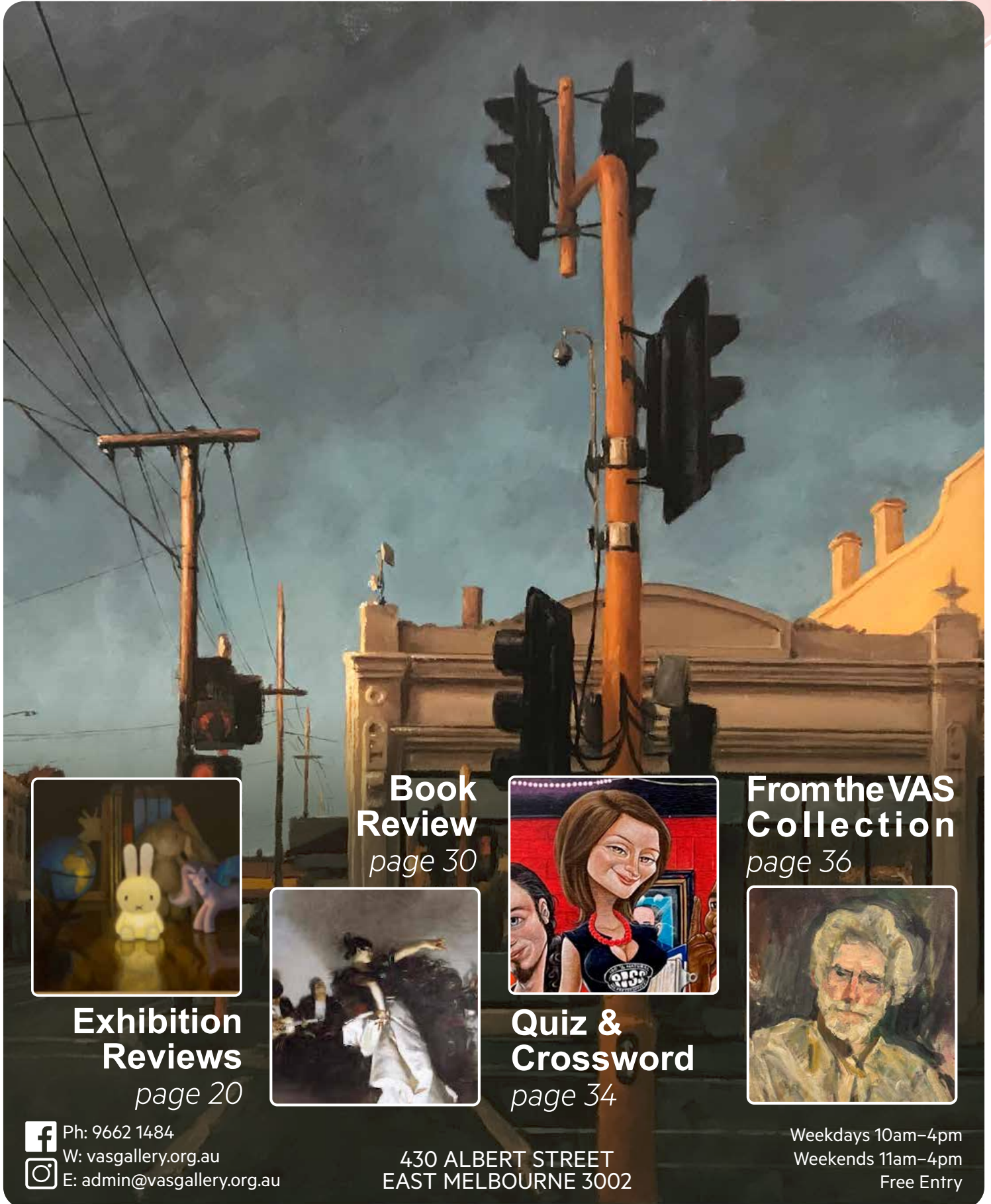


VAS MAGAZINE

Victorian Artists Society

July to September 2023



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
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 Ph: 9662 1484
 W: vasgallery.org.au
 E: admin@vasgallery.org.au

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Bruce Baldey VAS, Richard Impey FVAS
& Anne Scott Pendlebury HON FVAS

EDITOR

Bruce Baldey VAS

DESIGN & TYPESETTING

Mark Russell

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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Cover Image: Joe Whyte, *Through the Clouds*, Oil on Linen, Spring Select Exhibition Winner 2023

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Spring has sprung! What glorious weather for the school holidays. I hope our en plein air members are taking full advantage of it.

There has been lots of fabulous art works and exhibitions on display at VAS with a bumper crowd at the Spring opening and awards night. Although our long-time sponsor and donor Gordon Moffatt unfortunately passed away, his daughter Julie Viney and granddaughter Charlotte attended on the night and assisted with the awards presentations. Gordon also recently donated \$100,000 towards the construction of our disability access 'Moffatt's way'. On the night it was also announced that Eileen and Hylton Mackley were very generously donating \$250,000 towards the Artist of the Year awards to be spread over the next 12 years. This prize money will certainly add considerably to the prestige of winning our top award for the year.

It is a wonderful experience being involved in teaching Year 7 art students this year. They have been so enthusiastic and lap up all the experiences and tasks we set in different media with an emphasis on the art elements. Major tasks require the students to follow a process involving researching, and planning in their folios, creating the artwork, then evaluating what they have learnt, their successes and how they might improve next time. It's also a model of creative working that you as artists might contemplate applying to your own practice.

I am currently reading a book *Cubism and Australian Art* by Lesley Harding and Sue Cramer.

'Cubism was a movement that changed fundamentally the course of twentieth-century art. It had far-reaching effects, both conceptually and stylistic, which are still being felt today.

'Cubism irreversibly altered art's relationship to visual reality.'

One aspect of Cubism that intrigues me is viewing an object from different perspectives which might sometimes include internal views of that object. On

the portrait painters in action day there were groups of our artists painting the same subject at the same point in time but viewed from different perspectives using their own styles.

The Archibald finalist exhibition is currently on at the Mornington Peninsula Regional Gallery. The Archibald thrives on controversy. Attending but not knowing which artworks received prizes was good to do as I didn't have any preconceived ideas and I was able to choose the ones I liked best without any pressure. I came up with my winner being *Head in the sky, feet on the ground* by Julie Gutman. I confess that I have a fondness for textiles and mixed media. *Year of the Rabbit* by Sally Ryan was fascinating and exquisitely painted especially the translucency of the skin on the model's hands. Artist's statements that accompany the artworks added insight into artists processes and concepts that we might only guess at when viewing the painting in isolation.

I have a particular fascination with producing my own digital art. I am intrigued also with the advent of AI. Upon reading articles on the diverse applications of AI from creating new medicines, artificial pollination of crops, designing new machines and buildings, I view AI producing art with relative positivity. It is not surprising when experimental creatives get their hands on AI that they try and push the boundaries of what it can do. Artists have always tried new ways of seeing and making art and 'broken' the acceptable artistic rules of their time. Apart from the change of acceptable subject matter to paint and sculpt there was also new concepts such as perspective, as new art materials become available then these influenced the art that was produced. So, let's sit back and enjoy the ride of the interesting and positive things AI might be able to do for us and art.

Richard Impey FVAS MEd DipEd

President

Victorian Artists Society



By the Depot, by Joe Whyte

JOE WHYTE

Joe Whyte is a Melbourne based artist working in oils and the Winner of the 2023 Winter Select Exhibition and the 2023 Spring Select Exhibition.

He began his artistic career in the 2000s as an illustrator within the music industry and over the past decade he has gradually made a shift into the world of fine art.

Joe's formal painting training began at Studio Escalier, the classical atelier in France. Painting daily from the live model was rigorous training for the technique upon which he now relies.

While French small-town life served as a basis for his initial forays into landscape painting, it wasn't until his return to Australia that he truly began to find a real connection with the landscape.

Being a lifelong Melbourne resident, it was the streets and architecture of his local suburbs that captured his attention. The nature of France is undoubtedly

beautiful, but for Joe the emotional impact of his work comes from the streets where he has spent his days and nights, and experienced life's highs and lows. Ultimately the meaning in his work comes from tapping into those human experiences of place and of finding the emotional core at the heart of a scene.

Joe's technique is a mix of his disparate training and influences. As an illustrator he has trained under Sterling Hundley and Edward Kinsella, two of the world's top illustrators. This illustration training remains a fundamental part of his work, and goes hand in hand with his painting training from Studio Escalier as well as VAS.


He is heavily influenced by everything from the French academic tradition through to contemporary illustration, from the Australian Impressionism of Streeton and Roberts, through to the contemporary landscapes of Antonio Lopez Garcia and Peter Van Dyck.

Regarding *Old and New Brunswick*, his winning entry in the VAS Winter Select Exhibition.

This scene is just metres from my old painting studio in Tinning St, Brunswick. Tinning St is not a street filled with natural beauty. It is located in an old industrial part of Brunswick, sandwiched between factories, numerous construction sites, and the Upfield train line.

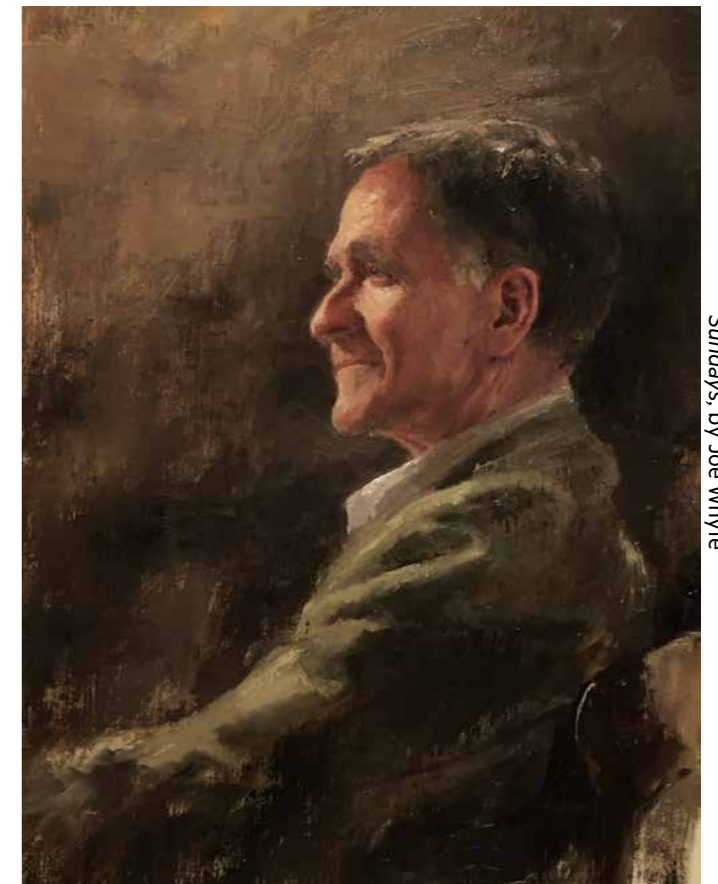
I worked there for many years and would look out at this scene every day as I left after a long day of painting.

There were days when I left inspired after some successes, and there were others when I left somewhat despondent after a far less successful day. Leaving into the gloomy industrial setting of Tinning St was at times far from uplifting. Seeing the grime and the discarded junk could be a bit discouraging.

But every now and then I would leave as the sun peaked through the clouds just so, and the entire scene would come alive with a beautiful warm glow. It never ceases to amaze me the way that light has the power to transform an entire scene. It was these moments of beauty that would motivate me, and remind me why I was doing this. 



The Art Room, by Joe Whyte, First Prize Winner VAS Summer Exhibition 2023



Sundays, by Joe Whyte



Through a Haze, by Joe Whyte

OUR FIRST LADY Elizabeth Parsons (1831–1897)

Pregnant, an infant in her arms and with two stepchildren in tow, Elizabeth Parsons arrives at Melbourne with her husband in 1870 and hits the ground running.

Barely a month passes before her English paintings are at a city gallery receiving favourable comments in the press.

Soon after, at almost 39 years of age, she gives birth to the first of four sons and before year's end is running en plein air classes and has five works in the 1870 inaugural exhibition of the Victorian Academy of Arts (forerunner of the Victorian Artists' Society until 1888).

This 1870 exhibition features watercolours by esteemed male painters Louis Buvelot, Conrad Martens and others, yet an art critic declares:

'IN THE WATERCOLOUR DEPARTMENT THERE ARE NO BETTER LANDSCAPES THAN THOSE PAINTED BY MRS PARSONS'.



Elizabeth Parsons



Albert Park Lake with dredge; by Elizabeth Parsons, 1893; State Library of Victoria

Is this the moment in the history of art in Victoria when the canvas ceiling first rips a little?

Taking issue with the label 'exotic' (a foreigner) in another review of the same exhibition, Parsons fires back with a clear early statement of intent:

'[I am] ambitious enough to hope soon to take rank amongst Victorian artists'.

And, that she does, and quickly, in this post-gold rush city of 200,000 people that is on the cusp of boom times.

Fast forward five years to 1875. Against all convention Parsons becomes the first woman Councillor of the VAA but only after a begrudging

patriarchy relents in an era when a woman's place is reckoned to be firmly in the home.

Another achievement for these times!

To put it in perspective, it is 1900 before another woman Councillor graces Albert St and 1933 before Victoria's first female parliamentarian arrives at Spring St.

During her career praise flows readily for the watercolour landscapes painted mainly around Melbourne and country Victoria for exhibitions at the VAA/VAS, nationally and internationally. And, at her city studio in Exhibition St (then Stephen St) in the early years.

Following a colonial exhibition in London in 1886, the prestigious world art monthly, Magazine of Art, reproduces one of her Red Bluff, St Kilda series noting that:

‘[This] is another work inspired by study of good schools. It is composed and arranged with taste and method, and the colour is laid on with good broad washes.’

Certainly, Mrs George Parsons, as she is known, shows the benefit of sound tutelage. Eminent English watercolourist JD Harding, studies in Paris and a stint at Barbizon in France in the mid-1860s when Monet

and friends were visiting, all contribute to this artist’s ‘freedom of touch and true perception of colour’.

As a woman of conviction, she often vents her feelings in letters to the VAA and VAS regarding their raison d’être, especially in times of low exhibition sales:

‘In expressing views in which possibly I stand alone, I wish it to be understood that it is in no spirit of antagonism to the Victorian Academy, but I adhere to my opinion that too little importance appears to me to be paid to the fact that if Art is to flourish, Artists must live.’



Point Ormond, by Elizabeth Parsons, 1874-1886, State Library of Victoria

Two issues add to her financial considerations; her husband’s uncertain work at times and the prices of her paintings, which, like female wages in general, are usually half that of male painters.



Undeterred, Elizabeth fully embraces Melbourne’s art world.

From the camaraderie at the VAA/VAS to teaching alongside Buvelot at a Melbourne Ladies School and engaging in the stimulating atmosphere at the semi-bohemian Buonarotti Club with younger painters McCubbin, Roberts et al, Parsons lives life large, artistically speaking. Let’s not forget too that she is raising seven children through these times!

Just as many consider the direct-from-nature Barbizon colony shaped Impressionism in France, the Buonarotti Club spawned ideas that inspired the Heidelberg School here. Parsons participates in the dawn of both movements, and furthermore paints en plein air at Heidelberg many years before Streeton and company set up camp.

Open to experimentation, in many works she captures the ‘bright, transparent and truly Australian atmosphere’ in an ‘impressionistic light that bleaches and simplifies motifs’.

Mrs George Parsons last exhibits with the VAS in 1896, the year before she dies at age 65 years, just a death and a funeral notice marking her passing. Two decades later critic Alexander Colquhoun calls her:

‘THE FIRST WOMAN PAINTER OF NOTE IN VICTORIA’.

As an inaugural and prolific exhibitor at the VAA/VAS, our first woman councillor and a leading Australian female artist of her time, Elizabeth Parsons deserves recognition as our First Lady.

Veronica Filmer’s Geelong Gallery online 2004 exhibition book *More than a Memory, the Art of Elizabeth Parsons* is recommended.

Ian Hobbs

WHO REMEMBERS NORMA BULL?



The name of mid-twentieth century Australian artist Norma Bull is not widely recognised today, except at the VAS when the biennial portraiture scholarship award is made in her name. But who was she?

Norma Bull was an important Australian artist, working in Australia and England from the 1930s until her death in 1980. She had a privileged childhood and as an adult, led a most interesting life.



Norma was born in 1906 in Melbourne and went to school at Fintona Girls' School in Balwyn, where she was the Dux in 1925. She then went on to the University of Melbourne to complete an Arts degree before enrolling at the National Gallery School where she studied painting and print making under the supervision of Bernard Hall. Amongst other



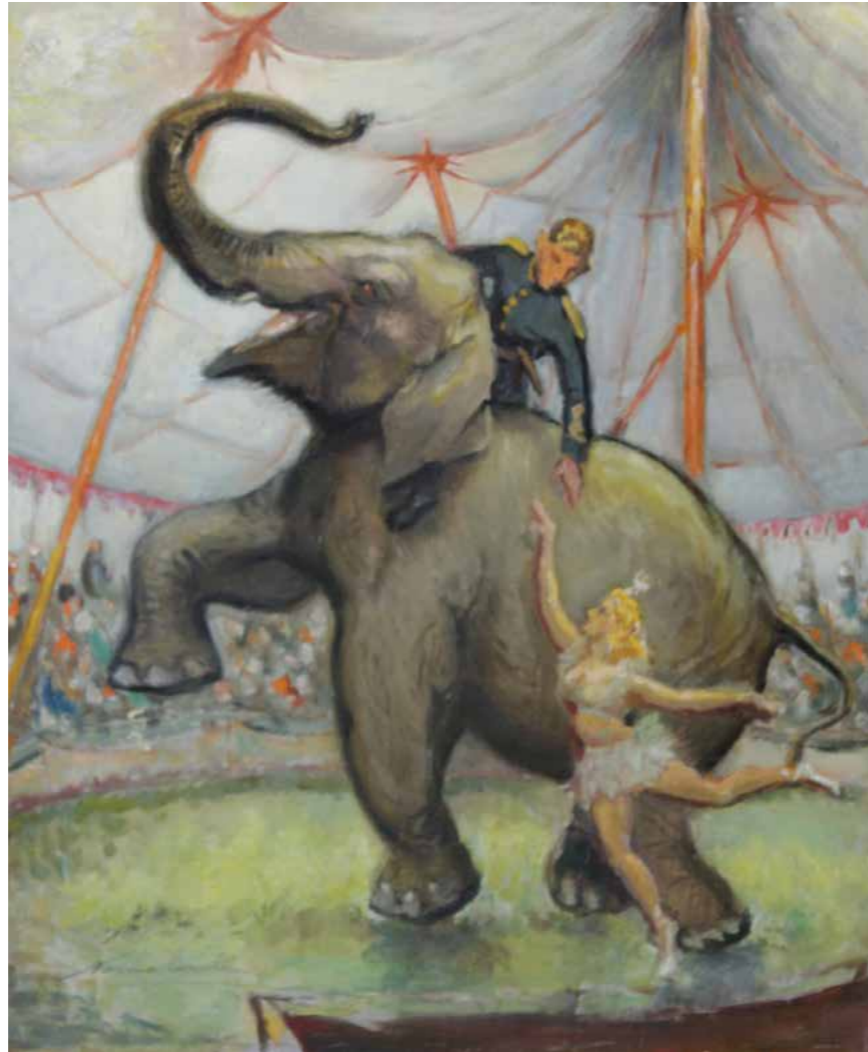
Coastal Landscape with Trees, by Norma Bull
Oil on Aluminium Plate
Wesley College Collection

prizes she won the prestigious Sir John Longstaff Scholarship which allowed her to travel and study in England for three years.

She sailed for England in 1937 and was to stay for the next ten years. During the war years she became a recognised war artist, painting scenes around the war-torn towns and villages of Britain. Her work was highly regarded and she held an exhibition at the Royal Academy, which was opened by the then Poet Laureate, Sir John Masefield, with whom Norma developed a friendship and whose portrait she painted. Unfortunately few of her wartime paintings came back to Australia when she returned in 1948, so we have been unable to show images of them.

Upon Norma's return to Melbourne, she settled at the family home of Medlow, in Surrey Hills (now in the care of the National Trust). She conducted private painting lessons and travelled extensively around Victoria, particularly to her favourite painting spots at Bright and also along the southern coast.

In the early 1950s Norma travelled around Australia, following Wirth's circus and painted many scenes of the circus tents, animals, acrobats and other performers.



The Circus, by Norma Bull
Victorian Artists Society Collection

She was also a renowned portrait painter and the watercolour held by VAS of Mrs Edward Stevens is a study for a portrait she entered in the Archibald Prize Competition in 1953.



Mrs Edward Stevens, by Norma Bull

Norma Bull never married or had children. When she died in 1980, her long time friend Mrs Elaine Haynes, the executor of her estate, was charged with making bequests of Norma's works to interested art galleries and institutions. As a result, examples of her work are found in many regional galleries and other collections, especially around Victoria. Fintona Girls' School, as Norma's alma mater has a small collection and Wesley College has a more extensive collection and generously agreed to lend some of these works for the exhibition held at VAS during August and September this year.

VAS itself holds several of her works in its Collection and is lucky enough to be the custodian of a series of copper etching plates, for which we have been able to source prints from the Wesley Collection.

Norma Bull made a significant contribution to the story of her era as a painter, etcher and recorder of the people and events of her time. The biennial Norma Bull Portraiture Scholarship Award is a reminder to us that, along with other more widely known earlier VAS members, she deserves an honoured place in our history. ✍️

Rosemary Noble



Bush Track, by Norma Bull, Oil, Wesley College Collection



GOODWILL WHICH GOES AROUND— COMES AROUND ONCE MORE

Or, THE DAY OF THE TRIFFID

One day, back in the 1950s when I was a young child there was a surprise delivery at the front door of our Caulfield family home.

A surprise for me, that is, as I distinctly remember several men hauling a huge timber apparatus through the door, across the floorboards and into my parent's studio with its bay window overlooking Inkerman Road.

The apparatus, covered in stains and paint with moving and squeaking parts, nearly touched the ceiling and had to be tilted this way and that by a couple of disgruntled removalists in grey dust coats.

It looked to me that at any minute this frightening looking thing could topple over and kill all of us.

I was about three years of age and covered down behind my mother's knees. But from memory my parents had no fears, and once this mammoth device was wheeled into place, there were 'oohs' and 'ahhs' and the offer of a beer or a cup of tea to the hot and bothered removal men.

Over the next few years, this gigantic object on wheels eventually became a source of delight and fun.

It was no longer something resembling a John Wyndham 'Triffid'—but on the rare occasion when it was not in use by my father, it turned into a vehicle upon which we children could scoot and push each other across the newly polished floorboards and brand-new Axminster carpet.

As older kids, we covered it with bed sheets and crouching on the low support beam above the castors, we took it in turns to manoeuvre it up and down the hallway—one child hiding beneath the sheet—the other pushing and guiding it, as

the monstrosity draped in flannelette squealed and thudded along, hitting the skirting boards and anything else which lay in its way.

One day, by the time I was 10 and my brother a few years younger, my father decided he'd had enough of cleaning and constantly repainting the walls and skirting boards and said,

'This is a valuable piece of furniture and not a plaything. I won't tell you again. Now go outside and find something useful to do.'

So that was the end of that.

The piece of furniture in question was indeed valuable.

In fact this monster is now housed at the VAS—given by my brother and myself to the Society in 2011.

It is no longer covered in bed sheets, but it is still covered in paint marks which go back nearly 100 years. It still runs on four castors, and can be more or less adjusted to a great height and still operate with a crank handle which lowers or raises the timber support on which an artist's canvas or water colour board sits.

Yes, the scary monster of decades ago is the easel which once belonged to my father and before him to eminent VAS member and Councillor John Rowell.

Rowell was mentor to my young father and this grand piece of studio equipment was left to my dad all those years ago.



Now it can be used and appreciated in at the VAS—where hopefully it will remain in perpetuity.



This brings me now to the present day and our midyear Pop Up Exhibition of Winning Artists held in the Cato Gallery.

During this Exhibition we received a visit from a Dr. Michael Ackland and his wife. Not only did they purchase a work by artist Adrian Johnson, but Michael and his wife glanced with interest at the great easel placed in the Cato under the window.

'It looks familiar,' he said.

A quick inspection assured him that this easel had once belonged to his grandfather John Rowell, and Rowell's signature in white paint on the back instantly proved it.

Michael Ackland was both astonished and moved to view it, as he had not seen it since the time it had been relocated from his grandfather's studio to our family home over half a century ago.

The day the 'Triffid' appeared ...

I told Mike and his wife about the connection our family had with John Rowell—and I think it touched a nerve.

They too suddenly felt as if they had also found a connection with the VAS seeing their relatives's beautiful old easel had finally found its final home within our newly renovated walls.

Mike then said he would like to do something in return for the Society.

Before they left, I offered to deliver the Johnson painting to their home at the end of the exhibition.

A few weeks later, I enjoyed a visit to the Ackland family home, not far from where I had grown up as a young girl.

Mike now restores furniture—a departure from his earlier full time work within the medical profession. In his workshop I saw a small cedar table in the process of restoration—identical to one belonging to the VAS.

I was reminded of Mike's wish 'to do something' for the Society—and I told him that we also had a small cedar table badly in need of repair.

So the offer to restore it as a gift for the VAS was made, and within a week it had been picked up and taken back to this good man's workshop.

And this is where it was brought back to life.

Thank you Mike for your fine work. Our restored table will be a wonderful addition to our building.

It is an enormously generous gesture offered to the Society—and of course you can visit us anytime, and admire both the cedar table and your grandfather's old easel in the foyer and be reminded of your boyhood days watching him using it—just as I am constantly reminded of the 40 years it stood in our family studio and still today remains such a significant piece of family history and brings back many poignant memories.

Anne Scott Pendlebury



AUSTRALIAN WATERCOLOUR INSTITUTE

A Century of Watercolour Excellence— with VAS members being involved in this Institute from its formation.

On Tuesday 21st August 1923, BR Minns, Martin Stainforth, JA Bennett, CES Tindall, AJ Daplyn and AH Fullwood met to discuss the formation of the Australian Watercolour Institute and on the 6th November 1923 the Sydney Morning Herald announced that the Australian Watercolour Institute had been formed and included among its founding members were the six names provided above as well as VAS members Arthur Streeton, Blamire Young, Sydney Long and Septimus Power.

The inaugural exhibition of the Australian Watercolour Institute was held at Anthony Hordens Fine Art Gallery, Sydney from 25th March—15th April 1924.

This exhibition set a very high standard which has been maintained over the years and future exhibitions included works by Norman Lindsay, Lionel Lindsay, Harold Herbert, Hans Heysen, Thea Proctor, Margaret Preston, Vida Lahey, Lloyd Rees, Mervyn Napier Waller, Rupert Bunny, John Coburn, Tim Storrier and John Olsen.

A number of the artists listed above were also members of the VAS and today the VAS has a strong representation among the very talented and many internationally recognized members of the Australian Watercolour Institute, including Julian Bruere, Amanda Hyatt and David Taylor.

Andrew Mackenzie OAM

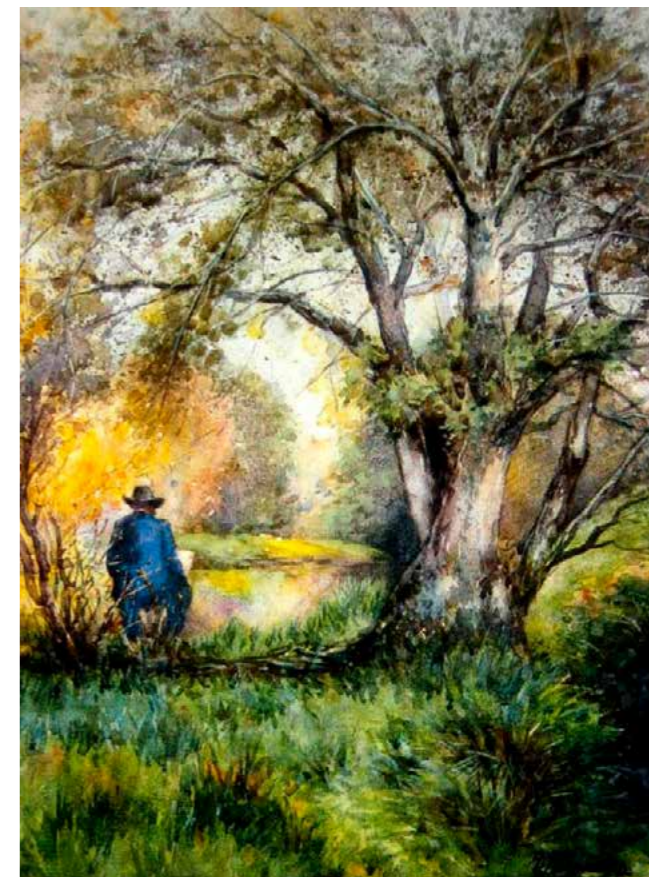
VAS Historian



BE Minns, Sydney Harbour Bridge, 1930



Across the Paddock—Yea, watercolour by Julian Bruere



AJ Daplyn, The Artist at Work

WINTER SELECT EXHIBITION

A Select Review

There were 123 works on show in this year's Winter Select Exhibition (7-24 July).

Joe Whyte's *Old and New Brunswick* was judged the Winner of the Senior Arts Supplies Prize. (See page 4 of this Issue for an article on Joe and his work). Second and Third Prizes were awarded to Linda Weil's *Cypress on the Tioga Pass* and Lynden Stone's *Rebuttal of Unicorn Pseudodoxia* (Pseudodoxia: from the Greek pseudodoxia, false opinion. Don't worry, Bushranger had to Google it too).

Ellen Jenkins and *Simon* won the Senior Art Supplies Sculpture Prize.



Clockwise from top left:
Rebuttal of Unicorn Pseudodoxia by Lynden Stone; *Cypress on the Tioga Pass* by Linda Weil;
Simon by Ellen Jenkins

The following is a selection of other works from the Winter Exhibition that caught the indiscriminate eye of Bushranger.

VAS tonalists as usual were well represented. VAS members will have noticed the broadening flourishes of doyen Ray Hewitt's recent work. Ray is a multiple Winner of the VAS Artist of the Year.

Prolific artist and Curator of the Exhibition Mark Bagally entered his classic rural piece *Shed on Wambidgee Road* (below).



Autumn by Ray Hewitt FVAS



Steps not Taken by Eva Miller

Eva Miller lives and paints in Castlemaine where she moved three years ago. There are three approaches to her art:

1. Abstracted landscape, focusing on the high plains where she walks in January:

‘Instead of painting trees, rocks and wildflowers, I refer to them through mark making and colour. I hope to give the feeling of place rather than the real.’

2. *Steps not Taken* illustrates another style i.e., layering and active use of colour to give the feeling of being in a garden with lush growth and always some source of light.

3. Smaller pieces (less than 50 x 50cm) again, with layering and colour.

Describing herself as essentially an abstract painter Eva begins her painting by,

‘Making quite random marks on the surface and by gradually adding colour the painting suggests ways to continue. I work the paint intuitively and allow the meaning to develop. I never finish a painting in one session and find that working on more than one at a time allows me to come back to each with a fresh eye.’

‘As this painting developed I came to realise that the light areas below and above could represent the ideas of the beginning and end of a journey. The dark section in the middle of the painting represents the time of life when one is faced with choices.’

‘Just as one’s dreams entail going into uncertain and possibly dangerous territory, so in my painting it’s not the light areas above and below that are critical but the darkness in the middle, where the rising white horizontal lines end, stopping the viewer from reaching the light areas above. In other words life’s journey is not straightforward and one is often faced with uncomfortable decisions to continue or to turn back to the familiar.’

Rachel Dettmann-Smith’s soft and seductive *Night Light* also caught the eye of Bushranger.

‘The painting is inspired by the objects my daughter has on her dressing table, which I look at each night when I am reading or telling her a story. I was hoping to capture a sense of glowing light using only tonal range.’

Rachel was the Winner of the Norma Bull Portraiture Scholarship in 2018.



Night Light, by Rachel Dettmann-Smith



Mural Prep, by Lucy Fekete

Luck Fekete’s *Mural Prep* is a portrait of contemporary Melbourne artist Charlotte Clemens¹ and one of a series of paintings of female artists in their studio space Lucy is currently working on.

‘IT’S MY WAY OF SHARING THEIR STORY.’

‘I chose to paint Charlotte because her life experience and her values of the variety of artistic skill she has is so interesting to me. She was born in Cyprus to Australian parents ... and studied art at the National Gallery School and was sometimes taught by John Brack himself. At one time she was part of an artistic collective called “Bad Mothers” which was made up of local artists who were also mothers ... She paints paintings, murals and she weaves and screen prints. She has been an art teacher and does a lot of art projects within her local community and is an advocate for raising money for education focused charities. Charlotte’s work is in the NGV Collection and she is featured in the 2001 book *Doing Feminism* by Australian art critic and historian Professor Anne Marsh.’

Creagh Manning² is a student of early modernism who trained under the late Bill Coleman and is a frequent exhibitor at the VAS. His work is also influenced by George Bell and Arnold Shore who introduced Modernism to Australia.

‘My paintings are constructed from my experience. Even if I work from a model I am primarily interested in all the formal elements of the picture making such as colour and composition. *Making a Scene* is created from my imagination in response to an Exhibition theme of the same title as the female figure (the artist) in the painting is literally creating a scene. An actual “past event” is depicted through the window which is the subject of her painting. The interior and the view from the window are depicted with the same visual intensity. I have also included a suggested narrative of domestic violence.’

Bushranger recognized the goodbyes but didn't sense that violence was in play. He did however recognize the influence of the Sydney Moderns. The work is beautifully composed and painted with suppressed tone and colour. Creagh has suggested *Girl with a Four-Leaf Clover* as a companion piece.

Bushranger



Making a Scene, by Creagh Manning



Girl with a Four-Leaf Clover, by Creagh Manning

References

- 1: www.charlotteclermens.com
Charlotte has an exhibition from September 22nd to October 1st at Red Gallery, 157 St Georges Road, North Fitzroy, Melbourne.
- 2: www.creaghamanning.com

VALE, NATHAN PARAMANATHAN

(1929–2023)

Nathan was a much admired VAS artist. He was a long standing and loyal exhibitor, Councillor and promoter of art within the Society, also winning the prestigious Artist of the Year Award in 1993.

Nathan also had an ongoing interest in Sociology, holding an M.A. and Ph D. He belonged to the Australian Institute of Human Relations, which led to the opportunity to conduct art therapy sessions, an important development in Nathan's career as mentor and educator. Over the years he also held several positions within the education sector including as a member of the Academic Board of the State College of Victoria and Chairman of the Institute of Art Education.



Nathan was born in Malaysia and arrived in Australia at the age of 20. He soon married and became an Australian citizen.

He trained as a teacher and taught for 7 years in Victorian Schools whilst at the same time pursuing a career as a painter and studying towards a Fellowship Diploma in Painting at the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology.

He joined the VAS in 1969 as well as the Coburg Teachers College, eventually taking up the position of Head of the Art Department at the Coburg Campus of the Phillip Institute of Technology.

Throughout his career he held several solo Exhibitions, including two at the VAS in 1975 and 1977, as well as in Singapore and many regional centres around Australia. Other awards include the 1973 VAS Allied Chemical Prize and 1st Prize in 1980 with Essendon Rotary.

His work is held in collections with the University of Melbourne, La Trobe University, Melbourne College of Education, Victoria College, Footscray Institute and the Shepparton Gallery. The Civic Centres of Essendon and Hawthorn also retain a worthy collection of his work.



Landscapes by Nathan Paramanathan

VAS PORTRAIT EXHIBITION

Sixty-two paintings and drawings were entered into this year's VAS Portrait Exhibition (11-21 August).

Julia Wang's *Ash Gray* (below) was the winner of the Nada Hunter Portraiture Award.



The subject depicted is not Julia's grandmother however it embodies her in every way and is inspired by the close matriarchy within her family. Julia's intention was to,

'Encapsulate a sense of innocence and perhaps even cheekiness, furthermore, of wisdom and compassion through the subject's gaze and aura.'

'Visual art has always been a vital part of my self expression; painting at the core of my infatuations with it. As a young artist who is only at the tip of their career, I am constantly learning with each project. Experimentation is essential in my artistic development, at the same time I believe technique to be at the core of free experimentation. With every painting that I do, I experience a process of fluctuation, of stumps and confusions to the satisfaction of finding solutions (and repeat).'

'The biggest concept I learnt during the making of this painting is the power of blurring, in turn, how harsh and soft edges can be juxtaposed to create depth and dimensions. Whilst emphasising the chin and wrinkles close to the core shadow line, yet deliberately blurring the clothing and shadows, I was able to convey the space around and behind the subject. I discovered the idea of push and pull to create rhythm and retention in the work.'

'Art is my personal way of experiencing, connecting and reflecting the human condition, I can only hope through my subjective lens and portrayals, to spark solidarity with others. I am extremely excited to see where my art takes me, and am beyond grateful for all the support.'

Louis Sauzier and his *Self Portrait* (top and middle) took second place and Jill Shalless, setting herself against a backdrop of self portraits, was awarded second place with *Allegory of Self* (bottom).

Louis Sauzier was born in Mauritius and migrated to Australia in 1967. He was taught the first elements of painting by his father. Married with a young family Louis could only paint spasmodically on the weekends but still managed to exhibit in Rotary and other Exhibitions. He completed a BA Degree in Fine Arts at the RMIT in 1990 retiring from a career in administration to begin another career as a full time artist. Louis's approach to painting is a direct response to his environment. He does this by endeavouring to express whatever emotions his subject brings forth.. Whether it is a landscape, still life or portrait, he considers the compositional lines, the tones, and the light to express what he wants to say. It can be a feeling of rapid and forceful movement to express, say, a storm, or it could be melancholy or nostalgia. In the past decade or so Louis has adopted pastel as his main medium of expression however his *Self Portrait* is painted in oils. He chose a confronting close up view as he believed that it would best bring forth his personality. A small black coloured cardboard support received a generous coat of transparent acrylic Gesso (liberally applied with a large brush) before any layers of pigment were applied. Louis says that this technique has the advantage of providing a strong underlying body upon which many layers can be applied and laid on quite thickly if necessary.

'As I mainly use soft pastels, it has a particularity that suits me. Although I have always regarded myself as an impressionist, I have gradually steered towards the tonalist method of visualizing and painting.'



This year's keenly contested VAS Norma Bull Scholarship Award went to Phillip Roberts for his acrylic *Gamer Girl*. An article on the Norma Bull award appears on page 10 this issue.



Lynden Stone, won third place in this year's Winter exhibition, this time weighed in with an equally outrageous piece. No classical allusions however, just a man and his pet.

One assumes that the bloke is Harry and the big name belongs to the cat!?

Bushranger



Members were pleased to see a couple of most excellent graphite drawings on the gallery walls. Gwendoline Krumins received a Highly Commended Award for *Isla*.

Meanwhile Sam Bruere was reminding some of us of the redacted pleasures of smoking and Fred Toumayan VAS presented another solid character.



Top left and right: Phillip Roberts with *Gamer Girl*; Far Left: *Isla* by Gwendoline Krumins; Above: *One Last Smoke Before I go*, by Sam Bruere; Left: *Light and Shadow* by Fred Toumayan; Opposite: *The Real Runceley Chaser and Harry* by Lynden Stone

Book Review

SARGENT & SPAIN

By Cash, Kilmurray,
Ormond, et al

National Gallery of Art Washington 2022,
Hardcover, 255 Pages

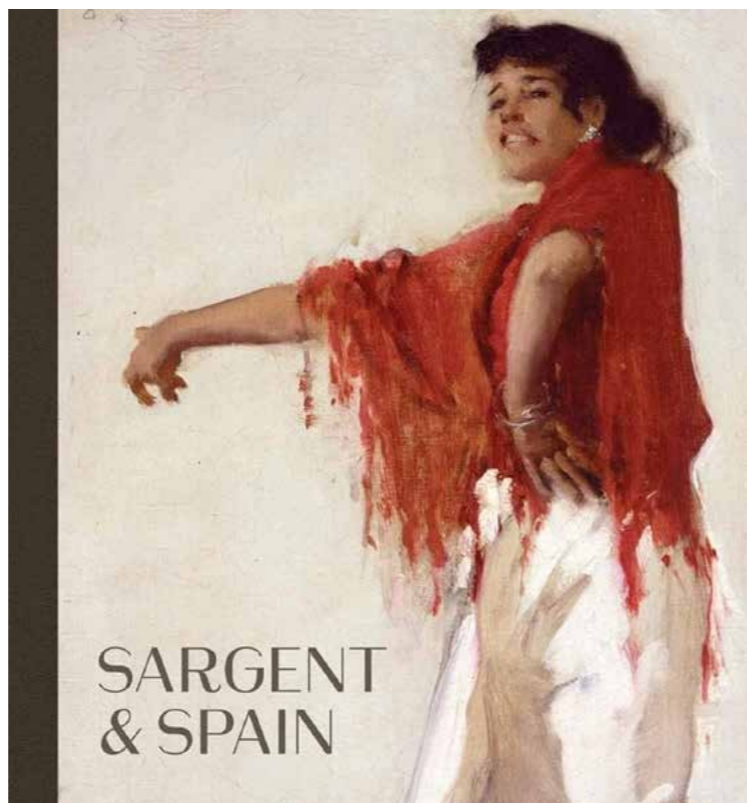
Available from Dymocks \$93.95 and Amazon
Australia \$69.00

In the March issue of the VAS Magazine we reviewed *The Grand Affair*, a 2022 autobiography of John Singer Sargent (1856–1925), the leading European society portraitist of his era. Born in Florence to American parents this roving artist spent most of his life and career travelling and working throughout North America, Europe and the Middle East.

He made seven trips to Spain between 1879 and 1912. His first visit when he was 23 was in 1879 after completing his training in Paris where he was encouraged to study 'Velasquez, Velasquez, Velasquez,

and ceaselessly study Velasquez'. He subsequently copied the oil paintings of Velasquez, Goya, Murillo, Ribera, et al. in the Museo Prado in Madrid where he travelled most often and immersed himself in the rich culture of Spain and its religious art. He travelled frequently to Barcelona, Granada, Ronda, the beautiful island of Majorca, Catalonia, Andalusia and the remote hilly villages of the Pyrenees.

Toledo is the historical and cultural capital of Spain and here he studied and copied the work of El Greco in the Cathedral of Toledo Sacristy.

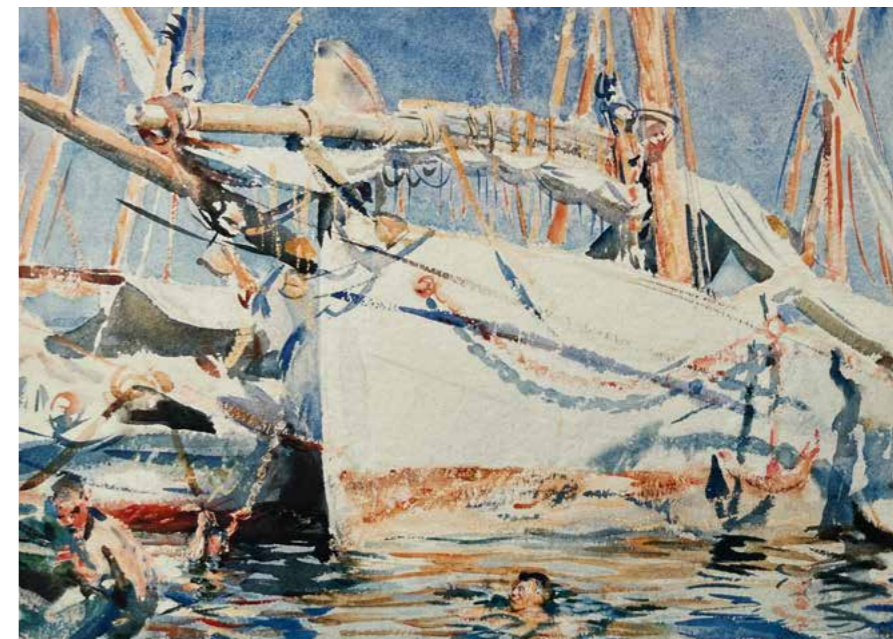


The book is produced by the National Gallery of Art, Washington and documents the 2023 Exhibition at the Gallery which brought together more than 130 works of art revealing the depth of the painter's captivation with Spain.

Sargent was also an enthusiastic photographer during the time when photography was in its infancy. Featured in the book are never before published photographs most of which would have been taken by Sargent himself. Today we use photographs from our travels as an aide-memoire. However early cameras could never capture the light and movement of the contemporary iPhone and so artists relied on their drawing skills to record their travels.

Sargent produced a remarkable series of images of Spanish dancers and musicians and the book is replete with the brisk sketches of these performances executed in the dimly lit conditions. One reviewer has rued the preponderance of these black and white plates. For most readers though, these drawings will be a highlight of the book, as fresh, and contemporary as if executed yesterday. They demonstrate how meticulous and skilful the artist was in recording the events before composing the painting later in his London studio.

El Jaleo (over) is referred to as 'the best-known and most powerful image of flamenco ever painted'. The title refers to the process of *jaleo*, the sounds-including shouts of 'Ole!' plus *palmas* (hand clapping) and *pitos* (finger snapping) that encourage a flamenco performer.



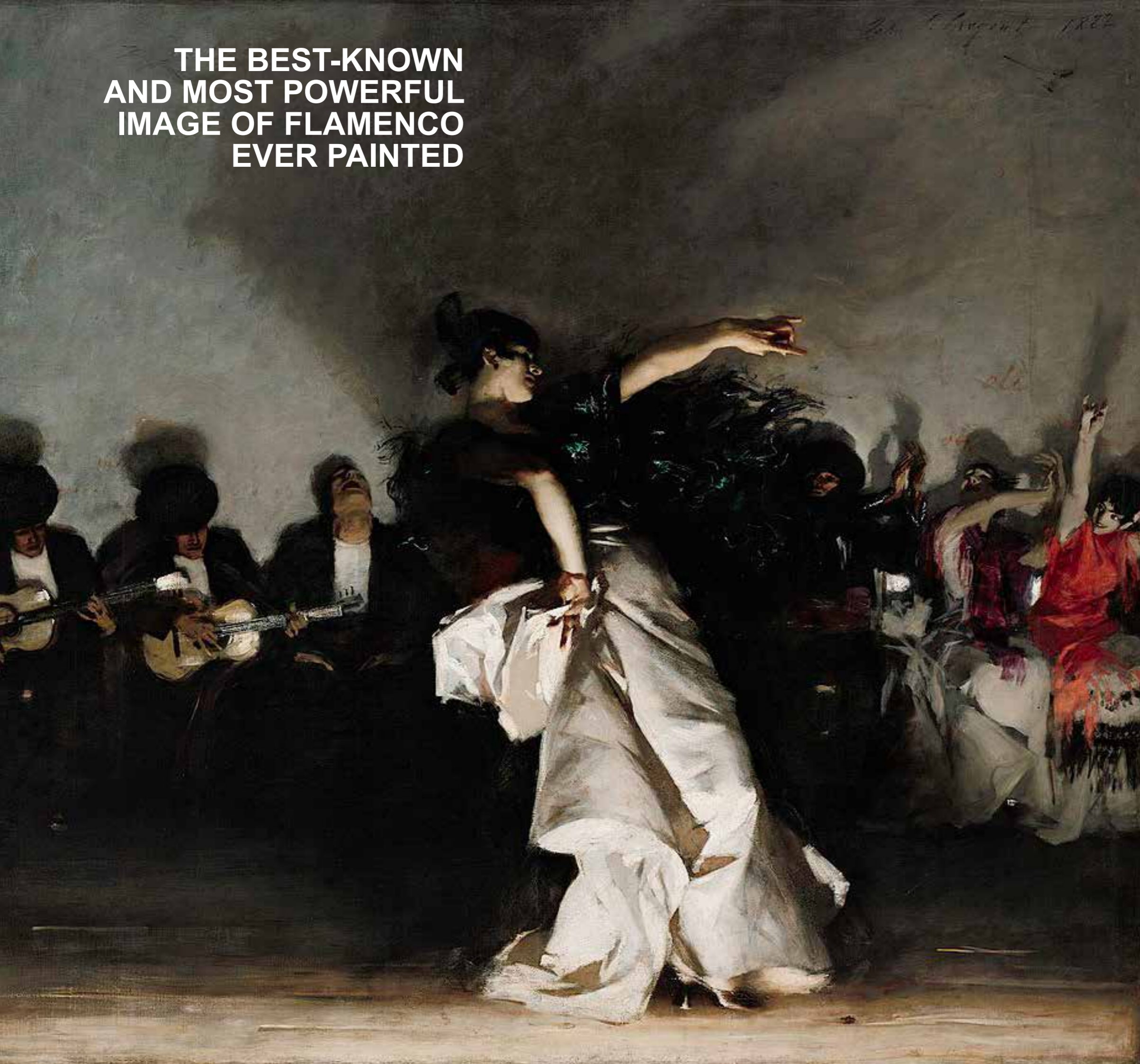
A Falucho, Watercolour, 1908



Above and Opposite: Preparatory sketches for El Jaleo




THE BEST-KNOWN AND MOST POWERFUL IMAGE OF FLAMENCO EVER PAINTED



'This heroic representation of an anonymous flamenco dancer caused a sensation at the 1882 Salon because of its size (352cm x 237cm) and Sargent's unusual choice of subject'¹

Sargent is also one of the great watercolourists; a useful portable skill to have given the challenging terrain, limited roads and railways of pre-EU Spain. Mind you Sargent employed a full time assistant not only to assist with his studio work, preparing paints and cleaning brushes and palettes etc., but also accompanying him on his journeys smoothing out creases in his itinerary and carrying his drawing and painting equipment.

A third of the illustrations are his watercolours and feature his distinctive broad and brisk technique. His rendition of Majorcan fishing boats sparkles with maritime light in contrast to the dramatic settings of the Jaleo.

The final chapter is a veritable travelogue of Spain there for any other reader wishing to retrace Sargent's journeys. 

Bruce Baldey VAS

References

1: Nancy Heller, NG 2022, *Portraying the Art of the Flamenco*

El Jaleo, 1878, Private Collection



THE QUIZ



1.
In which State capital city is MONA (Museum of Old and New Art)?

2.
What word is derived from the Greek for 'Master Builder'?

3.
Which two painters co-founded the Cubism Movement?

4.
What is the shape of fusilli pasta?

5.
What are colours opposite one another on the colour wheel called?

6.
John Singer Sargent was born in which Italian city?

7.
What is the Italian for a painting that is completed in a single session?

8.
Are painting knives and palette knives the same?

9.
What is a film of dry, semi-opaque colour on a dry under layer called?

10.
Surrealist painter Rene Magritte was born in which country?

11.
What nationality was painter Frida Kahlo?

12.
Which English singer commissioned a painting of the cartoon character Spongebob Squarepants for his/their house in 2008?

13.
Situated in New York what does MoMA stand for?

14.
Which English painter was the first President of The Royal Academy?

15.
Sir Arthur Streeton is buried in which Melbourne suburb?

16.
In which Italian city is the Gallerie dell'Accademia located?

17.
In which building is the Gallerie dell'Accademia located?

18.
The painter and poet Dante Gabriel Rossetti was a member of which Brotherhood?

19.
Where is the newest regional Art Gallery in Victoria?

20.
Marie-Therese Walter was the mistress of which famous Spanish artist?

21.
Who was the Winner of the 2023 Archibald prize?

Answers Page 38
Image: Detail from *Mrs Smith's Trivia & the GBH Last Supper* by Lucy Fekete

Across

1. Painter who featured in NGV Winter Masterpieces Exhibition this year (7)

5. William Beckwith ____, seven-time winner of the Archibald (7)

8. Russian painters may have fancied a drop of this (5)

9. An artist often ____ a painting, as in makes small improvements to it (9)

10. ____ Machelak, Twenty Melbourne Painter, VAS tutor (3)

11. James Whistler born in this country (3)

12. Bonnard and Vuillard were known as ____ artists (4)

13. Buvelot's first name (5)

15. Some think the Mona Lisa's ____ follow you (4)

17. Augustus Earle, travelling artist, 1800s (init), (2)

18. It can be a real chore to ____ your brushes after painting (5)

19. Toulouse-Lautrec's name is associated with ____ art, like a billboard (6)

21. Technique for softening the transition between colours, rhymes with tomato (7)

23. French landscape painter (1796-1875), inspired the impressionists (5)

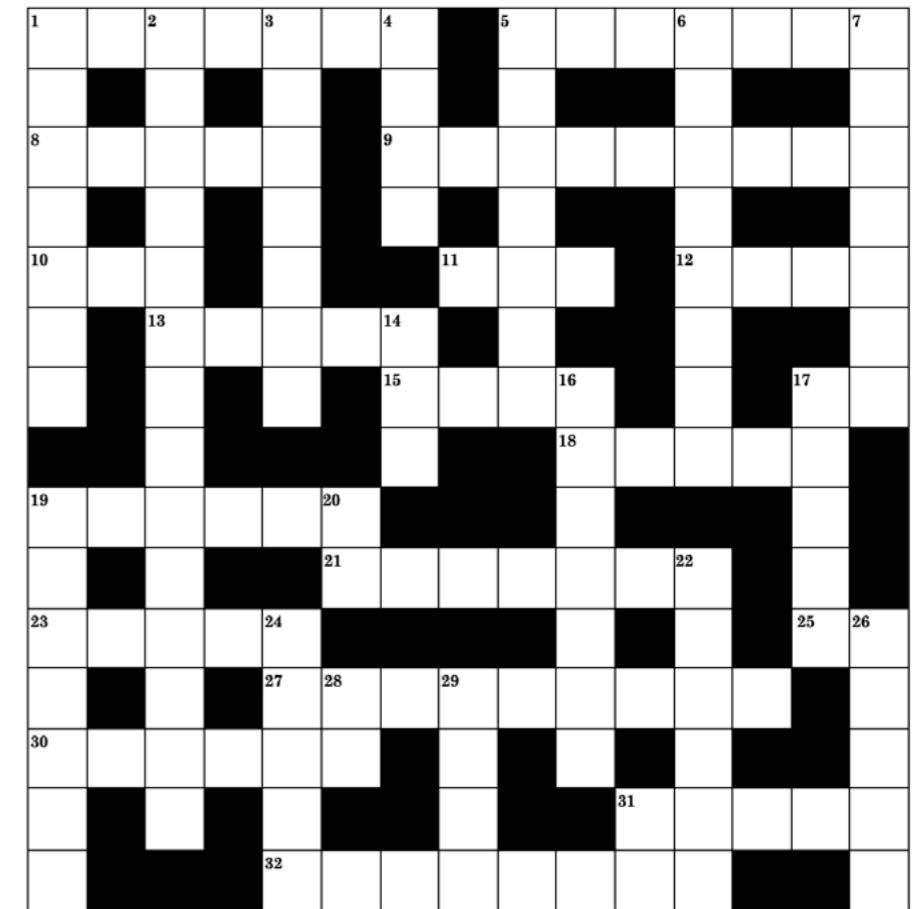
25. Degas (init) (2)

27. Paris Museum where Monet's water lilies hang (9)

30. Yellow-brown pigment, named after Italian town (6)

31. Vermeer's hometown, known also for blue and white pottery (5)

32. Portrait painter's aim for a good ____, ie resemblance (8)



Down

1. Early Swiss-born painter in Australia, first name Louis (7)

2. Nolan's sequence of paintings of our best-known bushranger (3,5,6)

3. Opposite of a professional artist (7)

4. Romantic partner of Picasso, ____ Marr (4)

5. Famous French painter (1869-1954), Henri ____ (7)

6. Affectionate name, as Smike was for Arthur Streeton (8)

7. Michelangelo painted the ceiling of this chapel (7)

14. A starter paint ____ is suitable for a child (3)

16. Instrument like a palette knife or spatula (7)

17. Geometric painters will likely include a right ____ (5)

19. French painter who dominated Western art in first half of 20th century (7)

20. Ron Smith, VAS councillor (init) (2)

22. Iron ____ are yellow-brown pigments, ochre and umber are two examples (6)

24. Max Meldrum advocated this type of painting method (5)

26. Perspective, perceived distance between the background and the foreground (5)

28. Rick Amor, painter and sculptor, born 1948, Frankston (init) (2)

29. Type of painting where subject is unclothed (4)

31. Dora Serle (1875-1968), Melbourne painter (init) (2)

FROM THE VAS COLLECTION

William (Jock) Frater OBE (1890–1974)

William (Jock) Frater was born in Ochiltree, south of Glasgow in Scotland and studied at the Glasgow School of Art and later in London and Paris. Prior to Art School he was apprenticed to the Glasgow Glass studio of Oscar Patterson. He visited Australia in 1910 where his first job was as a stained glass designer with Brooks, Robinson & Co. After a brief period back in the UK he returned to settle permanently in Australia in 1914 re-joining Brooks, Robinson where he worked for another 25 years. His early work as a painter was influenced by the tonal theories of Max Meldrum but by 1922 his interest had shifted towards the technique of Paul Cezanne.

Together with George Bell and Arnold Shore, Frater was a pioneer of Post Impressionism in Australia although his own approach to painting has been described as:

Artist: William (Jock) Frater OBE

Title: *Self Portrait*

Date: 1964

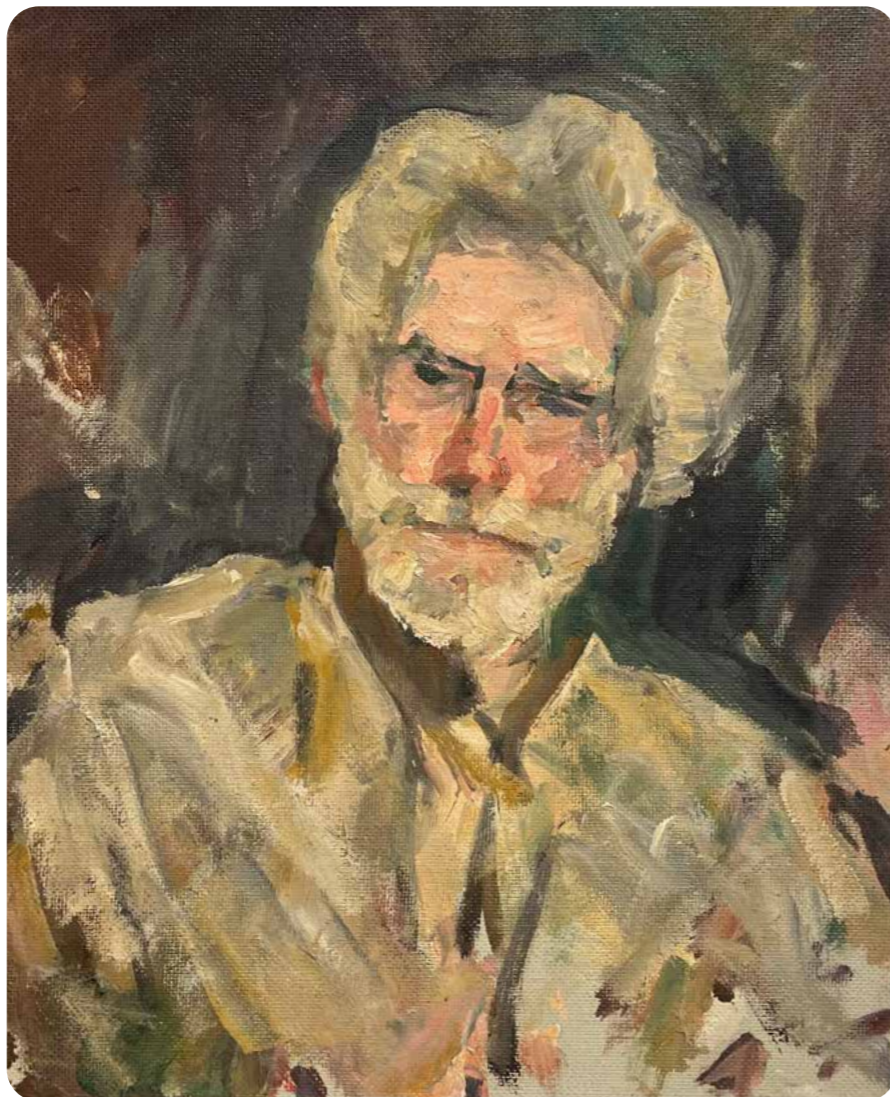
Medium: Oil

Size: 49CM W x 58CM H

Donor: Artist

SENSUOUS RATHER THAN CEREBRAL.

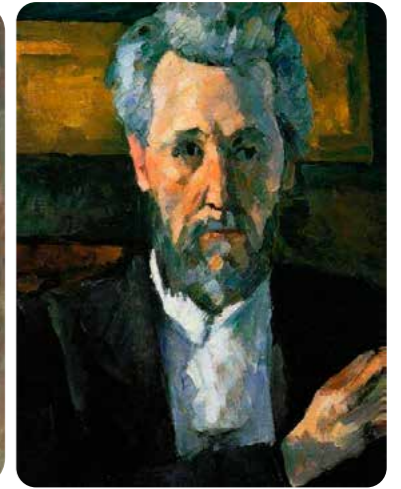
Frater was President of the Victorian Artists Society from 1963 to 1972 exhibiting annually with the Society during the last decade of his career and filling the 3 upstairs Galleries at his final exhibition in 1973.



His best-known work *The Red Hat* in the Collection of the NGV is a portrait of Frater's partner, artist Lina Bryans. He had met Bryans in 1936 and was influential in her decision to become an artist. Frater and Bryans painted together for many years and he gave her the advice to 'draw with the brush', an approach which is clearly evident in his own painting.

In 1974 Frater was appointed an Order of the British Empire (OBE) for his services to art. His work is represented in Galleries throughout Australia as well as the Glasgow Art Gallery. He died at his home in Alphington Melbourne on 28 November 1974 and was buried at the Arthur's Creek cemetery in the north east of Melbourne.

'We have to be ourselves and run the risk of being a nobody. That's a chance we have to take. You might become somebody by being yourself. You will never become anybody by trying to be someone else.' 🖌️



Top Left: *Self Portrait* by William Frater, 1971, NGV Collection

Top Right: *Victor Chocquet*, by Cezanne, 1877

Above: *The Red Hat*, by William Frater, Oil on canvas, 1937

ANSWERS

1. Hobart
2. Architect
3. Pablo Picasso, Georges Braque
4. Spiral or corkscrew
5. Complementary
6. Florence
7. Alla prima ('at the first')
8. No. Painting knives have shorter blades and cranked handles
9. Scumble
10. Belgium
11. Mexican
12. Liam Gallagher (Oasis)
13. Museum of Modern Art
14. Sir Joshua Reynolds
15. Ferntree Gully (Cemetery)
16. Venice
17. The Doges Palace
18. Pre Raphaelite-Brotherhood
19. Shepparton (SAM—Shepparton Art Museum)
20. Picasso
21. Julia Gutman



Julia Gutman
Head in the sky, feet on the ground
Archibald Winner 2023



Mitch Cairns
Agatha Gothe-Snape
Archibald Winner 2017



Picasso, 1932

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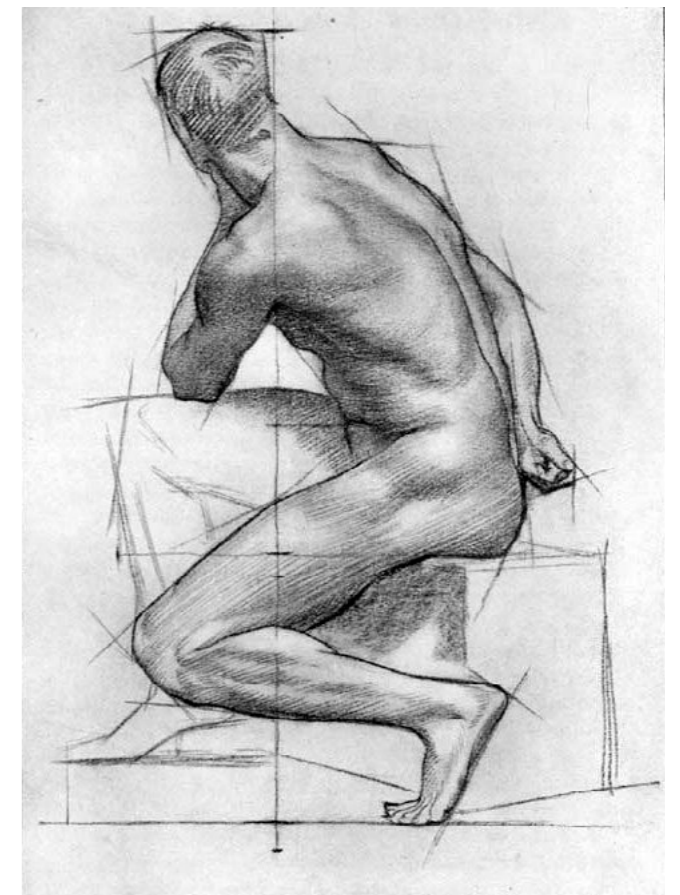
UNTUTORED LIFE DRAWING

These sessions are untutored and suitable for artists who can work confidently on their own. All experience levels are welcome for those who want to draw or paint the human form in a relaxed and quiet environment.

Artists need to bring their own materials. We supply easels and tables. Non-members are welcome to attend.

No bookings are required. Cash or eftpos is to be paid to the class monitor on the day.

Please be aware that these sessions feature male and female nude models. Artists must be 16+ and will need to show proof of age. Attendees aged 16 to 18 must provide proof of consent from a parent or guardian.



FRIDAY SESSIONS

Portraiture and Life group sessions each feature a single long pose for the entire 2 hour session.

PORTRAIT SESSION

4PM-6PM
\$20 (members)
\$25 (non-members)

LIFE GROUP

6:30PM-8:30PM
\$20 (members)
\$25 (non-members)

BOTH SESSIONS

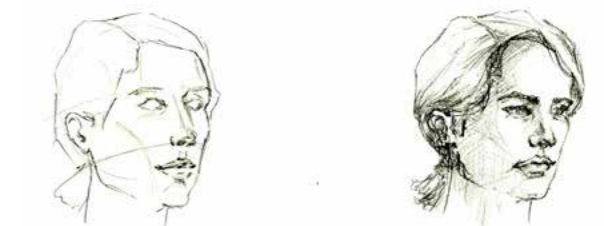
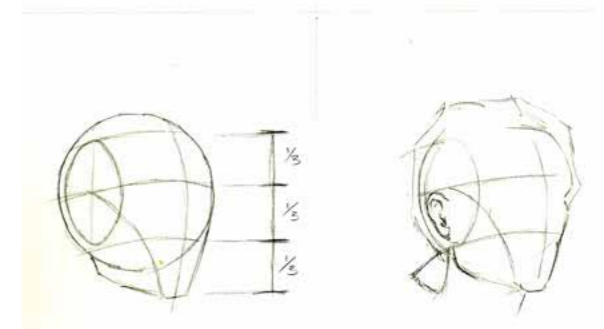
4PM-8:30PM
\$25 (members)
\$35 (non-members)

SATURDAY SESSION

Weekly sessions alternate between Long, Medium and Short poses as well as sessions with a single longer pose for painters who want more time to work on a piece. See the schedule of poses online.

LIFE GROUP

1PM-4PM
\$25 (members)
\$30 (non-members)



Sketches by Nathalie Anne Marion

OUR SUPPORTERS

Eileen Mackley AM VAS FVAS & Hylton Mackley AM - Gordon Moffatt AM - Noel Waite AO
Stuart Leslie Foundation - The Naphtali Family Foundation - The Hugh Williamson Foundation



2023

DATES TO REMEMBER

SEE FULL EXHIBITION DETAILS IN THE 2023 PROGRAMME CALENDAR

14-23 OCT OPENING: 7PM TUESDAY 17 OCT	ART SCHOOL & TUTOR EXHIBITION <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Entries: 2 to 10 Oct 11am-2pm• View Online: 19 Oct• Collection Day: 24 Oct 11am-3pm Students may submit up to 2 artworks and up to 2 sculptures.
27 OCT-6 NOV OPENING: 7PM TUESDAY 31 OCT	DRAWING EXHIBITION Bequest from the late Maree E Heffernan <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Entries: 25 Oct 11am-3pm & 26 Oct 11am-2pm• View Online: 1 Nov• Collection Day: 7 Nov 11am-3pm Members may submit 1 drawing. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Entry Fee: \$10 per artwork
27 OCT-6 NOV OPENING: 2PM SUNDAY 29 OCT	MARITIME EXHIBITION THOMAS SOMERSCALES TROPHY <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Entries: 25 Oct 11am-8pm & 26 Oct 11am-2pm• View Online: 30 Oct• Collection Day: 7 Nov 11am-3pm Members may submit up to 2 artworks and up to 3 sculptures. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Entry Fee: \$10 per artwork
9-20 NOV	LIFE GROUP EXHIBITION For VAS life & portrait group participants only <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Entries: 1 to 7 Nov 11am-2pm• View Online: 9 Nov• Collection Day: 21 Nov 11am-3pm Members may submit up to 2 artworks and up to 2 sculptures. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Entry Fee: \$10 per artwork
10-27 NOV OPENING: 7PM TUESDAY 14 NOVEMBER	ARTIST OF THE YEAR EXHIBITION Invitations to exhibit will be extended to artists who have received the highest number of votes from Select Exhibitions throughout the year. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Entries: 8 Nov 11am-8pm & 9 Nov 11am-2pm• View Online: 15 Nov• Collection Day: 28 Nov 11am-3pm Up to 3 artworks may be submitted: 1 large and 2 small.
23 NOV-13 DEC	LITTLE TREASURES <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Entries: 22 Nov 11am-3pm• View Online: 24 Nov• Collection Day: 14 Dec 11am-3pm Members may submit up to 3 artworks and 3 small sculptures. Each artwork should have a combined height and width of under 60cm, including the frame. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Entry Fee: \$10 per artwork



Contact us

The Victorian Artists Society
430 Albert Street
East Melbourne 3002

ABN: 75 004 046 824

Ph: 03 9662 1484

E: admin@vasgallery.org.au

W: vasgallery.org.au

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[#victorianartistsociety](https://www.instagram.com/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

