

VICTORIAN ARTISTS SOCIETY  
QUARTERLY JOURNAL  
150th ANNIVERSARY



April–September

**2020**

**VAS**

**150 YEARS**



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**Quarterly 2020**

The VAS Quarterly will be pleased to consider publication of or photographic contributions on subjects of general interest. Contributions will be published on a strictly honorary basis and no payment will be made.

**April – September 2020**

**Quarterly Editor and Designer**

**Mark Russell**

**Quarterly Photography**

**Cindy Rodriguez**

**Proofreading**

**Eileen Mackley, Chris Reade**

The VAS Newsletter 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.

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.

**Inside this issue**

.....	3
.....	5
.....	6
.....	8
.....	13
.....	14
.....	15
.....	16
.....	17
.....	18
.....	21
.....	22
.....	23
.....	24
.....	26
.....	26
.....	27
.....	28
.....	28



Cover Image: 'Storm over Streeton Country—Mt. Abrupt' oil on linen by Ben Winspear—Winner, 2020 VAS Winter exhibition, Senior Art Supplies Award

**WELCOME  
NEW MEMBERS**

- Joe Blundell
- Jane Pittard
- Helena Jones
- Erin Anderson
- Wayne Degenhardt

- Anthony Stephens
- Mariana Velo
- Yue Qi
- Hung Lin
- Rob Scholten
- Amanda Bennett
- Robert Sedman



*Eileen Mackley AM VAS FVAS  
VAS President*

## **PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**

As I mentioned in my last Quarterly Report, 2020 was to be a year of great activity, with the restoration of the building completed and the opening of our 150th Anniversary Celebrations. However this was not to be.

Through the COVID-19 pandemic, the Society has suffered the cancellations of exhibitions, student classes, members activities, such as plein air paint outs and studio life drawing. The decision was also made for all staff to work from home. This involved diverting phones and setting up computers off site. This procedure remains in place today.

I am sure all VAS members are missing the creative spirit that lies within the walls of the Society building, always open and always welcoming.

Having visited the building with Chris Reade our Manager for weekly checks,

I can report that it is silently waiting for us all to return, complete with the Winter Exhibition still hanging on the gallery walls.

It is the duty of Council to keep planning for the future even though we have no idea of when this horrific pandemic will come to an end.

We are filled with disappointment by not being able to complete our programme set out for our 150th Anniversary this year.

Our cancelled exhibitions have been carried over to our 2021 calendar programme, along with outside bookings, trusting that next year we will be open for business.

Over 150 years the Society has survived two world wars, the Great Depression of the thirties, the Spanish Flu and many more financial recessions.

With member support and activities alive, we will survive this pandemic of 2020.

We were incredibly lucky to have been able to celebrate our 150th Anniversary on the 10th March which was combined with the Contemporary Exhibition 2020 opening.

With our two of our three Select Exhibitions being cancelled , we have consequently lacked votes for the AOTY. With restrictions eased in June, we were able to show our Winter Exhibition. Social distancing requirements prevented us from having the an opening. The announcement of the awards with a critique by the Judge Herman Pekel was streamed live on Facebook. This worked very well, but still not enough votes for AOTY.

Within a week of opening the Winter Exhibition we found we were entering an even more very stressful time with the COVID-19 raging through Victoria, and stage 4 lockdown announced for the next 8 weeks. Once again our building was to be closed with the Winter Exhibition still on display in the galleries, where it will remain until we are able to open the building again. This exhibition can now be viewed on the VAS website along with the VAS Gallery Art for Sale site.

We have reviewed the Exhibition Programme & Calendar from August to October 2020 and have offered a list of new online exhibitions for artists who have been creating works while in lockdown.

The Art for Sale section can be found on the VAS website. For further information and assistance in placing your work, please phone the office and Cindy will help. This site is free for VAS members to exhibit their work.

With the galleries closed, the staff have been busy working on constructing a new website which will have many developments, upgrades and member benefits. This should be launched in October.

We are proud to announce our 150th Anniversary Commemorative Book has been completed and published.

This beautifully modern publication portrays the history of VAS and features winners of Artists of The Year, from 1973 when the Award was initiated by Robert Miller.

We are offering a free copy to members upon their renewal of their 2021 membership subscription before 31 January 2021.

Extra books will also be on sale for \$45.00 plus postage. Orders from members will be discounted to \$40.00 plus postage or collection from the office.

In this issue we have included a copy of the cover by Clive Sinclair. Order forms will be issued via the Notice Board, so watch that space This is an excellent gift for Christmas.

Take care and stay safe.

**Eileen Mackley AM VAS FVAS**  
**President**  
**Victorian Artists Society**

# A NEW VAS WEBSITE COMING SOON

During the last eight months, we have been fortunate to receive some grants from the Victorian Government and Creative Victoria, which have enabled the office team to work on creating a new website with a digital agency. This new website will be launched in the coming weeks.

The website encapsulates VAS's fresh new look as we embrace the digital age on our 150th anniversary. It also has a centralised database making it very easy to use, whilst increasing our efficiency in the office.

The new features of the website include:

- New online entry forms for members which will be integrated with the catalogues created at VAS. This feature will allow the admin staff operate more efficiently whilst reducing our overall paper wastage at VAS.
- A new mobile phone app will allow members to photograph, upload their artworks and fill out their entry forms with ease from their mobile phone or iPad devices, directly to our new website.
- We'll be launching an improved free member only, online gallery. Any member can create their very own profile page which includes the opportunity to upload images of you working in your studio and telling your 'artist story'. This gives every member the chance to promote and sell their artworks through our new site.
- All future VAS exhibitions that are shown in our galleries, will also be exhibited online, widening our audience for all exhibitions and giving more opportunity to sell your artworks. Our new 'Art for Sale' area has easy to use filter functions that will be handy for visitors to the site, who can search for an artwork by: medium, genre, subject, colour tones etc.
- A new VAS YouTube channel will be integrated to the site. On this channel we'll be posting video demonstrations on how to use the new website features, including how to login and manage your member profile.
- A new booking system, making it easier for everyone to book an art class, workshop, life and portrait sessions.
- A new online shop, that will sell the VAS 150th Anniversary book as well as a range of VAS merchandise.
- The new mobile phone app will also be integrated with google maps. This is a handy feature for our Paint Out members when you're out and about, trying to locate John Hurle on your next paint out trip.

The VAS team will be on hand to provide help to all members with any aspect of navigating these new online capabilities. We will continue to assist artists who need help by uploading photos of their artworks and entry forms for them.

When our galleries re-open, on 'send in days' we will be showing exhibiting artists how to fill in their online forms, upload photos and use their artist profile page.

We look forward to sharing the launch of this new website with you very soon.

**Cindy Rodriguez**  
**Administration**

*We are grateful for the financial support that we have received from the Victorian State Government through their Business Support Fund and from Creative Victoria.*



# VICTORIAN ARTISTS SOCIETY 1870–2020: CELEBRATING 150 YEARS

## The VAS 2020 150TH anniversary book is here!

By the time you are reading this issue of the Quarterly, our lovely celebratory publication will have been printed and on its way to the mailboxes of our members and friends.

While I can take credit as the editor, it is actually the work of a great many other people who have so generously contributed their time, stories and images of their beautiful paintings to make it a wonderful record celebrating the achievements of our society over the past 150 years. Gathering the stories, new and old, strange and wonderful, has certainly given me a much greater appreciation of the diverse talents of our members from so many different walks and stages of life.

I would like to take this opportunity to especially thank the fellow members whose knowledge and help I relied on heavily throughout the process from conception to publication—a period of almost three years. Anne Scott Pendlebury was particularly helpful in sorting through our archives to fill in many gaps in the timeline. Andrew Mackenzie and Graeme Williams both contributed well-researched and interesting historical information and of course I had the unfailing support of our President Eileen Mackley, the office staff and other VAS Council members. I am grateful to Clive Sinclair for so graciously allowing us to use his painting of ‘Autumn, Castlemaine’, on the cover (next page).

I must also pay tribute to the work of the book’s designer, Sheryl Cole, with whom I developed a warm and supportive relationship throughout the past year. I know you will agree that she has done a marvellous job when you see the book.

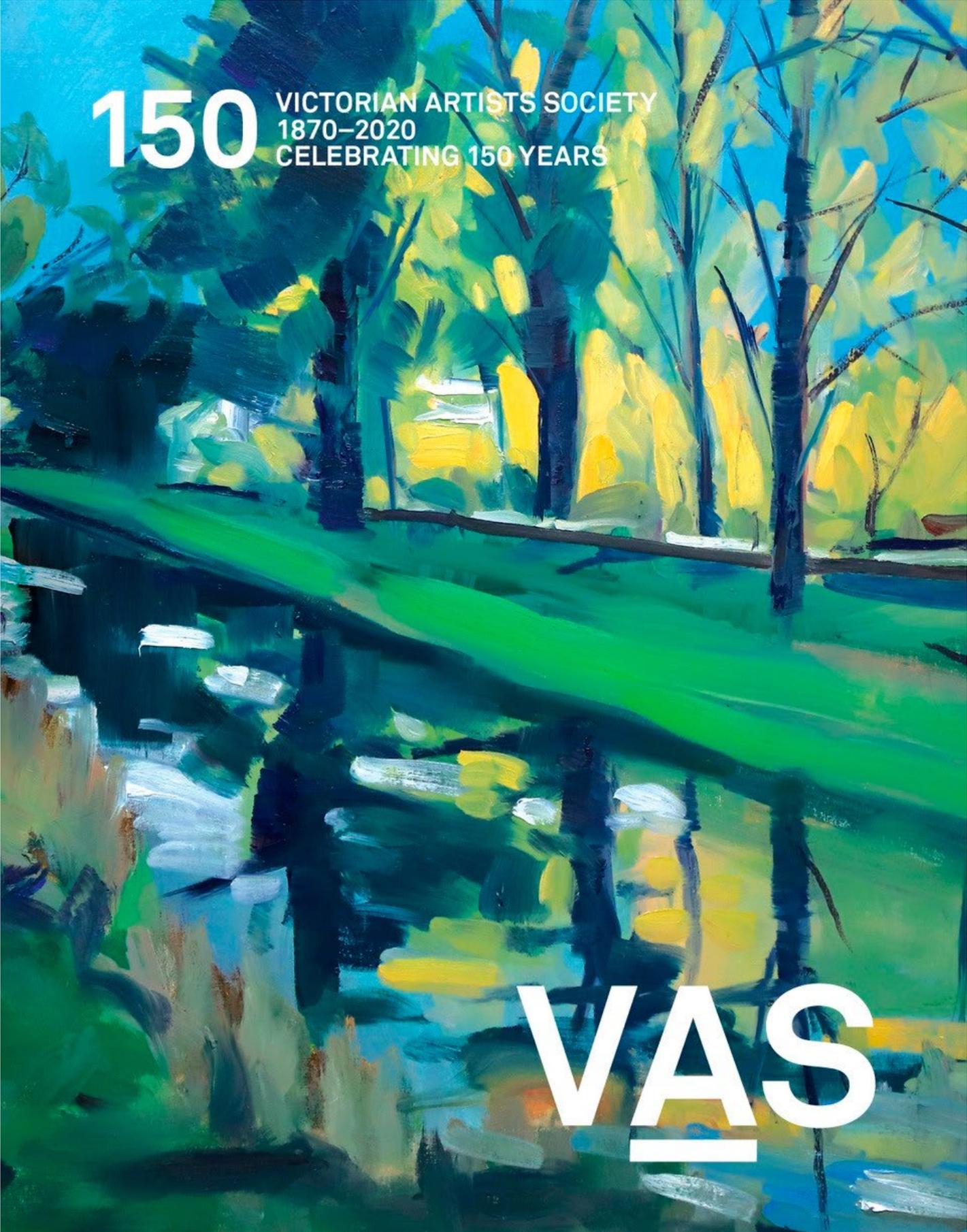
Of course, we would not have been able to undertake this project without the generosity of our sponsor, Clemenger Group. Others who were there to lend support and advice are too numerous to mention, but to you all, on behalf of the Society, I say a very big thank you for making this task so very pleasurable.

A complimentary copy of the book will be available to each VAS member as you renew your membership to the society and additional copies will be available for sale after that. Pre-orders will also be possible so watch your mailbox for details.

**Rosemary Noble**

**Editor ‘Victorian Artists Society 1870–2020: Celebrating 150 years’**

**September 2020**



**150** VICTORIAN ARTISTS SOCIETY  
1870-2020  
CELEBRATING 150 YEARS

**VAS**

*150th Celebration book cover:  
painting by Clive Sinclair, 'Autumn in Castlemaine'*



## VAS WINTER EXHIBITION 2020

Due to COVID-19 restrictions we were unable to host our usual opening night and awards ceremony for the 2020 VAS Winter Exhibition. Instead, the awards' presentation was livestreamed on Facebook where, as of printing, it has received over 2.5 thousand views.

Eileen Mackley, President of VAS, thanked all artists who were involved in the exhibition. 'We have 121 exhibits which is quite outstanding. Thank you very much for bringing your work in under these conditions. And I think a lot of people have been enjoying painting at home. So thank you very much. Thank you to Herman for his judging and giving such wonderful critiques, thank you very much.'



The Judge for the 2020 VAS Winter Exhibition was Herman Pekel, who has had a long career in the world of art. Herman is a painter of oil and watercolour, and also takes overseas workshops when we don't have a virus to worry about. What follows is Herman's critique of each Highly Commended artwork and Award Winner for the VAS 2020 Winter Exhibition.

## Highly Commended Awards

### Melissa Fraser, 'Ghost Ship'

This is quite a large piece, and one of the reasons I've chosen it is its uniqueness, its design and its beautiful colour sets, with this muted sort of warm grey maroon, this beautiful cold viridian. If we get in close we can see the beautiful handling of the paint. It's an absolutely unique lovely piece of work.



### Lisa Wang, 'Baristas at Brunetti, Melbourne'

The next one—I've chosen this for a totally different reason—is by Lisa Wang, and I chose this because of the amazing draftsmanship as well as the handling of paint. If you look closely at Lisa's work you can see she's academically trained, so the actual technique of this work is unbelievably good.



### Julian Bruere, 'Snowgums—Mt Torbreck'

When I look at this work I can honestly say it's just unbelievably well painted. It's just so well painted. Julian is an amazing draftsman. The work is beautifully drawn, beautifully executed, and as a bonus, this is a bonus, I don't see any white paint in the painting at all. So just a beautiful atmospheric work.





## Susan Morris, 'Banksia'

Once again when you look at all these paintings, they're all totally different. For me personally there's not one particular style—I respond to all styles of art. Now this work I chose for something totally different, number one—I liked it. I just looked at it and I thought 'I love that piece of work'. But it's also obviously very well done. I love the way it's composed and even though it's only a very small painting it says a lot for a small painting. And once again it's beautifully and sensitively executed.



## Eros Anceschi, 'Wattle Hill'

Now once again this is a totally different handling of paint. In fact the last three paintings had a little bit of paint, not a lot, just a little bit of paint. This is a very carefully painted work. There are whole sections where I can see half a dozen different colours. I can see cold greens, I can see viridians, I can see warm yellows. So it such a sensitive piece of work. I also chose it for its originality. It's a handling of paint that I've never seen, this sort of technique really used before on this scale. A beautiful work.

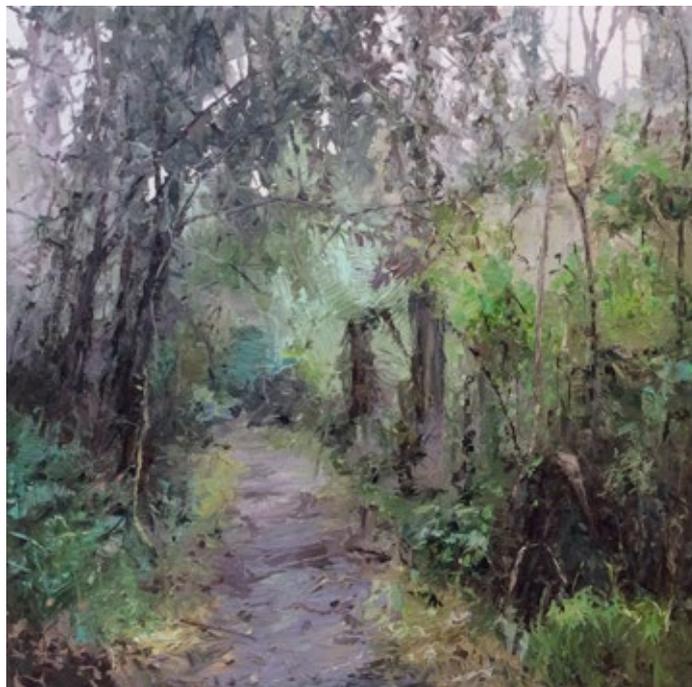


## Mike Kowalski, 'Arts and Leisure'

This next work is reminiscent of one of my favourite watercolourists, John Singer Sargent—but that's not why I chose it. I chose it for its competence in technique and unbelievably good draftsmanship. There is an amazing light, movement and an energy through the painting. And once again, not that this is an absolute criteria on my behalf, but there is absolutely no white paint that I can see. I do a lot of watercolours and I find that half the time I have to resort of white paint. This is a beautifully handled watercolour.

## Joe Blundell, 'Somewhere only we know'

Now the next one is something totally different again. This painting is impasto, with very thick paint. But I chose this for one reason alone. The thing that I responded to and I think the thing that we always respond to in painting more than anything, is colour. And in this the amazing use of those beautiful purples against those greens and the greys is absolutely beautiful. I keep looking at these gorgeous greys and it's offset by those greens. And it's once again some beautiful work.



## Chris White, 'Pt Addis Morning'

Now the painting by Chris White, it's funny, every one of these paintings I chose for a different reason. I didn't choose this one for colour, I didn't choose this because of the design—though the draftsmanship is very good—I chose this, apart from the fact that I responded to it, for the beautiful handling of paint. If you look very closely at Chris White's work and you look at this technique on the cliffs—that's an original technique. That's one thing I always look at, an original but beautifully handled technique. It's got quite a bit of paint but I wouldn't say it's quite impasto. The handling of the paint is absolutely magic.



## Maxine Wain, 'Keystone'

So I chose this one for a number of reasons. But one thing that is still always my number one priority is my response to an artwork. This one has a very strong design. It also has a nice textural element and it was one that caught my eye and it kept my eye for a long time. A nice piece of work.



## VAS 2020 WINTER EXHIBITION AWARD WINNERS

### Rachel Robertson, 'For Dad'

A very interesting piece. I reckon that will be me in two years. There's not much to say about this work—it speaks for itself. Highly realistic, highly detailed, and it's another work that I responded to very strongly. I responded to the actual shape of the old man, the way he's been elevated to look taller than life, the hunched over back, and the amazing detail in the face, in the feet and in the hands. I think it's a real worthy winner of the Sculpture Prize.



### Ben Winspear, 'Storm over Streeton Country—Mt Abrupt'

Let's talk a bit about Ben Winspear's work. The funny thing is when you choose painting, every one of these paintings and maybe a couple of ones that we haven't even seen today, I would have been quite happy to give the first prize to. But really, when I give a first prize it's really about one thing. I don't say to myself, okay I'll look at drawing, I'll look at tone, handling of paint. I'll look at a lot of things, but the thing that means the most to me is how I respond to it on an emotive level and I think I responded to Ben's painting on an emotive level for a number of reasons.

I can see the struggle, the struggle in the painting. Sometimes if a painting's too easy then it can have a slickness to it. I can see with this painting the struggle. Even though it's a traditional painting, even though it's a realistic painting, it's quite a unique painting. It's unique and it's original in its concept. With the rainbow and lightning, it reminds me of a John Constable painting that I saw in London in the Tate museum. It's got that John Constable feeling to it, and I'm not sure about this, but I wouldn't be surprised if this painting was painted plein air. It's got that feeling.

But it's an absolutely beautiful painting. I responded to it on an emotional level. I love the texture, I love the colours, but it's not even about that. It's purely how I responded to it, and this is the one, out of all the paintings in the exhibition that I responded to most.



It's always very difficult when you judge and when you judge you make a few friends but you make a lot more enemies. I wish I could give a lot more Highly Commended. I chose eight but so many more were worthy. So I hope people are happy with my judging. Thank you very much, it's been an absolute privilege to judge this year's Winter Exhibition for the Victorian Artists Society.



## **BOOK RELEASE: 'WATERCOLOUR WARFARE'** **By MAXINE WADE (B.Ed.Visual Arts Dip.Ed)**

A culmination of Maxine's 43 years of teaching, this book is suitable for all skill levels of the practice of watercolour painting, whether a beginner or a more experienced watercolourist. Maxine brings particular emphasis to avoiding the danger zones in using this medium, through a deeper understanding of the inherent nature of the paint and the critical use of water.

With concise and simple text, this book assists you in planning your 'battle'— with the right 'weapons' in your hand—to sidestep a problem, to avoid a failed attempt. Advice is given on aesthetic choices, whilst understanding and evaluating your progress. This is not simply a 'how to paint watercolours' book – but a 'how to succeed in watercolour painting' book.

### **14 chapters encompass an extensive examination of:**

- Paints, paper, brushes, tools and equipment
- The crucial use of elements of Art and design
- The techniques of watercolour painting and their appropriate application
- The application of good composition
- Colour and colour mixing
- The importance of values
- How to paint convincing shadows and light
- The use of drawing in watercolour
- Edges and backgrounds;
- The development of your personal style
- Interpretation of a subject
- The use of gouache (opaque watercolour)
- Problems and solutions
- How to evaluate your paintings

This book will be available for mail order through the author's email: [maxinewade8@msn.com](mailto:maxinewade8@msn.com).

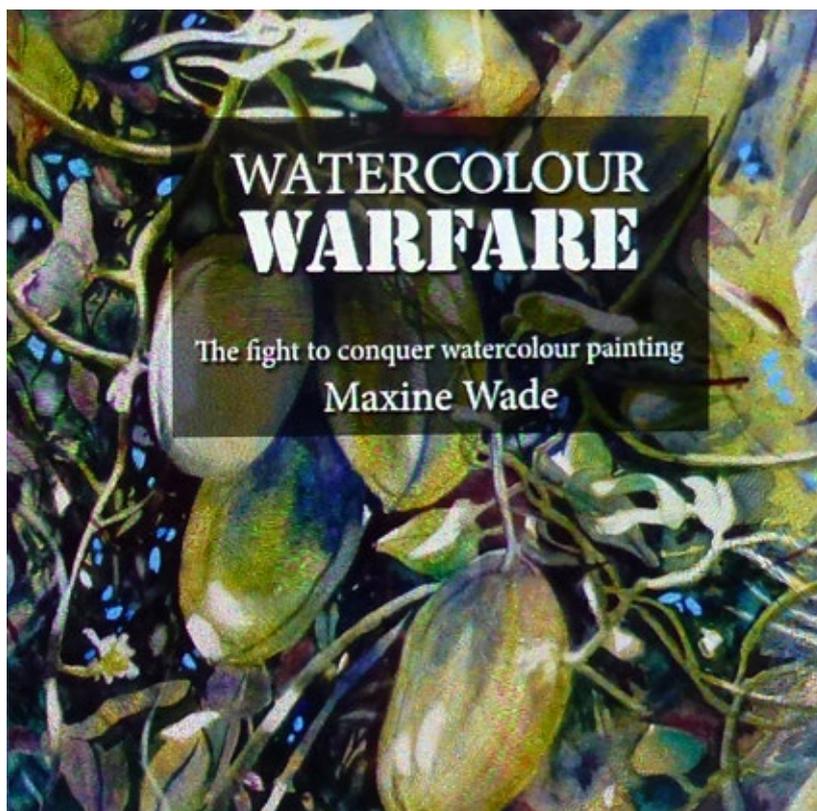
Price: \$45.00 (free postage in Victoria for the first 40 orders)

The book shall be released around the end of October.

Further details available at: [www.maxinewade.com](http://www.maxinewade.com)

### **SPECIAL OFFER FROM MAXINE:**

The first 40 purchasers will receive a limited edition copy signed by the author, together with a complimentary small original watercolour painting, by Maxine Wade.





## CREATIVITY DURING LOCKDOWN 2020

Now and again, most artists will go through the 'black canvas' lack of motivation syndrome, but these last few months in lockdown have been very challenging. Usually I have a very full week, teaching numerous classes from my studio, attending the Friday Group at VAS and doing my own artwork on the days in between.

At first I felt very flat, then I thought about what I'd always wanted to achieve but never had the time to do. So I started working on 'Our Family History', found an old bound A3 sketchbook (I had drawn in) and continued in it with each family member, back to the early 1800s. Having written all information, I started illustrating it with portraits and related subjects of interest. I drained my mum (now 94 years old) of all details she could remember and I think it gave her a good distraction to focus on. Now finished, and blessed with a little granddaughter in May, I hope I can encourage her to continue it when she's older.

I started a diary for granddaughter Isla, now 5.5 months old, and am filling it with drawings of her. Between lockdowns I was babysitting and drawing her from life, but now I'm working from my photographs from when I'm lucky enough to see her.

New project required, more weeks to fill in. My students have been messaging me with their artwork progress and I had been giving them advice and support, so I decided that instead of doing this individually, it would have more community spirit if I started up a private art page on Facebook. They post their work and receive feedback from their class fellows and myself. I also set up still life subjects, post photographs of them and set challenges each week for all to participate. I too, take part and video my progress to show how I tackled the subject. I ended up selling one of a bird's nest to a friend which was a bonus, and my daughter-in-law claimed one of a protea.

My son (a photographer), set up easels and exhibited his work in the front yard. A sign on the fence asked for passers-by to participate by tagging him in their social media sharing. At a social distance, people would stop to look at the works and he, with a beer in hand, got to chat to everyone. With so many people out walking, there were many, and it brightened everyone's day.

Practicing plein air painting in my back garden has been a challenge. I'm thinking about setting up in the front garden to see what response I get. I think we're all craving for our social network.

Now it's time to start planning for how we will operate in the new normal. I'm thinking of continuing more outdoor painting activities. Portraiture could be interesting outdoors, with a model, when we are allowed to gather in 10s or 20s. You might see the Friday Group in the Fitzroy Gardens until the VAS Studio opens up to us!

So blessed to have a skill that I can enjoy anytime, anywhere. Miss all my art buddies though—hope you're all faring well.

PS: I think every piece of my casual clothing has got paint smears.

**Gwendoline Krumins**

# COPING WITH LOCKDOWN

With measures in Victoria possibly easing in the weeks to come, I was asked to write a short article about COVID and how being in lockdown has impacted on my artistic practice. I have made a bit of an assessment and must admit that the outcome is not all bad, far from it.

Yes, lockdown had meant no longer being able to do my Saturday routine of going to the VAS studio for a life drawing session, and doing workshops there and elsewhere. My solo show, in the Fortyfivedownstairs art gallery in Flinders Lane got postponed, with a definite date still to be confirmed. The social side of these studio visits with the pleasant comradery was and is, sorely missed.

On the other hand, lockdown has also meant being able to devote time to finally, finally, complete unfinished work, to work up those promising sketches and—inspired by online life drawing sessions and reference photos posted online by art societies or emailed by models—to really delve into new techniques and improve on existing ones.

Incidentally, those online life drawing sessions have made me aware of how wide the art community stretches out. Some of the session I have been in had participants from not only Australia, but also New Zealand, Europe and the US, all bound together by that shared passion: being creative and making art. A wonderful realisation.

During lockdown I've also set up my own website ([www.hansvanweerd.com.au](http://www.hansvanweerd.com.au)) and seriously got involved in Instagram ([www.instagram.com/hansvanweerd](https://www.instagram.com/hansvanweerd)), an addictive affair with a high degree of FOMO. I've also entered a few art competitions and appeared in the Art/Edit Magazine and was interviewed by them. Things that otherwise I might not have had that much time for.

On balance lockdown has been a pretty lonely affair but the effort by VAS and other artist societies and individual people to keep things going has made a world of difference. Thank you!

Nonetheless, to be out and about again and to be able to do some plein air drawing or sketch people while going to a concert or while riding the train or tram is something I cannot wait to start doing again. I look forward to getting back to the art studio, to meeting fellow artists and models 'in the flesh' and chat, laugh, have serious discussions about art and life, have a coffee together, while gracefully declining a home-baked muffin, every week kindly provided by Jane, the wife of Bob Young, monitor of the VAS Saturday Life Drawing Group.

**Hans van Weerd**

**28 September, 2020**



# VAS PAINTOUTS

Along with just about everything else, our paintout program has been severely affected by the Covid restrictions. However, we managed to get a further two days in before the current shutdown.

## MAY

In May we went to the Coburg Lake Reserve which offers a nice range of subjects. From groomed lawns and stately trees to the bush like setting of the Merri Creek as it meanders through the reserve.

Most of the group focused on the creek setting, the rapids and the basalt rock cliffs.

We enjoyed a lovely late autumn day with the sun picking out the lush greens of the bank and the craggy profile of the cliffs.



## JUNE

For the June paintout we visited Yarraville and the port area of the Yarra River just north of the West Gate Bridge.

Port and Industrial locations provide a fascinating array of subjects. Large industrial structures of all shapes, grime, rust and cargo ships looming overhead as they pass by. It's always a rewarding experience looking at this kind of environment through an artist's eye.

**John Hurlle**  
**Outdoor Activities Convenor**

*Works painted from lockdown:  
Top, 'Woolshed Falls' by Roy Gibson  
Bottom, 'Williamstown', by Annee Kelly*

# THE PAINTOUTS YOU HAVE WHEN YOU CAN'T GO OUT!

Keeping a group of enthusiastic plein air painters restricted to gazing longingly toward the horizon, unable to venture out, is like keeping a greyhound tethered as the fluffy bait glides past. Sooner or later their spirit will break!

Well, perhaps that's a slight exaggeration. But as this interminable year has dragged on the frustration has increased for all of us.

If you walk past a house and see a forlorn figure standing, brush in hand and French easel strung over their shoulder, you might notice them sniffing at the wind for the scent of that far-off eucalyptus tree they so long to paint. Or straining to hear the gentle swish and swash of a river tumbling over a rapid, with little diamonds of reflected sunlight creating a magical subject to capture.

If you do, you can be sure it's a plein air painter under house arrest!

But seriously, the VAS Council has been well aware that many of our membership, as with the broader community, have found aspects of this year very hard to adjust to.

For us artists, it can be so challenging to maintain enthusiasm and creativity when our interaction with each other, and the camaraderie by which we are nourished, is suddenly taken away. Let alone after you've painted your back yard for the 500th time!

For our outdoor painting enthusiasts, there seemed little we could do to make up for the cancellation of our program. We felt however, it was important to at least have a reason to keep in touch and remain involved as a group.

The next best thing to being on location was to offer a sort of virtual paintout as an alternative. We have been emailing selected photos of previous paintout sites to the group.

The hope was that these would allow the artists to draw on their memory of being there and challenge themselves to paint the scene as freely and spontaneously as a true plein air painting ideally would be.

An alternative challenge was to try depicting the subject in a different style or with a different medium than they might normally employ. There was of course no pressure to participate or to share their work with the group if they didn't want to.

I'm pleased to say however, we've had images of some very nice work to share and there has been communication from member to member with comments, critiques and ideas.

Some haven't necessarily wanted to share their work but have said they've enjoyed having a challenge set for them and it has re-ignited a somewhat stifled creative drive.

We are very pleased with the result and have been so glad to be able to help keep the flame alight!

I'll take this opportunity to remind all VAS members that the paintout activities we provide are open to all financial members at no extra cost. Our calendar of activities (under normal circumstances) offers a broad range of locations for those who would like to join in.

All levels of experience are welcome and you can make some great friendships among like-minded artists. If you'd like to be kept up to date with our paintout program contact me at: [vas\\_paintouts@optusnet.com.au](mailto:vas_paintouts@optusnet.com.au)

**John Hurle**  
**Outdoor Activities Convenor**



*'Kilcunda', by Serena Xue, with remote guidance by David Chen*

# C DOUGLAS RICHARDSON: VAS PRESIDENT 1918–1925

## FORGOTTEN MAN OF THE 9 X 5 EXHIBITION

The 9 by 5 'Impression' Exhibition of 1889 (VAS Quarterly July–September 2019) is purportedly the first in Australia organised by artists promoting themselves and a new approach to painting and sculpture. Tom Roberts (1856–1931), Arthur Streeton (1867–1943), and Charles Conder (1868–1909), and to a lesser extent Fred McCubbin (1855–1917), are most commonly associated with this Exhibition. These four artists contributed 153 of the 183 works in the Exhibition's catalogue. Student artists Roger Falls (1858–) and Herbert Daly (1865–1929) provided 4 paintings. The students may have been recruited not only for their talent but also their VAS and Melbourne society connections. The remaining works, 19 paintings and 6 sculptural pieces (23% of the Exhibition), were the work of Charles Douglas Richardson (1853–1932).

Richardson was a contemporary and friend of Roberts and McCubbin. He was one of longest serving Victorian Artists Society Presidents and the only one to have served two non-consecutive terms. History hasn't been as kind to him as it has been to his more celebrated friends despite his being a leading sculptor, painter, engraver and teacher of the period.

### Pre 9 by 5 Exhibition

Charles Douglas Richardson was born in Middlesex, England in 1853 and immigrated with his family to the Portland area of Victoria in 1858. His father was a successful portrait painter and teacher. He was apprenticed to a Melbourne lithographer after leaving school and enrolled at the Old Trades Hall School of Design where he became friends with Tom Roberts and Fred McCubbin. In 1871 Richardson along with Roberts and McCubbin enrolled in the new NGV School of Design. By 1876 Richardson was exhibiting at the VAS and attending evening anatomy classes at Melbourne University. In the same year he was elected to the VAS Council and '... helped in all capacities including the Life Class'.

Richardson followed Tom Roberts to the Royal Academy School in London in 1881 where they shared a studio. He completed the 6 year painting and sculpture course at the RA and performed the customary Grand Tour of Europe with his sculpture friends.

The core of the RA painting syllabus consisted of copying the Old Masters and drawing from antique casts and life models. Work exhibited by Richardson at the time reflects the history subjects preferred by the Academy and the prevailing art movements. By 1883 Roberts had already moved on to an interest in Impressionism and plein air painting.

The Melbourne that Richardson returned to in 1889 was still enamoured with the genre and allegorical styles of Victorian England. Richardson's 'Acrasia: Or the Enchanted Bower' (Figure 1) was exhibited at the VAS 1889 Autumn Exhibition.



Figure 1: 'Acrasia: Or the Enchanted Bower' VAS 1889

### 9 by 5 Exhibition

The exhibition was very much the brainchild of the entrepreneurial Roberts. Roberts, Streeton and Conder had preceded Richardson to Melbourne and '... were already shaking off the dry skin of outworn Europeanism'. According to Richardson's biographer Fysh, the Exhibition was '... a great success ... the good people of Melbourne shut their eyes and bought lavishly of the queer pictures on cigar box lids ...' The works were priced to sell at 3 guineas a piece. Richardson was hardly the Impressionist in the mould of Streeton or Conder but was probably there on the strength of his friendship with Roberts and McCubbin and his versatility as an artist.

Unfortunately none of Richardson's paintings from the 9 x 5 exhibition can be located. His 'Foggy Morning' evidently matched the style of Whistler's nocturnes and colour studies so admired by Streeton, Conder and Roberts. 'Foggy Morning' was bought by the same buyer of Robert's 'Fog on the Thames' (Figure 2). His sketchy wax panel titled 'Wind' has survived and is in the NGV's permanent Collection.



*Above Left: Figure 2: 'Fog on the Thames'. Tom Roberts*

*Above Right: Figure 3: 'Wind' C D Richardson Wax bas relief on wood panel*

Despite strong sales and general public acceptance of the 'Impressions' the work of Streeton, Conder and Roberts was panned by the conservative media. The Argus commented that the exhibition as a whole 'would leave a very painful feeling behind it, and cause one to despond with respect to the future of art in the colony'. They described Richardson's wax reliefs however as the best 'bits' of the Exhibition. Richardson's paintings may not have been strictly Impressionist however, judging by the surviving example 'The Wind' (Figure 3), his 'plastic sketches', wax reliefs on wood panels, with their texture and suggestions of movement (Figure 3) were in the spirit of the Exhibition.

## Post 9 by 5 Exhibition

From 1890 to 1897 Richardson was Director of Painting and Sculpture Life Classes at the VAS. In 1914 at the age of 61 he married Margaret Baskerville (1861–1930), one of his sculpture students. Margaret was Victoria's first female professional sculptor and described by Margaret Preston as one of Australia's pioneer women artists. By this time Richardson's focus had turned to sculpture and he and his wife completed a significant number of public works in Victoria during this period e.g. 'The Discovery of Gold' (1906) (Figure 5) in Bendigo and his marble bust of the first Lord Mayor of Melbourne, Samuel Gillot, (Figure 4) still in the foyer of Melbourne City Council in Swanston Street.



*Far Left: Figure 4: Marble bust of Sir Samuel Gillot*

*Left: Figure 5: The Discovery of Gold*

In 1915 Richardson was appointed VAS Treasurer and Trustee. He served as President during the WW1 years between 1918 and 1924 and again in 1926. He resigned as President in 1930 ‘... through failing powers’. Margaret died in 1930 and Richardson donated a significant collection of their work to the Bayside (formerly Brighton) City Council. C Douglas Richardson died in 1932 at the couple’s home and studio in Church Street, Middle Brighton.

## Legacy and Collections

Bayside City Council still holds the ‘Birrilla’ Collection of 36 items of painting and sculpture by Margaret Baskerville and C Douglas Richardson ([www.victoriancollection.net.au](http://www.victoriancollection.net.au)). Richardson’s ‘The Cloud’ (Figure 6) was cast in bronze during the 1980s and set in a formal water garden in the grounds of BCC’s Sandringham offices. His works can also be viewed online in the collections of the NGV, State Library of Victoria, Geelong Art Gallery, Art Gallery of South Australia and at [www.aasd.com.au](http://www.aasd.com.au).



Figure 6: ‘The Cloud’ C D Richardson

Finally, I am drawn to Richardson’s landscape ‘Hillside, Bacchus Marsh’ (Figure 7) painted at the very end of his life in 1932 and the only work of his in the wonderful Geelong Art Gallery. Although much of his painting in his later years reflected his interest in symbolism and mysticism, there is enough colour and energy in this painting for me to view it as his tribute to his Heidelberg School friends.

Though never an Impressionist as such nor a member of the Heidelberg School, Richardson was the most educated and versatile of professional artists and very much a part of the Australian art world around the turn of the 20th century.

**Bruce Baldey  
2020**



Figure 7: ‘Hillside.  
Bacchus Marsh’



## DIGITAL ART FROM LOCKDOWN

How the world has changed. The digital world has become a lifeline for us. I have been ordering my art supplies online and waiting eagerly for the parcels to arrive. It reminds me of my excitement, when as a child, my Grandmother would post out a brown paper parcel for me with 'exotic' English comics and a garishly pink cylindrical lolly called Worthing Rock rolled up inside. Now with Galleries closed, online exhibitions are becoming the new norm for promotion and sales of our artwork. Many artists are having to navigate the added costs and the vagaries of packaging and posting their rolled-up paintings and prints to customers around the world. Hopefully, the artist's clients will be experiencing the joys of receiving their parcels.

When I was studying Art and Design, we learnt to touch type on electric typewriters. The lecturer said, 'One day computers will be important for producing art'. How could any of us have imagined what 2020 would be like? In photography classes we had to purchase film, develop and print them in darkrooms. Does anyone still do that? My digital camera was stolen a few years back on our trip to Europe. I lost all my pictures of Portugal and Spain. Never again! Now, I prefer the convenience of my phone to record subject matter. My shots are safely and automatically stored on an easily retrievable 'cloud' server.

Digital art has been around since the late 1960s. My first experiences at creating digital art were producing dots and lines of colour on a small screen using programming. There were no mice or painting programs. Later, in the 80s I was teaching primary students how to draw using a computer with some very basic graphic tools. Storage and working memory capabilities of the computers was very limited. Now, I am in seventh heaven. I use the iPad and the Procreate program to create some of my art. I can currently only produce an artwork 42 x 59.4 cm (A2) in size using the iPad. If I want to go larger, I need to transfer my work to my computer. So, my current strategy is to draw the individual components with the pencil stylus on my iPad as large as I can. I then transfer the drawings to Photoshop on my computer where I arrange the parts and paint the final composition. My artworks are then professionally printed on archival paper using archival inks using a process called Giclee.

**Richard Impey**  
**Facebook: richardimpeyartist**  
**Instagram: @richardimpeyartist**



*Left, details from  
'Autumn Leaves 2020'*

# VAS EXHIBITIONS TO GET READY FOR

## Nature's Way

Landscape and Plein Air.  
All mediums accepted plus sculpture.  
Photos of art work to be sent in 19, 20 & 21 October.  
View on website from Friday 23 October.

**Further details to be sent to members via email.**



*'Creek Bed Brachina',  
oil by Ray Hewitt*



## Art Alive 2020

13–30 November 2020.

Replacing the Artist of the Year Exhibition.  
If restrictions are eased, this exhibition may still  
be held in the VAS Galleries.

**Members to be advised.**

*Detail from 'Waiting to Bat', oil by  
Jennifer Fyfe, Artist of the Year 2019*

## Little Treasures

18 November–8 December 2020.

Replacing the 9 x 5 Exhibition listed in our programme. The 9 x 5 will be  
carried over to the 2021 Retrospective Exhibition.

If restrictions are eased, this exhibition may still be held in the Cato Gallery.

**Members to be advised.**

**All works currently online can be viewed using this link:**

<https://victorianartistsociety.com.au/art-sale>



*'Leucospermum', Oil by Ray Wilson,  
Little Treasures 2017*

# UPCOMING EXHIBITIONS

## NATURE ABSTRACTED

**ROBYN PRIDHAM**

**1 – 15 DEC**

**EILEEN MACKLEY  
MEMBERS ROOM**



## SHAPING MOODS

**GLAC, ROVSKI, WISNIEWSKI**

**2 – 8 DEC**

**FRATER GALLERY**

This exhibition explores spectrum of views on personal experiences in contemporary world and expresses it on canvas.



*'Arkadis', oil by  
Gabriela Rovski*



## THE OTWAYS EROS ANCESCHI

**2 – 15 DEC**

**McCUBBIN  
GALLERY**

Eros reveals his enduring passion for the landscape of the Western Otways.

*'Wattle Hill', oil by  
Eros Anceschi*



*'The Forest', oil by  
Paul Laspagis*

Paul works with the landscapes of Melbourne's outer eastern suburbs.

He does drawings on location and develops the paintings in the studio.

His intention is to develop an autonomous pictorial structure that integrates the contents of the space studied.

## VIBES POLISH ART FOUNDATION

**9 – 15 DEC**

**FRATER GALLERY**

An exploration of ecology, existence and how we vibrate in the world we live in.



**LANDSCAPE:  
A LIVING  
PRESENCE  
PAUL LASPAGIS  
2 – 15 DEC  
HAMMOND  
GALLERY**



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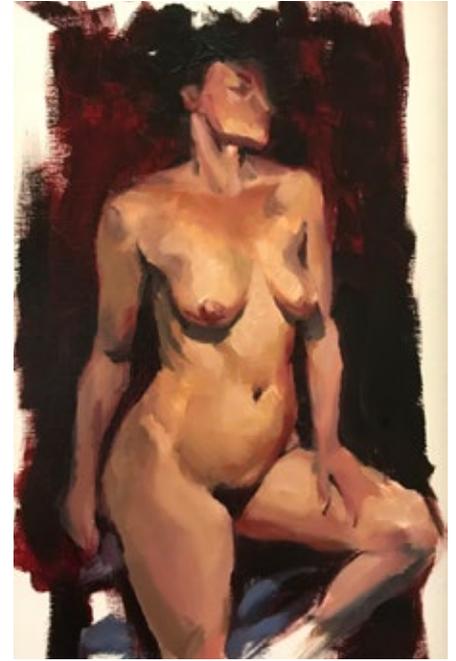
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 \$15 (members) \$25 (both sessions)  
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Life Group Saturday 12.00pm–3.00pm  
 \$20 (members)  
 \$25 (non-members)

Members only 5 session package: Saturday \$75 Wednesday \$50

These sessions are untutored and suitable for artists who can work confidently on their own. All ages and experience levels are welcome, for those who want to draw the human form in a relaxed environment. For more information see:

<http://victorianartistsociety.com.au/untutored-life-drawing>



*'Emma', by Joe Whyte*



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# 2020

## THE YEAR AHEAD

### AND DATES TO REMEMBER

#### ALL EXHIBITIONS TO BE CONFIRMED

FROM FRIDAY 23  
OCTOBER

##### NATURE'S WAY

Landscape and Plein Air.  
All mediums accepted plus sculpture.  
PHOTOS OF ART WORK TO BE SENT IN 19, 20  
& 21 OCTOBER  
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13-30 November  
2020

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18 November-8  
December 2020

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# VAS

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Map design by David Kaneen

