

VAS MAGAZINE



July to September 2022



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July 2022 – September 2022

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The VAS Magazine is printed through the Office of the Victorian Artists Society. Opinions expressed herein are not necessarily those of the VAS Council or the editors of this magazine.

Articles from members will be appreciated. Contributions will be published on a strictly honorary basis and no payment will be made.

The Victorian Artists Society acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the land on which they meet. We pay our respects to Elders, past and present, and the Aboriginal Elders of other communities.

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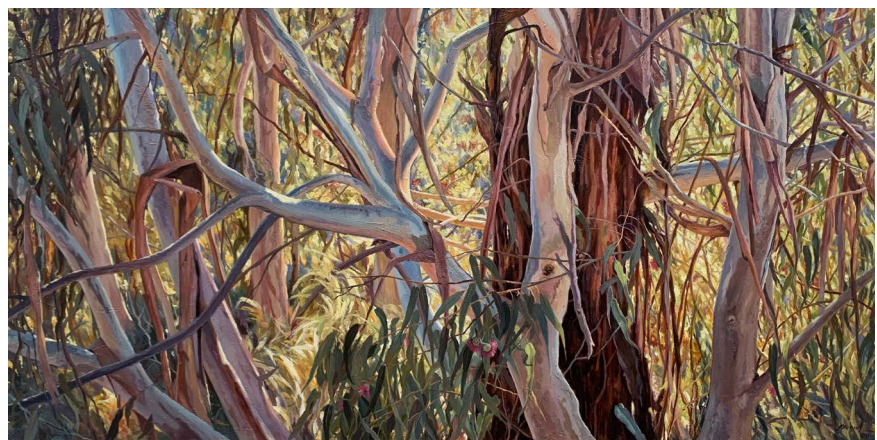
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Cover Image: ‘Senorous Bushland Calls’, oil by Gwendoline Krumins VAS, First Prize VAS 2022 Winter Select Exhibition

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Richard Impey FVAS MEd DipDd

It is very pleasing to report that our membership numbers are growing steadily as is our email subscribers list and our visitor numbers are also increasing. Our galleries are again solidly booked for 2022 exhibitions and 2023 is filling up fast.

Councillor John Hurlle (Convenor) and his team have been working diligently and relentlessly to sort, organise and rationalise our VAS Collection (Formally called the Permanent Collection). Clear policies are now in place including the process by which we accept or gracefully decline any donated artwork. In previous years this was a problem that resulted in works being accepted that were clearly not a good representation of a prominent VAS artist's body of work or represented a style or theme that we already had an abundance of examples. The limited storage space we have for the collection is now well organised and is very capably looked after in part by Anne Scott Pendlebury.

We were so fortunate to be able to arrange to have the Australian String Quartet perform at VAS. It was a sell out performance with beautiful music filling our galleries. It was especially appreciated that the ASQ offered members a free opportunity to hear them practice in the afternoon. I received a resounding positive response from those that attended. Hopefully will be able to arrange another performance for next year. On another note, we are on the lookout for other professional musicians to perform at VAS. If you have any ideas, please contact the office.

The VAS Retrospective is coming. Rosemary Noble is the Convenor of the VAS Retrospective. We intend to have this exhibition up and running in 2023. A lot of planning was done previously to coincide with our 150th anniversary. That planning has now been resurrected and action to move forward has commenced with much excitement and enthusiasm. If you would like to be involved in some capacity or another, please contact Lucy in the office.

Council decided to rename and expand our volunteer program. It is now called 'Friends of VAS'. Eileen Mackley spent a lot of time establishing and organising the processes required. She gathered many names and contact details and specific areas of interest of members she personally approached to add to our database of friends. Members contribute in all sorts of ways but it's nice to acknowledge that valuable assistance whenever the opportunity arises. You don't need to be a member to join the Friends of VAS. You might be only able to contribute a small amount of time here and there. All offers of assistance are gratefully received.

The VAS Magazine has been renamed to allow a simple easy to read title to grace the front cover. We are also steadily rebranding/simplifying a lot of our naming to have more effective branding like the ABC or NGV. It was thought that the committee should have more of a role in the production of the Magazine. Bruce Baldey is now the Convenor of the VAS Magazine. He has put a lot of time and effort into writing and gathering articles from a diverse range of members on a variety of interesting topics. Mark Russell in the office has been a major player in the running of the magazine for several years now and should be recognised for the huge effort he has put in. He is still very much an integral part of the magazine team, and we highly value his input and publishing skills. If you would like to write an article or have some ideas on topics please contact the office.

We are interested in establishing mutually beneficial partnerships with other organisations. I'm currently exploring the possibilities of developing 'Educational Partnerships' with secondary schools and tertiary institutes particularly with their Arts faculties. I'm currently in discussions with Haileybury College via their city campus. Lots of exciting things to come.

OSKAR KOKOSCHKA

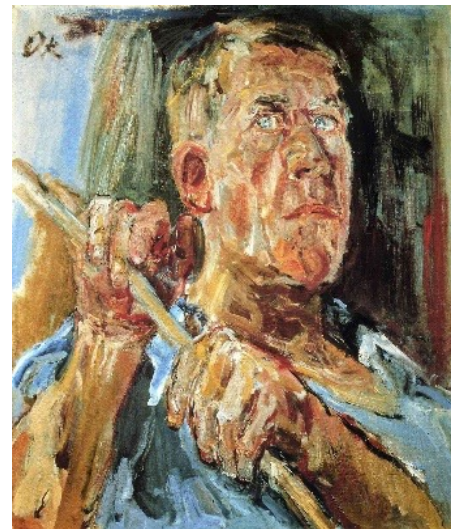
PORTRAIT OF A DEGENERATE

JD Park

Oskar Kokoschka (1886–1980) challenges brevity. An Expressionist artist, writer and teacher, his art evolved from figurative painting to avant garde Modernism. The journey is complicated as he survived actively into his nineties and led a peripatetic existence due to being a Jew in pre-war Austria. Never a mainstream artist, he had strong political, spiritual and philosophical views which were endlessly incompatible and added to his complexity.

Kokoschka was a student in Vienna where he was influenced by the Vienna Secession, more specifically and personally by the great Austrian architect Adolf Loos. He attended a school of design and drawing which it has been suggested explains why his early figurative paintings were technically naïve. He was essentially a product of the ‘arts and crafts movement’ rather than academy drawing and painting. His early paintings were largely portraits with expressive hands and a calm spiritual quality. Paint was applied very thinly and in places the canvas was left bare—he just dirtied the canvas. In his twenties this gave rise to a more agitated technique and a thicker application of paint. Self-portraits were prominent in his oeuvre.

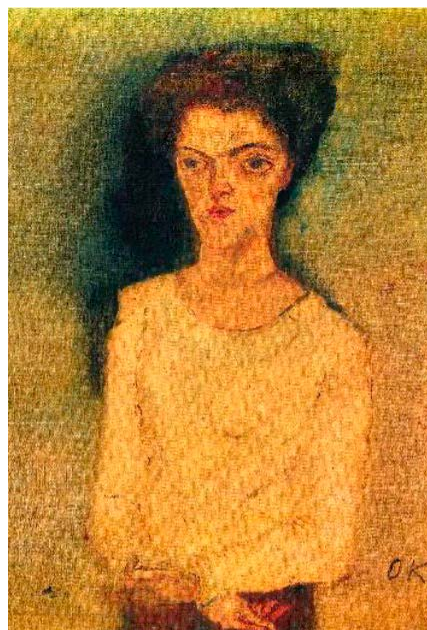
In passing one should note that there is a portrait of a woman signed by Kokoschka. It is dated 1909 and painted in a sophisticated neoclassical academy style at the same time as other images which were in a sketchy avant garde manner. This might suggest that rather than being naïve, these were a premeditated provocative construct.



'Self-portrait', 1948



1909



1908

There is much evidence that a young Kokoschka enjoyed playing the enfant terrible.

In 1912 Oskar Kokoschka delivered a seminal lecture entitled ‘On the nature of visions.’ He proposed that the accumulation of everyday visual experiences produces a repository of images stored with their emotional associations. These guide the artist, not as involuntary revelations from the unconscious, but as emotionally charged visions of inner imagination. The point was that these images had their genesis in things that had been collected from the material world. Kokoschka’s



'Bride of the Wind', 1914

ideas resolved a dilemma for art theorists in relation to Expressionism which was the apparent conflict between fidelity to appearance and truth to feelings. Kokoschka saw them as bound together in the vision.

At this time, he had a much-publicized relationship with the somewhat notorious Alma Mahler. This is significant in that it tells us something of the emotional intensity of Kokoschka. Alma left him distraught and he survived with a life size replica Alma doll—which he eventually beheaded! Whether the doll was an act of passion or provocation is uncertain—he loved to shock. It spawned several twin portraits of the artist and Alma. Perhaps his most famous is 'Bride of the Wind'. Robert Hughes describes this painting as, 'the last word on the subject of Expressionist love—devouring, narcissistic, and pitched to an abandoned fortissimo'.

In his forties he first painted landscapes which were not the Impressionist glimpse of nature. Early landscapes were a symbolic spiritual view of the Alpine world painted with streaks and fragments. A chaotic tangle of shapes like torn paper conveyed agitation and movement. Eventually he seemed to distil an artistic style which was a synthesis of line and colour. As he subsequently travelled widely, he painted immense vistas, often viewed from an elevated point of view. Harbour images were prominent.

Several other subjects attracted his attention, including music and animals. Images of opera houses, people moving to music and musicians such as Schoenberg—but never artists. Also, animals which, like 'The Tiger', he makes the sole subject or as significant bit players in his portraits. He gives these animals a unique identity just as he does for human subjects.

In 1934 with the rise of Fascist politics in Austria Kokoschka moved to Prague, the city of his Father and painted iconic images of the Charles Bridge and Tomas Masaryk, the first president of Czechoslovakia. In 1937 Hitler declared Kokoschka a degenerate artist and with great pride Oskar painted the self-portrait titled 'The Degenerate Artist'.

In 1938, aged 50, he fled to England with a young wife and settled in Polperro, where he painted many images of the harbour and a series of anti-Fascist images including 'The Crab' and 'The Red Egg'. The latter are powerful statements about



'Polperro II', 1949

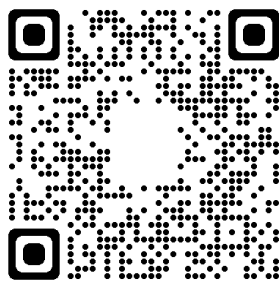
appeasement and the abandonment of Czechoslovakia and contain complex iconography. His impact in Britain was such that he received the CBE.

Eventually Kokoschka relocated to Switzerland where he died aged 94 years. His late works cover many subjects which include mythology, political images—Berlin and the wall and portraits of eminent people including Pablo Casals, Agatha Christie and the Furtwänglers who were his close friends.

In summary I would say that the variety and insights of Kokoschka's paintings are such that he never ceases to surprise and delight. It would be a very rigid conservative who couldn't find engaging and moving paintings in his extensive output. He demonstrates a long journey from figurative images to a very personal technique. He is sometimes linked to Max Beckman as a typical German Expressionist, both with very independent styles. Although characterized by the aficionados as Expressionist—not so viewed by Kokoschka himself who studiously avoided being pigeon holed.

Postscript

A very valuable picture of Kokoschka can be gained from his 2013 interview with Bregjie van der Laar at the Museum Broijmans, Rotterdam.



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SIR WILLIAM DOBELL

1899–1970

Nathan Moshinsky QC

The life and career of Sir William (Bill) Dobell spanned a period of social and artistic change in Australia. Dobell was an iconoclast, and his unconventional approach to portraiture provoked a Supreme Court challenge to the award of the Archibald prize to him. The case helped to establish his reputation as a leading modernist painter and to assist the acceptance of expressionist painting in Australia.

Born in 1899 in Cook's Hill, a working-class suburb of Newcastle, Dobell was the sixth surviving, and youngest child of Robert and Margaret Dobell. From childhood he became known as Bill. His father was a building contractor who lost a lot during the 1890's bank crash. His mother was a teenager when she married and came from one of Newcastle's earliest families.

To put the date of Dobell's birth into context, within a short time after his birth, soldiers from NSW made their way to board a ship to take part in the Boer war. Also, at this time Emile Zola was charged with criminal libel for his writing on behalf of Dreyfus.

Bill was a dreamy kid who attended Cooks Hill Public School. He was an average student whose love of art was recognised by at least one teacher. He once won a prize for a still life of a banana, and was put in the back seat of the classroom one week before the Newcastle Show came up, so that he could produce all the drawings for the class exhibition.

Dobell left school aged 14 and had a dozen jobs in the next two years, including a delivery boy, and a dog walloper. (He had to keep away the local dogs and jets of urine from the draper's goods displayed outside his shop).

At age 16, he was apprenticed to a local architect-Wallace Porter who was impressed by his drawings. He qualified as an architect but his ambition was to be a commercial artist or a newspaper cartoonist. He did not think of becoming a painter. However, he enrolled in a correspondence course in art, and night classes

in drawing at Newcastle Technical college.

Porter died in 1923 and after eight years working for him, Dobell decided to change his direction and moved to Sydney where he became employed as a draftsman by Wunderlich Ltd a company which made building materials and pressed ceilings.

In Sydney, Dobell enrolled in Julian Ashton's Art school where he practised drawing in night classes. A strong influence



'Mrs South Kensington', 1937

was George Lambert, who was one of the giants of Australian art. He was a country boy who became the only official artist of World War I, an illustrator of the Bulletin and who won the first Society of Artists' Travelling scholarship, which allowed him to go to Europe where he stayed for 20 years.

In 1929, Dobell won the Society of Artists Travelling scholarship and went to London. The scholarship provided a ticket on a ship

to Europe and 250 pounds annually for two years. Dobell spent a lot of time visiting the National Gallery in London and enrolled in the Slade school of Fine Art. Also, he visited Holland and studied in the Dutch museums where he saw a huge retrospective of Van Goghs and many Rembrandts. Daumier also drew his attention and another aspect of his personality responded to the charm of Renoir and the expressiveness of Soutine.

In 1930, he won first prize for figure painting for the *Nude Study* and second prize in draughtsmanship with a young German student.

Dobell's early paintings show an allegiance to naturalism. but he gradually adopted a less literal style.

During this period, his satirical style started to emerge in such paintings as *Mrs South Kensington*. This work depicts one of that host of mature women, with their air of self-importance, who styled themselves after Queen Mary. Resident in well-mannered flats or triple-storey terraces across Knightsbridge, Chelsea they emerged en masse upon the King's demise, and seemed to stand out like ornamental aspidistras among the reverential crowds beholding his funeral procession.

Dobell spent almost a decade in London including the grim years of the Great Depression. He was living on five pounds a week, staying in seedy bedsits in Pimlico and Bayswater, and as time went on, he was obliged to supplement his income in various ways. He worked as a film extra and in 1936–37 joined Arthur Murch and a bunch of Australian artists to decorate the Wool Pavilion for the great Glasgow Fair. But all the time he drew and painted the life he saw around him.

He had not made any real effort to establish himself as a painter in London, and had only exhibited three pictures.

Fearing the outbreak of war and concerned about his father's ill health he returned to Australia, in 1938.

In Sydney, Dobell's work came to the public eye in 1942 in an exhibition, together with the work of Margaret Preston, at the National Gallery of New South Wales.

In January 1944, Dobell was awarded the Archibald Prize for the preceding year by the Trustees of the (National) Art Gallery of New South Wales for this painting, *Portrait of an Artist*. This was a portrait of Joshua Smith, his friend and fellow artist with whom he had shared a tent while serving in the Civil Construction Corps.

Smith was a thin bony man with prominent features. The painting was born from friendship. Dobell produced a few sketches of Smith before he settled on the final pose. In this painting Smith's limbs are wrapped in a suit that looks tight on the wearer's arms. Sprouting from large hands are long, spidery fingers. He does not look relaxed and is sitting up straight. The most compelling aspect of the portrait is that elongated face, cantilevered by protruding ears, crowned with lank hair and highlighted by large doleful eyes. Dobell later said, '... I use an element of distortion in order to make the portrait more like the subject than he is himself ...'

In the 1920s and 1930s Australia was half a world away from the new movements in art in Europe. Australian artists were in the habit of travelling to Europe to further their arts education.

The widely accepted 'portrait' of Australia was the sun-drenched landscapes by artists like Roberts and Streeton.

During the 1930s interest in new movements in modern art had increased. In 1938, a group of artists in Melbourne has formed the Contemporary Art Society. On the eve of the Second World War, an exhibition of contemporary paintings, showing the works of leading European painters (such as Gauguin, Cezanne, Matisse and Van Gogh) was shown in Australia. It was sponsored by Sir Keith Murdoch, the Managing Director of the Melbourne Herald. However, the predominant style of painting was academic and tonal.

The Archibald prize is the first major prize for portraiture in Australian art and was first awarded in 1921 further to a bequest by Jules Francois Archibald, the editor of the Bulletin, who died in 1919. In his will, he outlined his desire for one tenth of his residuary estate to be held on trust and to pay the income thereof for an annual prize 'for the best portrait preferentially of some man or woman distinguished in Arts, Letters, Science or Politics painted by any artist resident in Australasia during the twelve months preceding the date fixed by the Trustees for sending in pictures ...'

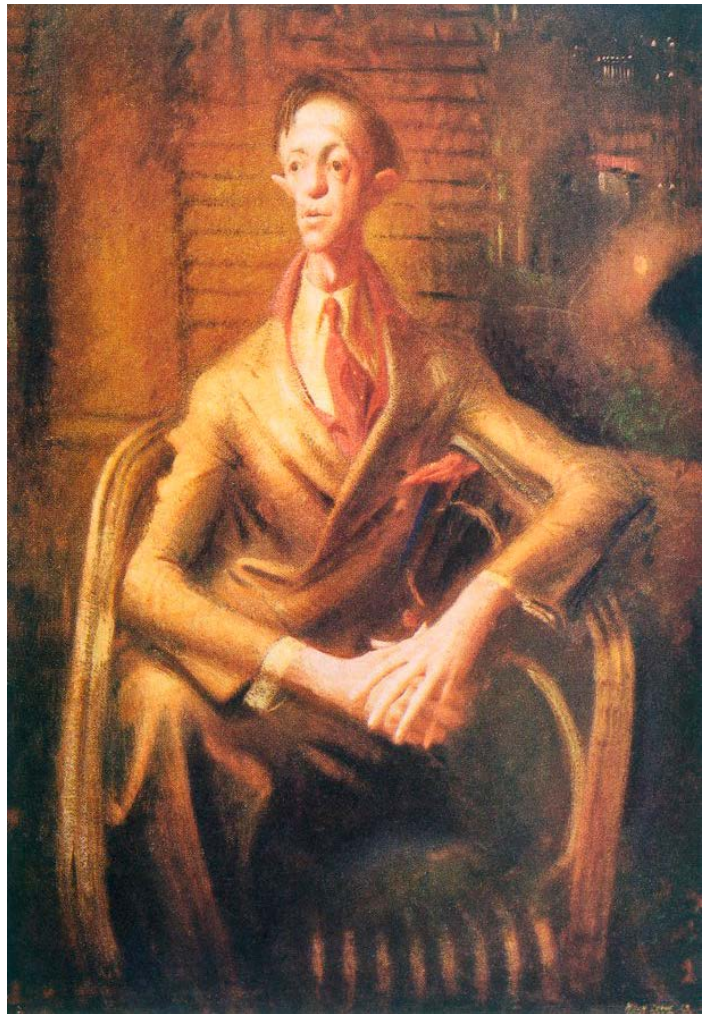
In 1943 prize money was almost 430 pounds. Considering a war was raging the average weekly wage was a little over 5 pounds. Today the prize money is \$100,000.

Prior to the award to Dobell, the winners of the Archibald prize had submitted works painted in the academic, strictly representational style and the subjects of these paintings were usually respectable members of the establishment.

The award to Dobell was accompanied by much controversy in the press. Melbourne art critic former director of the Gallery, James MacDonald wrote in *The Daily Mirror* that the painting was not a portrait at all, but 'a fantasy':

... even as a fantasy, it is pretty poor stuff, resorting to the age-old caricaturing dodge of deforming.

The Smith portrait proved to be the most controversial exhibition that the Sydney Art Gallery had mounted. Record crowds flocked to see Dobell's entries (3), standing 10 deep before the portrait. It had to be raised on the wall so it could be seen by more people, and still attendants had to stop people standing on benches to look over the heads of those in front. The Archibald show was so popular that it was given an extended run. When it closed, 140,000 visitors had seen the painting.



'Mr Joshua Smith', Oil on Canvas by William Dobell, Winner: Archibald Prize 1943

Two unsuccessful applicants (Mary Edwards, and Joseph Wolinski) obtained the fiat of the Attorney-General to apply for orders from the NSW Supreme Court that the award to Dobell infringed the terms of the Archibald trust and was therefore invalid. Sir Garfield Barwick KC, who was a leading King's counsel, and who subsequently became Attorney-General for the Commonwealth and Chief Justice of the High Court, represented them. He argued that the Joshua Smith portrait was a caricature and not a portrait, and that therefore the Trustees exceeded their powers in awarding the prize to Dobell.

Conflicting testimony by art experts was led before the Court. The Applicants witnesses referred to the portrait as a 'fantasy, and satirical caricature' or as a portrait of '... the body of a man who had died in that position and had remained in that position for a period of some months and it had dried up...' or as 'a biological absurdity'.

The Defendants' witnesses stated that the portrait showed a distinct likeness of the sitter although it was exaggerated and said that exaggeration was used by some great artists with respect to portraits made by them. Dobell was referred to as an expressionist who '... stresses the forms to express an emotion ...'.

Dobell gave evidence and said that he liked to know his sitter for at least three months before attempting to make studies for paintings of them. He had known Smith well for more than 12 months. In that time, he had noted Smith had 'a determination which amounted to stubbornness'.

Dobell stated that the Smith painting was mostly objectively faithful, but admitted the neck was elongated. He said that he was trying to paint a portrait in the tradition of Rembrandt, and to paint Smith's physical presence as he knew him.

Justice Roper who was the presiding judge dismissed the Applicants' claim and found for the Defendants.

He stated that the Applicants could succeed if they could establish that as a matter of objective fact, and not of mere opinion the picture is not a portrait, so that the opinion formed by the trustees to the contrary was founded on a wrong basis of fact and is not truly an opinion upon the question to which the minds of the trustees should have been directed.

He found that the evidence was overwhelming, that there is a proper basis for forming an intelligent opinion that the picture in question is a portrait.

His Honour found that the word 'portrait' as used in the will ... meant a pictorial representation of a person, painted by an artist. This definition denotes some degree of likeness is essential and for the purpose of achieving it the inclusion of the face of the subject is desirable and perhaps also essential.

His Honour found that the Smith painting,

... bears, nevertheless, a strong degree of likeness to the subject and is I think, undoubtedly, a pictorial representation of him. I find as a fact that it is a portrait, within the meaning of the word in the Will, and consequently the trustees did not err in admitting it to the competition ...

The Applicants did not pursue an appeal to the High Court, although appeal papers were lodged.

In 1949, Dobell sold the portrait of Joshua Smith to Adelaide businessman and art collector Sir Edward Hayward. It was hung in his home in Adelaide, until a fire in 1958 largely destroyed the residence and with it the painting. Hayward sent the charred canvas to Dobell, asking if he would restore it. Dobell declined, saying it was beyond hope.

After Dobell's death in 1972, Hayward sent the burnt canvas of Portrait of Joshua Smith to Kenneth Malcolm, an art restorer at the National Gallery in London. There, it was 're-painted' with the assistance of photographs. Although widely disparaged, the painting sold for \$222,500 at auction in Melbourne in 1998.

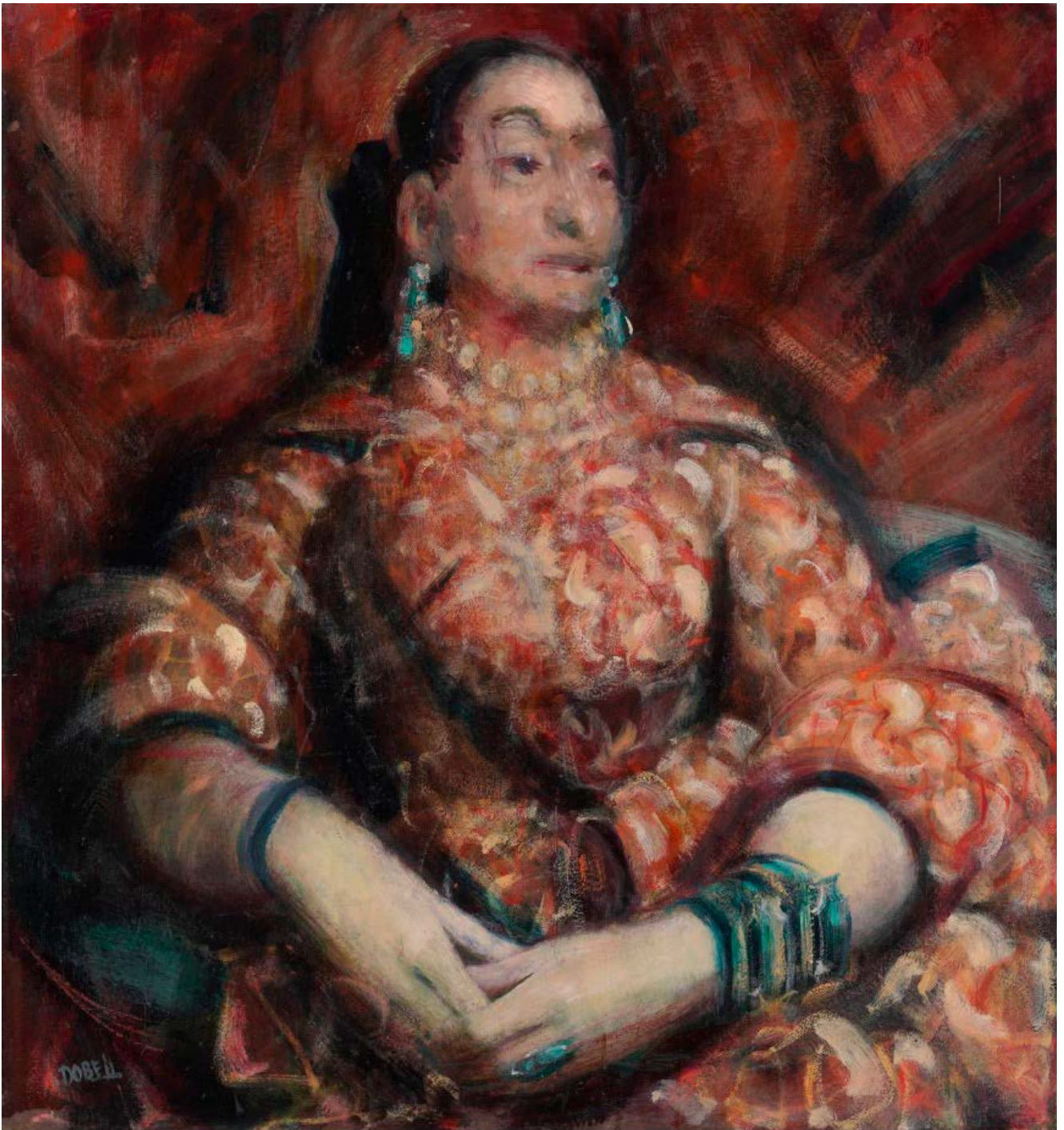
The strain and stress of the court case caused a serious decline in Dobell's health. He went to live with his sister, in a holiday house built by his father in Wangi Wangi on the picturesque shores of Lake Macquarie. He was welcomed by the local community and gradually regained his health.

His career as an artist was not over and he went on to paint many highly praised works including a portrait of the artist Margaret Olley. Echoing the spirit of Gainsborough and Renoir, this painting marked Dobell's return to portraiture, for which he was awarded his second Archibald prize.

Also, in 1957, he painted a famous portrait (page 11) of the business woman, Helena Rubinstein, which is an oil on composition board, and which now hangs in Raheen.



'Margaret Olley', 1948




'Helena Rubinstein', 1957

Dobell did many versions of this portrait. The final version showed Rubenstein as rich, bejewelled and monumental, even though the woman herself was quite slight. He perceived her as an alert and intelligent character, and projected it with bold brushwork.

Dobell continued to produce many fine portraits and landscapes.

Appointed OBE (1965), he was knighted in 1966. He died of hypertensive heart disease on 13 May 1970 at Wangi Wangi.

Dobell was an unpretentious, reserved and gentle man, with dark hair turning grey. John Hetherington wrote that, when he smiled, 'his grey-blue eyes are all but lost in nests of fine wrinkles, and the normally rather serious expression of his oval face becomes irresistibly quizzical'.

As a painter he made a significant contribution to the development of art in Australia. 

THE VAS BUILDING IN HISTORY

Bruce Baldey

The typically reserved Arthur Streeton (1861–1943) was an activist when it came to art politics. He was a member of the Victorian Artists Society Council with his friends and colleagues Tom Roberts (1856–1931) and Frederick ‘The Prof’ McCubbin (1855–1917). Throughout his career at home and abroad he argued publicly for the recognition and financial value of the work of his fellow professional artists. The VAS quickly outgrew the humble single storey studio on the property they acquired from the Crown in 1874. Due to a lack of space exhibitions were held in the Grosvenor Gallery, Collins Street (demolished mid 1970s) and the McArthur Gallery on the lower floor of the State Library, Swanston Street. The Society was divided on whether to rebuild in Albert Street or to rent larger space elsewhere. Streeton and his friends were strongly opposed to building at Albert Street believing that East Melbourne Hill was too far from the central city area and would not draw the public. His proposal was to build studios and schools at Albert Street and to retain exhibition space nearer to the centre of the city. The VAS called a meeting for the 30 September 1890 to vote on the matter. The Society was divided along traditional lines between the professional artists and what the professional artists regarded as the dilettantes who made up the Melbourne art establishment. Streeton, who was on his first visit to Sydney at the time, wrote beforehand to Roberts urging him to encourage the other artists including Alexander Colquhoun (1862–1941), John Ford Paterson (1851–1912) and Tom Humphrey (1858–1922) to ‘win this if only for the sake of ART’. Needless to say the Society decided to build on the Albert Street site and in 1892 the Builder William Massey completed the new VAS to a design which was an early example of the American Romanesque style in Victoria.

The design may have been unfairly attributed solely to Richard Speight Junior (1860–1927). Speight might well have conceived and even drawn the winning design however at the time he was in partnership with Harry Tompkins. In 1898 Tompkins would go on to form a partnership with his brother Frank (HW & FB Tompkins) and that Practice would become the foremost practitioners of the American Romanesque in Melbourne.

The style in Australia was strongly influenced by American Architects and in particular Henry Hobson Richardson (1838–1886). This marked a significant shift away from the customary colonial European cultural and architectural influence of classical and Gothic Revival styles. Whereas others had been content to design churches in a more or less faithful reproduction of medieval Romanesque, Richardson developed the Romanesque for use in a range of institutional and commercial buildings. He developed his own simplified version of the style which in hindsight was a precursor to that of the 20th century Modern Movement more commonly attributed to his successors Louis Sullivan and Frank Lloyd Wright. (Ref Thomas Crane Public Library, Mass 1880, Ames Free Library, New England 1883)



Ames Free Library, New England



Thomas Crane Public Library, MA

After Richardson's death the style was developed and popularised by other American Architects and reached Australia in the early 1890s, when it became commonly identified as the 'American Romanesque' style.

The style gained its strength from its qualities of simplicity and weighty robustness. A masonry style, it featured masonry walls and squat round-headed arches typically used over building entrances. The mature style made relatively small inroads into Victoria with the classical Romanesque and Gothic revival styles (eg, St Patricks and St Pauls Cathedrals, Melbourne) maintaining their popularity in Christian church construction.



Magistrates' Court, Bairnsdale

Melbourne architects were pioneers in the adoption of the American Romanesque in Australia. Because the style was also briefly favoured by the Victorian Public Works Department some examples can be found in regional Victoria. The Bairnsdale Magistrates' Court (1892–94) in East Gippsland, for example,

is one of the few remaining non-ecclesiastical examples of American Romanesque in Victoria. It is an amalgam of gables, towers and chimneys and features the same squat round arch as at the entrance to the VAS. Similar to the VAS it is an eclectic mix of diverse architectural influences including Arts and Crafts Movement, Art Nouveau and Romanesque revival trends in Australia. The front and side entrances of the Magistrates' Court have these large Richardson arches: the front arch rises from rock-faced stone courses, while the side arch incorporates large rock-faced voussoirs—voussoirs being the wedge-shaped stones used in arch construction. American Romanesque influenced the style of much competition work at the time, but, in the nature of the practice and business of architecture, left few examples in constructed buildings.



The Victorian Artists Society Building

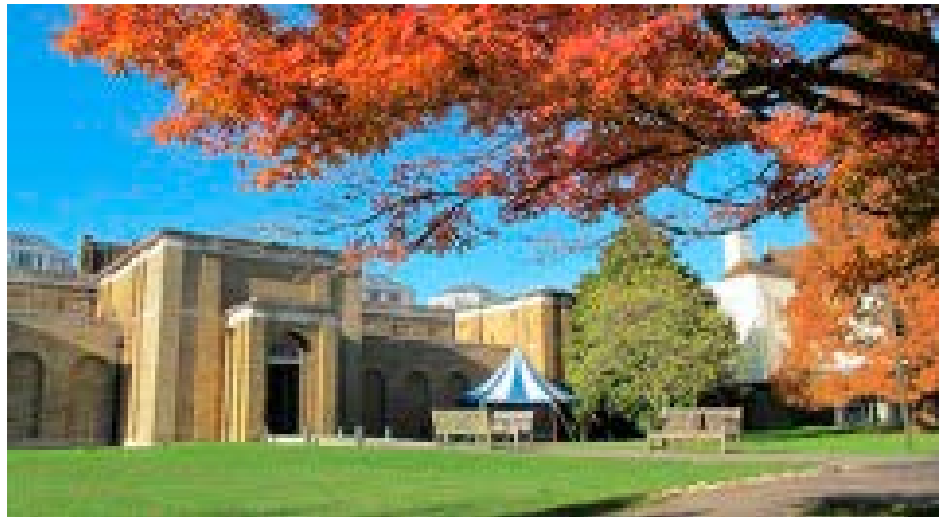
The Australian version of American Romanesque is very much a style of facades. The exterior of the VAS building may be derived from the New World however for the character and detailing of the interiors the Members and their Architect turned their attention back towards Victorian England.

The Dulwich Picture Gallery in South London was one of English Architect Sir John Soane's (1753–1837) pet projects, incorporating many of his idiosyncratic architectural devices. When completed in 1813, the building was the first independent purpose-built picture gallery created in the British Isles and it has retained an enduring

influence on generations of gallery designers. Dulwich features a linear arrangement of rooms lit by natural light from skylights. Plain arched openings link the galleries together. Soane's plan was not in itself innovative. It is similar to Charles Tatham's (1771–1842) Long Gallery in the west wing of Castle Howard, also a straight sequence of 5 rooms, details of which were published in 1811, and the arrangement of the top lighting, with lanterns above a big coved cornice, has a clear precedent in the Shakespeare Gallery in Pall Mall designed in 1798 by Soane's mentor George Dance (1741–1825). This building also has plain arched openings between rooms, very similar to those at Dulwich. Other examples of contemporary top-lit galleries are those by John Nash (1752–1835) at Attingham Park Picture gallery (1807) and the Corsham Gallery Wiltshire (1797).



Dulwich Picture Gallery, South London



But, for the first time, at Dulwich the gallery gains its independence from the private house; right from the start it was intended for public viewing. This basic arrangement—a sequence of connected rooms, top-lit as to leave large areas of blank wall on which to display the pictures became the standard model followed by Nineteenth and Twentieth century architects.

William Wilkins (1778–1839) adopted this principle for the design of the National Gallery London (1832) and in the twentieth century by Robert Venturi (1925–2018) and Denise Scott Brown (1931–) for the Sainsbury Wing extension (1991).


Dulwich is not only the prototype for the VAS galleries but also for the Art Gallery of Ballarat (1884) and the Bendigo Art Gallery (1887). Ballarat is the largest and oldest Gallery in regional Australia and the oldest purpose built public art gallery in Australia. Unlike the VAS Galleries, the Ballarat and Bendigo have both retained overhead natural lighting in conjunction with modern artificial lighting in the ceiling space. The combination of natural and artificial lighting is recognised as the optimum method for the general display of artwork. Perhaps one day the VAS will restore the natural light to our upstairs galleries and bring them back to life again. It will be a relatively straightforward task of removing the paint from the glazed ceiling panels and restoring translucent sheeting to the sections of roof.

In the day the VAS walls, like those currently in the NGV International and NGV Potter Galleries, were painted in rich earth and air colours.



Ballarat (left) and Bendigo (right) Art Galleries, Victoria

Contemporary Galleries seem to be either squeamish or hesitant when it comes to the colour of their walls preferring either neutral greys or just plain white; a hangover from the general sterility of the Modern Movement's preference for no colour at all. Too often painting the walls white avoids the more difficult task of choosing suitable colours. Taking the colour and natural light out of our galleries neuters the viewing environment. Visit any of the major art galleries in Australia and around the world and you will find their walls alive with natural colour.

Despite the early break Streeton returned time and time again throughout his career to exhibit individually and collectively at the VAS no doubt attracted by the quality of the space and light and the colour in the Galleries by now at the centre of City of Melbourne. 

References

Wray, C 1993, 'Arthur Streeton-Painter of Light,' Jacaranda Wiley

Davies, C 1985, 'Dulwich Picture Gallery', AJ Masters of Building, Architectural Press

LAURENCE SCOTT PENDLEBURY A REFLECTION ON HIS TIME AS VAS PRESIDENT

Anne Scott Pendlebury

My father, Laurence Scott Pendlebury was born in Melbourne in 1914. At the age of around 16, he was awarded a small bursary from art lover and philanthropist Sir Keith Murdoch (father of Rupert Murdoch).

This enabled him to attend the National Gallery School of Victoria, where for the next five years he studied under tutors Charles Wheeler and WB McInnes. He was just a generation away from the great Frederick McCubbin and was taught in the traditional National Gallery School manner.

Fellow students included young painters Sydney Nolan and Charlie Bush. It was here my father met fellow student Eleanor (Nornie) Gude—whom he married several years later.

The Gallery School was a place of discipline and rigorous standards—only pencil and charcoal were allowed to be used in the first year for example. Paint was for the more advanced student. A young doctor from the Royal Melbourne Hospital taught anatomy and the students became not only highly skilled at drawing, but as familiar with the skeletal and muscle system of the human body as any young trainee doctor. It put them all in good stead for competitive futures as professional artists.

Laurie joined the Army during the War and when it ended he secured a position as Junior Art Master at Swinburne Technical College, Melbourne—where he remained for over 30 years, eventually becoming Head of the Art School.

He was an excellent teacher and a devoted family man—patient, supportive and a man who encouraged discipline and hard work in his students and his children. He also found time to give his services to the Education Department as an Examiner as well as the VAS where he was a dedicated and active painter and Council member.

We children accompanied our parents—somewhat reluctantly—to the Society's Tuesday Opening nights—where we ran up and down the stairs; while artists such as Stanley Hammond, Jock Frater, Charles Bush and the colourful ruby lipped Paterson sisters Esther and Betty enjoyed good wine and discussed amongst themselves the merits and faults of the selection and the hanging of works. Exhibiting members commented loudly and often rudely as the guest Judge announced winners and runners up.

Back then, journalists from Melbourne's major daily papers attended Openings, and submitted reviews or 'write ups' later that night, to be published the next day.

The Exhibiting artists—my parents included—feverishly scanned the 'Age' and 'Sun' early the following morning, and later in the day there was also a mad dash for the evening paper, 'The Herald.'

In our household, there was frequent railing against many of these reviews or 'crits' as they were known.

● Mrs. Scott Pendlebury (Nornie Gude), wife of the Dunlop Art Contest winner, discusses her entry in the contest with Mrs. Reshid Bey, whose husband won a special £.50 award.





THIS WAS THE ECSTATIC SCENE when Mr. L. S. Pendlebury, of Caulfield, was congratulated by 4½-year-old daughter Anne for winning third prize of £100 in the Dunlop Art Contest yesterday. This prize winning picture "Suburban Station" is at the left of the excited pair.

In more than 500 paintings from all parts of Australia, some of them specially executed for the Dunlop contest, none was considered worthy of the first prize of £300. The second prize was awarded to L. Solomon, of Narrabeen, for his painting "The Yabbies' Pool." The judges specially recommended Mr. Ramon Horsfield, of Dundas-pl., Albert Park, for a prize of £100 for "Studio Scene."

Judges were Mr. William Dargie and Mr. Will Ashton, artists, Mr. C. S. Booth, of Melbourne, Mr. E. W. Hayward, of Adelaide, and Mr. J. R. McGregor, of Sydney. They took five days to select the prize winners. Mr. Ashton said he regretted the Dunlop contest had not aroused more interest among better known artists and that there was not greater in-

terest in the Australian scene. Other prizes were: £75 to Kenneth Jack, East St. Kilda, for "Mornington Pier," and to J. Hick, Adelaide, for "Packing Up;" £50 each to Mary McLeish, Malvern, for "Port Melbourne," R. M. McCann, Ivanhoe, for "Springtime," and A. Riebe, South Australia, for "The Sand Pit." Sixty of the exhibits are on show at Tye's Gallery.

Sun Art Critic, Alan Warren, says: Mediocrity and complacency lower the standards of Dunlop's Australia-wide contest. It is a mixed bag of moderns and conservatives—a depressing spectacle in which a majority of the exhibitors seem content to echo the past. Significant art is timeless, but pictures on a calendar are not — fortunately.

The writers were knowledgeable and highly regarded professional journalists—author Geoffrey Hutton, well known writer Alan McCulloch, art and music critic John Sinclair and even VAS member Arnold Shore took time out to write reviews of our exhibitions.

On the Sunday afternoon which followed the Opening nights, many artists once again gathered upstairs at 'the Vics' (as it was fondly called).

More red wine was consumed and a heated post-mortem took place over what 'the damned critics' had said, or not said or should have said, or didn't have the sense to say or forgot to say etc.

Some members sought refuge in too much red wine on those Sunday afternoons and occasionally punches were

thrown. There was heated discussion and threats to write to the newspaper Editors—which frequently did happen. There were equally angry words directed at the VAS Management and Council for allowing these 'philistine scribblers' into the building in the first place.

By late afternoon, the artists began to drift away, often staggering down the stairs—perhaps to drown their sorrows further up at Jimmy Watson's in Carlton where they would continue discussing the failings of the critics and how the Society could better run Opening nights.

As a reward for patiently joining our parents on these afternoons, a double headed icecream on the way home was more than adequate compensation for what had been a fairly boring afternoon for us children. However, for many of the grown ups present, I feel sure they were afternoons which left behind painful memories, severed friendships and sore heads.

Until the next time ...

In 1960 Laurie became President and held this position for the next couple of years.

He was a highly regarded President—warm, personable, and highly conscientious.

Although by day he was Senior Art Master at Swinburne, he always gave a generous amount of time—weekends and evenings—to the VAS. As well as this, he had a handful of private adult students whom he tutored in the family studio of our home every week.

Dad loved language and the use of words, and during his Presidency put together a small pamphlet, encouraging members to donate to a Fundraising Campaign. It was written in an eloquent and persuasive style—and it is on record that five thousand pounds was raised—which I believe contributed to the first round of some very modest—but necessary—renovations and improvements within the building.

Just before taking up the office of President, my parents went on a 6-month trip to the UK and Europe. Mother had won the National Gallery Student Travelling Scholarship in 1941, but was unable to travel due to the War. But by 1959/60 my young brother and I were old enough to be left in the care of a relative, and my parents sailed abroad with their painting kits.

My father had some modest financial support from Swinburne, as well as letters of introduction from the Premier of Victoria to various European Galleries and Academies.

Whilst abroad, Laurie and Nornie visited many tertiary Institutions to look at the direction fine art was heading in the world of teaching. My father kept accurate records of all the visits to schools and institutions, and on their return he put in a full report to Swinburne as well as giving a number of talks and lectures around Melbourne.

Whilst they travelled through Europe and England, they both kept visual diaries using top quality artists' sketch pads. Dad worked in gouache and mother in watercolour and ink. They travelled widely and painted most days, filling a number of sketch books. Dad's handling of this medium was supremely skilled; and once back in Melbourne he only painted one or two small works in oils based on rough sketches made during the trip. He preferred to work quickly 'in situ' in gouache—before jumping onto the next bus or train to continue their travelling.

Dad liked the medium of gouache—he said it dried quite quickly in difficult conditions—and apparently the spring and summer they were away, was a wet one in the northern hemisphere.

When they returned home, his beautiful plein air works were carefully stored away and he quickly resumed his teaching and the ongoing responsibilities at VAS.

For the next few decades these gouache works from this European study trip were carefully kept in various desks—glanced at occasionally by only a handful of interested family members.

So in March this year it occurred to me that it would be lovely to bring them out of storage, have them framed and show them in at the VAS—to acknowledge the six decades since Laurie's time here as President.

It was a small Exhibition and I think reflected well the style of painting father was doing during the early 60s.

I feel many members, students and visitors who visited our show in the Mackley Members room, appreciated and enjoyed not only the subject matter but also my father's masterly technique and handling of paint.



Anne Scott Pendlebury in front of an early family oil study by LS Pendlebury Mother (Nornie Gude) seated, with 2 year old Andrew and 7 year old Anne

The sales were gratifying—artists and their families never take a sale for granted—and when artists purchase the work of other artists it is the greatest compliment.

I feel this small 'Reflective' Exhibition was the right tribute with which to remember dad as VAS artist, Councillor and President all those years ago.



WILLIAM BECKWITH MCINNES

AN ARTIST'S LIFE

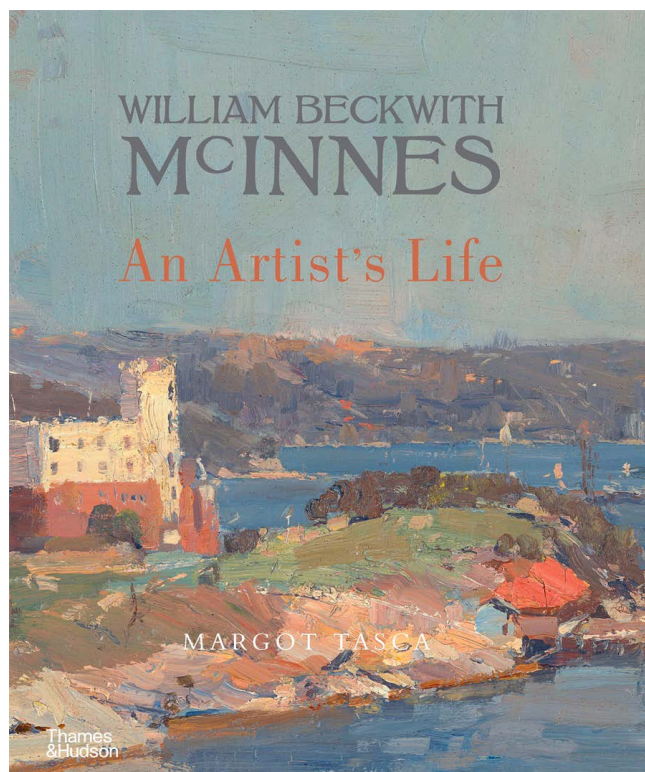
Margot Tasca, Thames & Hudson, 2022

R Noble


A copy of this beautiful book was recently donated to the VAS library by the family of William B McInnes and its inclusion is an important addition to our library of the works of former members whose names stand tall in the history of Australian painting.

Although the McInnes name is not as highly recognised today as his forerunners and contemporaries at VAS, such as McCubbin, Streeton, Roberts and Meldrum, Perceval and Boyd, his contribution to our art history was considerable.

He is first and foremost known as a portraitist, having won the Archibald Prize for Portraiture seven times between its inception in 1921 and his death in 1939. However he was also an accomplished landscape painter and in fact won the Wynne Prize for Australian Landscape Painting with his 1918 painting 'The Grey Road' (Art Gallery of NSW).



William 'Billy' McInnes was born in Melbourne in 1889 and was fascinated by drawing from early childhood. He attended the National Gallery of Victoria Art School under the tutelage of Frederick McCubbin and in fact remained on as Drawing Master and then Painting Master until shortly before his death in 1939. The book comprehensively covers the highlights of his life and work and is illustrated by many of his works held in both public and private collections.

William B McInnes had a long and close association with the Victorian Artists Society, having been a council member for much of his life until his death in 1939. Despite his many important positions in Melbourne's art scene at the time as well as the many awards and commissions he received, his work is largely overlooked today. This beautiful book will go far to redress this oversight. 



Left: 'Miss Collins', 1924 Archibald Winner, Collection of the Art Gallery of South Australia; Right: 'Drifting cloud' 1916, Collection of the Castlemaine Art Museum

A TRANSITIONAL EXPERIENCE

Mark Bagally

My life so far has been rich and full. I've experienced plenty, from the very worst of humanity to the very best and a whole assortment in between. On my retirement from Victoria Police, after 35 years, my transition to full-time artist was swift with essentially no down-time in between. Everybody, without exception has a story to tell. This is a bit of my story.

If I go right back to my younger years shuffling my way through school, I have little recollection of being overly artistic or creative as such. I can remember having irregular bursts, where I would draw wacky images very similar to Dr Seuss illustrations where everyday items are stacked on top of one another and the cat tries to balance it all. I can remember the thrill of being given a set of the then supreme, Derwent coloured pencils. I used them to draw up the plans for my dad's soon to be constructed chicken coop. He told me that the plans had to be good enough to present to council to get a building permit, which of course was nonsense, but I remember labouring over the task for hours, with my new pencils. I was so relieved when the plans came back from council stamped approved. That's pretty much all I can remember about my early artistic years.

My calling to be a policeman came when I was quite young. Each year Victoria Police would have an intake of cadets. You had to be 16 years of age and undergo a rigorous selection process. The benefits were many for those successful applicants. You got to finish years 11 and 12 at the police academy whilst at the same time engage in a variety of physical, operational and administrative activities designed to prepare you for transition to graduating as a fully sworn police member on turning 18 years of age. I was 15 years old when I decided that was the life for me. I worked very hard in preparation for the intake. I surrendered many typical 15-year-old interests, both good and not so good, to concentrate all my energies for the task ahead. I was not a very good student. I was bright, but easily distracted and quite academically lazy. One of the areas I knew I had to smarten up in was spelling. I spent many hours practicing and drove the family mad having them test me. In the end all the hard work was to no avail. Because of my age, I missed the yearly intake. I was six weeks too young to apply. Of course, I was devastated and waiting another year seemed a lifetime away. I promptly left school at 15 years of age and commenced and completed a trade in cabinet making. On finishing my apprenticeship, I joined Victoria Police at 20 years old.

For the next 35 years I was privileged to have experienced life in all its many facets. A former Chief Commissioner told us, as graduating police members, 'It's a front row seat to the greatest show on earth'. He wasn't wrong about that. I was involved in and exposed to a great deal over the years. I can say, hand on heart, that I enjoyed every aspect of it, from the day I joined until the day I retired. In my early years as a uniformed constable my career direction spun quickly towards crime investigation and was cemented by a couple of years policing St Kilda in the 1980s. In the late 80s, following a demanding and rigorous process, I was appointed to the Criminal Investigation Branch as a detective. I held the title of detective for my entire career, except for 2 years where I had a brief return to uniform on being promoted to sergeant. In addition to conducting investigations attached to various inner city Crime Investigation Units, I was also appointed to some of the higher profile state crime squads. In the 90s I was attached to both the Rape and Armed Robbery Squads. The Rape Squad had a state-wide responsibility to investigate high level crimes perpetrated by serial rapists



Plein Air painting in the back blocks of Anglesea, VIC



Abseiling Mount Arapiles during a team building exercise 1999



As a Homicide Detective Sergeant

and cases where the victim and offender were not known to each other. Likewise, the Armed Robbery Squad had a state-wide responsibility to track down gun-toting violent and dangerous criminals doing hold-ups on banks, financial institutions, payrolls and cash security vans. The work was dangerous but rewarding. In the late 90s I was appointed as an instructor on the directing staff at the Victoria Police Detective Training School before returning to the State Crime Squads as a Detective Sergeant at the Drug Squad followed thereafter by appointment to the Homicide Squad. Homicide investigation

is certainly not everyone's cup of tea. Detectives in the squad were not only highly skilled and tenacious investigators, but they also needed steely nerves and the mental strength to withstand constant exposure to scenes of violent death and just as regular attendance at autopsies. They also need the capacity to manage extremely heavy workloads and long hours.

Between 2004 and 2015 I remained at the rank of detective sergeant, working around the inner-city suburbs of Collingwood, Fitzroy and Richmond and finishing up with my last 8 years at the Sunshine Crime Investigation Unit.

Working in these areas was both physically and mentally demanding with constant and at times unrelenting pressure. My working hours were long and irregular and mostly fueled by adrenaline. I had a busy and very supportive wife and a young family and of course plenty of personal challenges thrown into the mix. Irrespective of the regular exposure to death, destruction and violence in all its forms, conducting investigations in those environments could be highly fulfilling, as bizarre as it sounds.

So how did my transition from madness and mayhem to artist occur? Quite serendipitously in fact.

Around 1998, I was going through a particularly busy period at work. Between my younger years sketching Dr Seuss images up until 1998, art as such, had never entered my mind in any way shape or form. One particular morning I literally woke up with a strong desire to paint something. I'm not sure what epiphany had subconsciously triggered that craving. It's a mystery I simply can't explain. In any event, later that morning, I found myself wandering aimlessly around an art supplies store buying paints, brushes and a board. I had no idea what I was buying really. I didn't know anything about colour mixing or the difference between paints or mediums. In the end I placed a lot of faith in the store attendant. I went home and painted a portrait of my son. I worked on it over several weeks a bit at a time. I wasn't overly displeased with the result. More importantly, I found I was totally absorbed and captivated when applying paint and totally free from pondering work. It was quite therapeutic. At that stage it hadn't entered my head to take classes and there was no real access to internet tutorials such as YouTube. Looking back, I wished I had committed to some type of art class.

So, in the years between this life-altering event and my retirement, I dabbled around with painting and had intermittent outbursts of artistic excitement but nothing serious. I tried a few different things, read some books and bought a few arts related CDs. I can say I was somewhat hooked, but I had no idea where I was going with it. As time went on, the only aspect of my art that I was sure about was my preference of oil over acrylic. I hadn't tried watercolour, thinking it was far too difficult.

Fast forward to my retirement and transition to artist. Free from the encumbrances of work, I could now get a real run-on learning to paint properly. Not being interested in a life of leisure, I had decided art was going to be my next career, albeit I was starting later in life. The beauty of art is that you can start at any age. I set myself up in the garage at home and commenced to paint with gusto. The change in career had also coincided with sea change and a move to the Surf Coast of Victoria. I was immediately drawn to painting seascapes given my proximity to the Great Ocean Road.



Relaxing by the Murray River, Echuca during a plein air session

I initially took a couple of art classes and a few short workshops, all of which I picked up bits and pieces from but to be honest none of these took my art to the next level. I felt I needed tuition that was more intense and challenging. I attended a week-long workshop at Katoomba in the Blue Mountains with John Wilson, a successful and distinguished Australian landscape painter and teacher. That week completely changed and influenced my painting and, in my view, took my work to that next level. I decided from that point on, to spend the money and only attend classes and workshops tutored by artists of note that would provide ‘bang for buck’ in progressing my work. I have so much respect and admiration for the talented artists who have made a full-time career out of art and done the hard yards to get where they are. So far along my artistic journey, I’ve met some fabulous people, generous with their time and advice and completely unpretentious.

Workshops and classes are but a small part of my self-education. I now have a purpose-built studio at home in which I immerse myself in all sorts of artistic learning, pretty much every day. For the serious artist I think a disciplined approach to self-education is important. I spend many hours practicing and experimenting with colour mixing, reading art books (of which I’m an avid collector) watching and listening to other artists and of course doing plenty of brush miles. Although I’m predominantly an oil painter, I have over the last couple of years become totally hooked on watercolour as well. I really enjoy painting en plein air, in either medium and routinely travel around Victoria and New South Wales in pursuit of that pastime.

To broaden my knowledge and build an artistic network of colleagues and friends, I’ve joined several societies. At the forefront is my membership and appointment to Council of the Victorian Artists Society. I’m excited about where this society is heading and I’m learning plenty along the way.

For me the transition is now complete!



Painting with friends on the Macquarie River at the Bathurst Art Retreat, New South Wales.

THE VAS COLLECTION

A NEW NAME AND A NEW BEGINNING

John Hurlle

At last year's AGM, a new management policy for the Permanent Collection was tabled and passed. The new policy gives the collection convenors and committee the means to effectively transform the collection into a more balanced and high-quality representation of the VAS historically, currently, and into the future.

The full 150-year history of our beloved Victorian Artists' Society encompasses a number of genres, and a great many significant artists who helped shape those defining periods in Australian art. The collection convenors have long felt there have been deficiencies in both the balanced representation of our society and frankly, the level of quality and appeal in some respects.

We want the collection to be viewed and enjoyed by an increasingly wider audience and certainly not just be tucked away in storage.

With the digital age we inhabit today, there is the scope to bring the collection out in a way not limited by available wall space. Plans are afoot to make the collection viewable on our website with detailed biographies of the artists and their place within the VAS family and the art world in general.

Our sculpture collection will feature in this as well. Suitably photographed or filmed, our sculptures can take their place alongside the two-dimensional works and be made more accessible for the appreciation they deserve.

It's our hope the collection can play a more significant part in promoting our society and act as a valuable resource of reference and learning for our students, members, and the public

Above all, an art collection needs to be a visual feast to enjoy and uplift. A collection of work that inspires. It is our desire to raise the standard of the collection to sit alongside and be comparable to the many other private and public collections so appreciated by art lovers.

An enormous amount of research and discussion has been undertaken by the team to understand what we have in the collection and what we need to bring into it.

The most difficult aspect of implementing this new approach was in making the decision to remove works from the collection. It is a sensitive area. The establishment and growth of the collection has been primarily via donation of work over many years.

The generosity of donors has always been appreciated. Reliance on unsolicited donation however, brings with it a randomness and lack of meaningful control over the collection's growth and curatorship. With limited storage space available, the size of the collection reached saturation point many years ago.

In order to make possible the introduction of new works we had to reduce the collection size significantly. We employed a carefully considered set of measures by which we selected works to be either returned to the original donors, their families or, where this was not possible, sold at auction.

For example, one of the first criteria used was to identify artists who were represented by more than one or two works. In these cases, the best representative work or works were retained and the remainder removed. At present 31 paintings have been de-accessed.

The collection team have wasted no time in working toward bringing together a collection we, the VAS members, can take pride in and enjoy. To mark the beginning of our new approach, we have changed the name from VAS Permanent Collection to The VAS Collection. We feel that there is a more contemporary feel to this name and perhaps better reflects a collection that, while retaining such vital links to our history, also has room to breathe and evolve.

The convenors have adopted a comprehensive set of criteria for a painting or other work of art to be added to the collection.

The key points are:

1. Artistic Merit
2. Presentation
3. Representation of a person of note to the VAS currently or historically
4. Representation of a genre, style, medium or era relevant to the society past or present

For a work to be recommended to Council for acquisition it needs to adequately meet all of these criteria.

Other factors taken into account are:

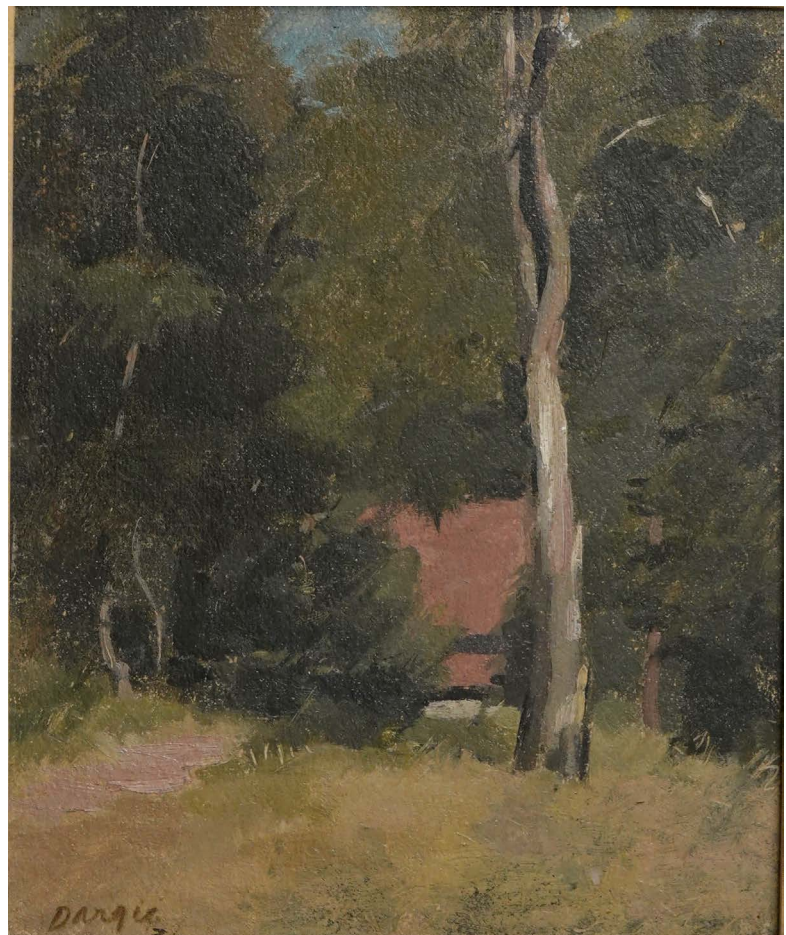
5. Whether the artist is already represented in the collection and by how many works
6. How the work will 'fit' within the collection. In other words, will it contribute to maintaining the desired balance of genre, era and subject matter.

These last two criteria are equally important and have often not been considered in the past, leading to what had become a rather patchy and uneven collection.

The new management policy provides a modest but vital fund to draw from, enabling us to seek work by specific artists connected to the VAS, past and present. This means that we can be pro-active in sourcing works through auction houses or by direct approach to purchase at exhibitions of these artist's work. The fund will also be used to undertake repair or reframing of works retained in the collection and other 'housekeeping' aspects where required.

The 'Wayne Leslie—An Affair of The Art' exhibition held at the VAS in July provided us with an exciting first foray into this new approach to acquiring work for the collection. We gathered together to view the exhibition and choose a painting to purchase. After much consideration, we settled on a small Sir William Dargie tonal landscape 'Ferntree Gully'. Dargie is of course one of Australia's most highly regarded and awarded artists with a strong connection to the VAS.

The asking price for this work was \$1,200. We felt confident it would be money well spent! Ironically, after confirming to Wayne Leslie our readiness to buy, he generously decided to forego payment and donate the work to the collection. This was an unexpected but very welcome development and one we gratefully accepted on behalf of the society.



'Ferntree Gully' by Sir William Dargie

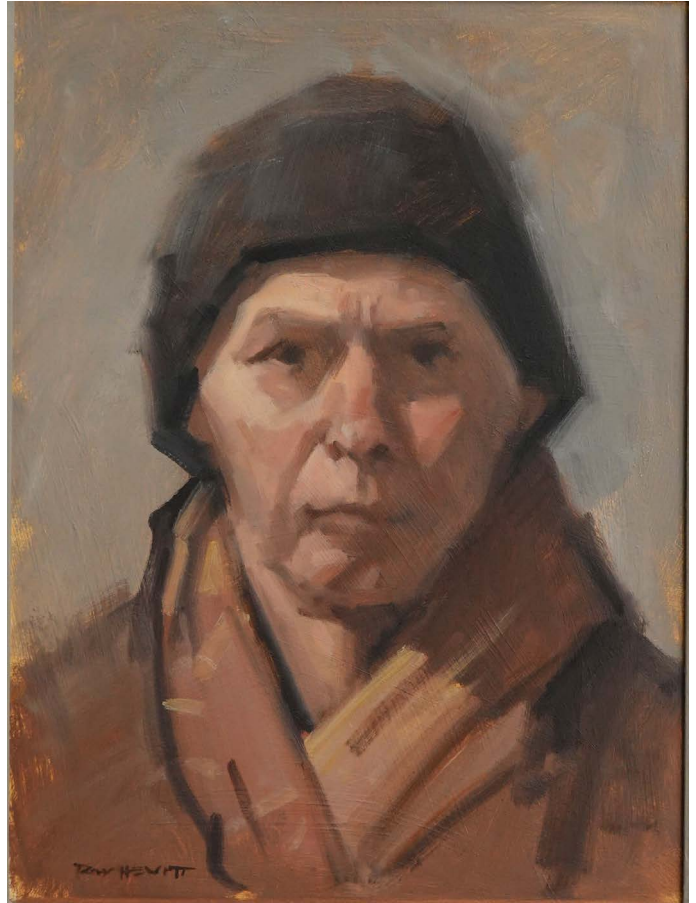
The Dargie is one of four new works brought into the collection so far this year.

A compelling self-portrait by Ray Hewitt VAS FVAS was acquired by donation from the artist. It's a captivating study that locks the viewer in Ray's steady gaze. Created with the deft handed economy of brushwork so typical of Ray's style it is a wonderful addition.

Ray is a highly credentialed member of the VAS, known and admired by so many.

Four time recipient of the VAS Artist Of The Year award, multiple prize winner and highly regarded teacher, he is long overdue for representation in our collection.

A landscape, 'Otways Clearing' by Peter Smales was acquired, also by donation from the artist. An eminent Melbourne painter, Peter has a long association with the VAS having held 6 solo exhibitions and teaching at the VAS school for 10 years up to 2008. The painting was completed en plein air and is a colourful, light filled work in the impressionistic style.



'Self Portrait' by Ray Hewitt VAS FVAS

A small watercolour and gouache cast study, 'After Dionysus' by John McCormick Farmer was generously donated by a private collector, Mr Bill Filipovski.

McCormick Farmer was a highly regarded artist strongly influenced by Max Meldrum. Despite being a member of the breakaway Max Meldrum Group, he returned to the VAS, going on to become an active member and frequent exhibitor in VAS exhibitions.

The work is a very well executed study and, apart from its inherent appeal, could be a useful teaching aid for our painting and drawing classes.

This year has been an exciting start to the re-invigoration of the VAS Collection, but one that is founded on years of planning and hard graft.

I must acknowledge the incredible amount of work the co-members of the collection committee have so willingly undertaken. This involved countless hours of hands-on toil and intensive research including trawling through archives here at the VAS and elsewhere and, not least, helping to make the really hard decisions. The enthusiasm and commitment they have had to bring this long-planned project to fruition has been a vital key to its success.

We look forward to seeing how the collection will evolve over the coming years. We hope VAS members will take ownership of this collection with pride. It is yours to enjoy!

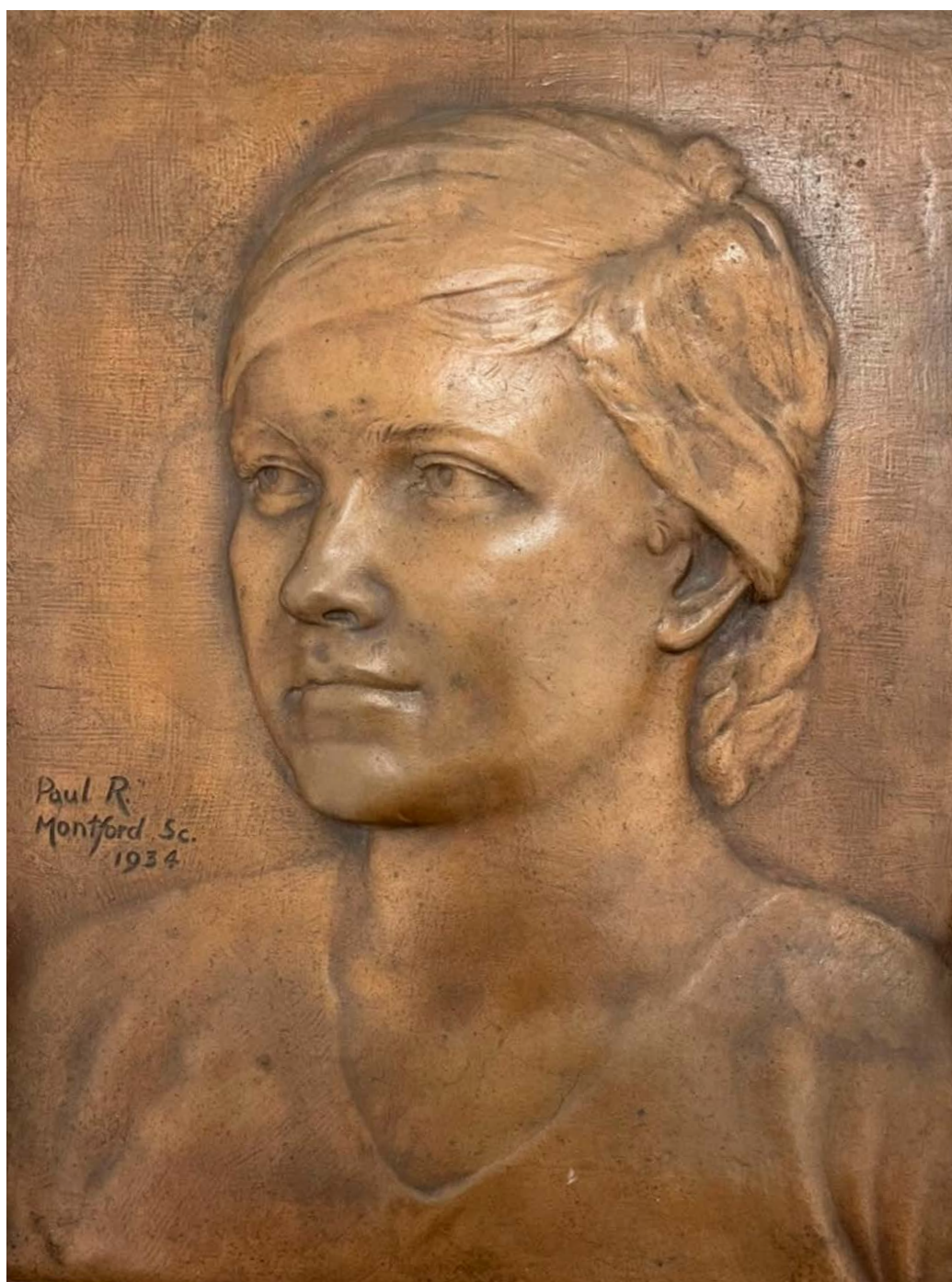
The VAS Collection Committee


John Hurle, Bruce Baldey, Anne Scott Pendlebury, Mark Bagally, Raymond Barro.

FROM THE VAS COLLECTION

Each new issue of the VAS Magazine we feature a work from the Victorian Artists Society Collection of Artwork.

Sculptor: Paul Raphael Montford
Title: 'Athelia'
Date: 1934
Medium: Cast bronze Plaque
Size: 49CM H x 36.5CM W
Acquisition: 1977
Donor: NS Finn



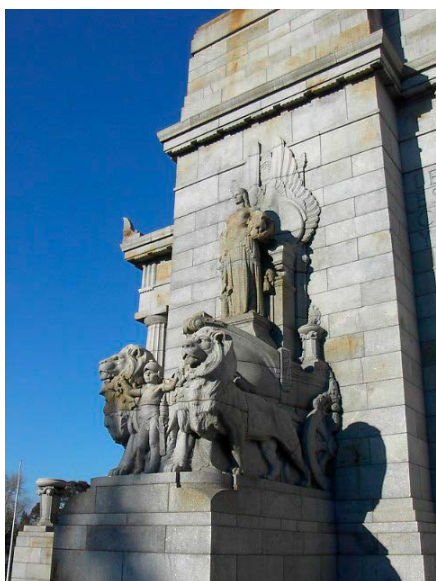
Paul Raphael Montford (1 November 1868 – 15 January 1938) was an English born sculptor who lectured at the Victorian Artists Society where he became President from 1930 until 1932. Montford was born in London and studied at the Royal Academy. Montford regularly exhibited portrait busts at the Royal Academy but specialised in the sculpture of architectural decoration. He taught modelling at the London Polytechnic before relocating to Australia in 1923 in the belief that its light was conducive to great monumental sculpture. This ambition was realised over a period of 15 years in Australia when he produced a significant body of public sculpture. In 1927 he won the commission for the exterior sculpture groups at Melbourne’s Shrine of Remembrance. His Melbourne works include the statue of John Wesley in front of the Wesley Uniting Church, Lonsdale Street, *Water Nymph* and *Peter Pan* in the Queen Victoria Gardens and *The Court Favourite* in the Flagstaff Gardens. His statue of Judge *George Higinbotham* (1937) is in a prominent position outside the Treasury Building in Macarthur Street opposite Gordon Reserve in Spring Street where his statue of *Adam Lindsay Gordon* (1931) is located. *Adam Lindsay Gordon* was awarded the Gold Medal of the Royal British Society of Sculptors in 1934. Montford is represented in the NGV by ‘Atalanta’, the ‘Spirit of Anzac’. A bronze bust of *Carlo Catani* (1852–1918) a prominent public service civil engineer, lies at the foot of his memorial clock tower on Jacka Boulevard, The Esplanade, St Kilda. 



Adam Lindsay Gordon



John Wesley



Shrine of Remembrance

2022

THE YEAR AHEAD AND DATES TO REMEMBER

SEE FULL EXHIBITION DETAILS IN THE 2022 PROGRAMME CALENDAR

14-24 OCT | VAS ART SCHOOL & TUTOR EXHIBITION

ENTRIES: 3 TO 13 OCT 11am-2pm

OPENING EVENT: VIEW ONLINE 19 OCT

7PM TUESDAY 18 OCT

COLLECTION DAY: 25 OCT 11am-3pm

Students may submit up to 2 artworks and sculptures.

27 OCT-7 NOV | VAS DRAWING EXHIBITION

EDWARD HEFFERNAN MEMORIAL DRAWING PRIZES

1ST: \$900 2ND: \$400 3RD: \$200

CATO GALLERY & MACKLEY MEMBERS' ROOM

Bequest from the late Maree E Heffernan

ENTRIES: 26 OCT 11am-3pm & 27 OCT 11am-2pm

VIEW ONLINE 28 OCTOBER

COLLECTION DAY: 8 NOVEMBER 11am-3pm

Members may submit 1 drawing.

Entry Fee: \$10 per artwork

11-28 NOV

VAS MAVIS LITTLE ARTIST OF THE YEAR EXHIBITION

1ST: \$5000 2ND: \$3000 3RD: \$2000

SPONSORED BY THE

HANSEN LITTLE FOUNDATION

MEMBERS' CHOICE PRIZE \$500:

SPONSORED BY DESIGN FRAMING

EXHIBITORS' CHOICE PRIZE \$500:

SPONSORED BY NOEL WAITE AO

VAS SCULPTOR OF THE YEAR PRIZE & TROPHY

ENTRIES: 9 NOV 11am-3pm & 10 NOV 11am-2pm

VIEW ONLINE 16 NOVEMBER

COLLECTION DAY: 29 NOVEMBER 11am-3pm

INVITATIONS TO EXHIBIT WILL BE EXTENDED TO ARTISTS WHO HAVE RECEIVED THE HIGHEST NUMBER OF VOTES FROM SELECT EXHIBITIONS THROUGHOUT THE YEAR.

2-13 DEC | VAS LITTLE TREASURES

CATO GALLERY

ENTRIES: 30 NOV 11am-3pm & 1 DEC 11am-2pm

VIEW ONLINE 3 DEC

COLLECTION DAY: 14 DECEMBER 11am-3pm

Members may submit up to 3 artworks and small sculptures.

Artwork sizes up to A4 including frame. (21 cm x 29.7 cm)

For Sale prices of \$250 and under

Digital works included.

Entry Fee: \$10 per artwork

2-13 DEC | VAS MARITIME EXHIBITION

THOMAS SOMERSCALES TROPHY

ENTRIES: 30 NOV 11am-3pm & 1 DEC 11am-2pm

VIEW ONLINE 3 DEC

COLLECTION DAY: 14 DECEMBER 11am-3pm

Members may submit up to 2 artworks and 3 sculptures.

Digital works included.

Entry Fee: \$10 per artwork



Contact us

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'Victorian Artists Society'

Find us on Instagram at:
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Use the hashtag
#victorianartistsociety when posting about an artwork you have created.

TRANSPORT OPTIONS

5 minute walk from
Parliament Station
Trams 11, 12 and 109 stop on
Gisborne Street
Meter parking is available along
Albert Street

Map design by David Kaneen

