Director

of the Institute of Chinese Painting, and judge of Senior Professional Title of Ministry of Culture. He is also part of the Traditional Chinese Painting Art Committee of Chinese Artists Association.



Eileen Mackley with artist Man Weiqi presenting his vase to VAS



Painting by Man Weiqi

## Student/Teachers Exhibition

17th - 28th July 2015

Over 120 paintings and sculptures by our talented student artists were on display. In addition to the awarding of encouragement awards a number of sales were made. Not only providing the opportunity of sales, the Student exhibition introduces our students to the "business of art". That is, the opportunity to package, price, title and frame their works to be hung amongst their peers.

The Teachers exhibition celebrated the work and expertise of our wonderful teachers and exemplified the quality of our teaching offering.

# VAS Building Maintenance



New rain-heads re-modelled to have the drainage holes at the bottom, not the side, have been manufactured and installed at 3 points across the front of the building which together with other plumbing works will make the front of the building watertight as a precursor to renovation works in the building.

Scaffolding had been erected in the courtyard to facilitate this maintenance work.

Further, quotations are being sought on re-roofing as well as renovating

the balcony.

A Development Plan for renovation works has been drafted and a Committee is working behind the scenes with a major push for fund raising imminent. Membership will be kept informed of developments as they occur.

Ray Wilson  
Manager

The above rain-head was discovered in the ceiling space of the western end of the roof facing Albert Street.

## New Receptionist - Chris Reade



an important contribution it continues to make, as part of the cultural fabric of Victoria.

My working life began in the early 1980's with the Victoria State Opera. I had 12 wonderful years as subscriptions officer, publicity assistant and finally as their marketing manager. I then began a family and over the past 11 years have developed my creative skills as a mosaic artist and teacher.

I have especially enjoyed working with many community groups as a mosaic artist. Following the terrible Black Saturday bushfires, living close by in Warrandyte, I wanted to reach out and help in some way. I established an art therapy mosaic group in St Andrews that

helped bushfire victims create their own mosaic artworks using their salvaged remnants of crockery and glass. With this group, I facilitated a bushfire recovery project, creating an eight metre mosaic seat, that tells their story of Black Saturday. This was a truly enriching experience for me and I still enjoy teaching mosaics in St Andrews.

As a result of my volunteer work, I was nominated and became a state finalist for the 'Local Hero Award' for community services, as part of 'Australian of the Year Awards' in 2013.

In the last month, I have met so many warm, friendly creative people at the VAS and look forward to meeting many more. Please come and say hello when you next visit.

Chris Reade

Working at the VAS reception desk, with a stunning view to St Patrick's cathedral and sitting in such a beautiful building, I feel incredibly blessed to have recently received this position.

Being passionate about art myself, I have been delighted to discover how vibrant the VAS is and what



# Online Membership subscriptions and Class Enrolments, up and running



The Victorian Artists' Society (VAS) has a new online membership system. The membership system can be accessed from either a link on the homepage of the VAS website or via the following URL: [www.victorianartistsociety.com.au/](http://www.victorianartistsociety.com.au/)

[members/massTemplate.php](#)

We suggest adding it to your favourites in your web browser.

Members and non-members are now able to access the online VAS MASS database which will enable:

- Joining the VAS as a member
- Logging in and updating membership details
- Renewal and payment of membership subscriptions online
- Enrolment and payment for VAS Term classes online (including provision for waiting lists) for both members and non-members
- Enrolment and payment for VAS Workshops online (including provision for waiting lists) for both members and non-members

The system may also be used to pay/receipt other things in the future including donations, gallery hire, painting sales and entry fees etc.

To get started, enter your member number (see membership card) then

password, members have been given a default password to log in with, which is their surname in lower case - this can be changed once logged in to another password.

Members are encouraged to visit the portal and check the information provided. At the very least ensure that a correct, current email address is provided.

For members without computer skills or access to a computer, the VAS administration will add/update information. However, family and friends are encouraged to assist wherever practicable.

It is also my pleasure to announce the winner of our membership competition Robyn Pridham. Congratulations to Robyn who was one of the many members who took the time to login to our new system and update her details.

Ray Wilson  
Manager

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Or call Vivi on 0408364084.



## MEMBERS ROOM EXHIBITIONS

The members room is an ideal location for VAS artists to have a small solo show. This well appointed gallery has plenty of natural light and receives a great deal of foot traffic.

We invite members to take up this opportunity to engage with the public on a more personal level.

Artists may hang up to 15 pieces depending on size (double hanging available) at \$10 a piece for one month. Usual VAS commission applies (27.5%)

# Treasure Trove of Paintings - dating back 100 years



**W**atercolour landscapes have always been a constant in my life, ever since that morning when us kids awoke to all those paintings stacked in our vestibule, safe, just inside our back door. My parents were busy negotiating where to hang them all. Too many paintings, too few walls. So off some went to Aunt Mary's house.

The artist was my grandfather, T.R.PRIDGEON. I never knew him since he died suddenly, aged 56, well before I was born. And so his prolific painting abruptly stopped and his studio door closed, with the stash of paintings shut away in his Victorian residence in Maryborough, a country town in central Victoria. It seems there was an unspoken family agreement that this body of work should be forever kept together. Until one night nearly three decades later when my father had a nightmare that every one of T.R.PRIDGEON's paintings was destroyed in a house fire. That's when, in the middle of the night,

he separated the collection, loading works from his childhood home into the back of his FC Holden station wagon to bring them to my childhood home.

And so we grew up surrounded by watercolours, not just ordinary watercolours, but landscapes so serene, so balanced, so true to rural central Victoria that I contemplated their execution in wonderment.

"The Old Warrior Gum", "The Pyrenees", "Road Near Avoca", "The Smithy", "Old Shop At Alma". How did this dead grandfather of mine get skies and clouds to look so magical in those paintings on our walls? How did he manage to depict the grandiose eucalypt with such poise? How could he capture fleeting light and shadow with such accuracy?

My father's sudden death a couple of years after he acquired these paintings ended any chance of exploring the rest of my grandfather's art collection. Dad's brother, an eccentric bachelor, now lived alone in the original T.R.PRIDGEON home. And there he stayed, a reclusive hoarder, for the next 40 years.

So this is why in 2012 when Uncle Stan died, our journey began. My family had always known of the paintings stored in this old dilapidated house, but just how many we had no idea of. The

last 4 years has been a process of discovery, sifting through the clutter accumulated over a century to discover the artistic creations of T.R.PRIDGEON. Room by room of this dark, dingy old house, beneath seven decades of dust and cobwebs, artworks including oil paintings from the early 1900s, were gradually unearthed. My father's premonition of a blaze of destruction had never eventuated, yet many paintings were still on the brink of irreparable decay. And so came the long haul of art conservation, with many works including frames requiring tedious hours of gentle rehabilitation.

Researching my grandfather's life led to another discovery. Alongside his lifelong friend and art contemporary, Harold Herbert, T.R.PRIDGEON had been an exhibiting member of the Victorian Artists' Society during the 1920s and 1930s. So where better for his retrospective Melbourne debut?

"Discovered Life Works of T.R.PRIDGEON" is in the Frater Gallery from 7th to 20th October 2015. Included are the watercolours exhibited at the VAS nearly 100 years ago. But the standout work is executed in oil, a 2x2 metre historical depiction of "THE BEGINNING OF WOOL GROWING IN AUSTRALIA. MACARTHUR LANDING MERINO SHEEP NEAR SYDNEY."

SALLY PRIDGEON, exhibition researcher and curator



**THE VICTORIAN  
ARTISTS SOCIETY**  
EST 1870

# 2015

## DATES TO REMEMBER

### NOVEMBER

- 24 Nov-8 Dec** Artist of the Year  
Send in days (by invitation only)
- 24 Nov** VAS Artist of the Year  
Opening at 7.00pm  
Members & guests are invited to attend
- 20 Nov-15 Dec** Little Treasures  
Send in days 18 & 19 November  
11.00am to 3.00pm

### DECEMBER

- 8** Collection day for Artist of the Year  
11.00am to 3.00pm
- 15** Collection day for Little Treasures  
11.00am to 3.00pm

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