

SPRING NEWSLETTER 2020

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Newsletter

Elizabeth Yuill Proctor Suzi Abbott

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Welcome to our Spring 2020 Issue of our Newletter. Although as I write this it is quite chilly out there. But the promise of better things to come is certainly in the air. We have a large Peony Rose tree which is about to burst into bloom, the blooms are as large as dinner plates and more than doubles. Quite a delight.

We are always looking for interesting articles (like Lisa Dickson's!) from our members. This is *your* Newsletter, so please help us to make it even more interesting. Is there something you have read you would like to share? A technique you use, or have come across? Please get in touch newsletter.basnzinc@gmail.com

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President's Report - Lesley Alexander

Spring is here - or so it says on my calendar, but as I write this in Auckland, it is cold, windy and wet! I hope the weather is good where you are and you are finding time to paint! I need to get out into the garden, but as I'm a fair weather gardener that will have to wait!

We all get inspiration for paintings from many different places - many of you have spectacular gardens where you spend many hours of your time planting, weeding and taking delight in waiting for your favourite flowers to bloom again so giving you a chance to paint your favourite flowers again! A constant source of inspiration! I find my specimens on walks in urban areas and bush or the fresh produce departments of supermarkets! I look for unusual, old or life worn specimens to paint, in keeping with my age and



condition I often think! What are your favourite subjects to paint and where do you find them? (This will be next issue's Question to the Members - editor)

I have had a very busy few weeks and as they say, it never rains but it pours, I have art in 3 shows at the moment! Quite a feat of organisation getting everything in the right place at the right time - even getting the artwork finished and framed was a bit hair raising!

Our exhibition at Auckland Botanic Gardens is still on - just heard we have another potential sale - should know more after this weekend! The visitor centre staff look after the exhibition in the week, but the weekends are much busier so we try to have a BASNZ member manning the gallery over the weekends. Numbers going through have been very good, the times I've sat there we have had over 150 come to look and it's great to interact with the visitors - they love to hear about the artists and plants, and are keen to know how you all get such fine detail in your work! We still have till Labour Weekend to get some more sales so keep sharing it with family and friends, on your social media etc.

The website is coming on slowly - thank you for all of you who have shown interest in having a presence on the site. What an amazing talented bunch you are! Many of you have sent through your images and information, but there is still time if any others wish to take the opportunity to showcase your work - look back for an email sent to you on 6th September as that has all the details. We do need the images to be clear, with a clean background to show off your work to it's best advantage!

Member Profile - Suzy Abbott

1. Who or what inspired you to start painting?

It was an exhibition of paintings from Shirley Sherwood's collection which were being shown in a gallery in Sydney in the late '90s which took my breath away and really acted as a catalyst. I think until that point, the only botanical art I had ever seen were probably Redouté prints in hotel bedrooms and hallways!

2. Do you have a botanical hero?

I have multiple botanical heroes but if there had to be a shortlist it would include Sydney Parkinson, Rory McEwan, Rosie Sanders and Shirley Sherwood.





3. If you had to choose a six colour palette which would you choose and why?

My luxury six (actually seven!) colour palette would have to include the following:

Schminke Transluscent orange – such a beautiful colour which seems to just burst into life on the paper

W&N Permanent Alizarin Crimson- a reliable and steady

favourite

W&N Bright Violet - a stunning velvety rich hue

W&N Payne's Grey – indispensable

W&N Permanent sap green- such an easy, go-to versatile green as a base W&N Quinacridone Gold – like the chocolate of paints.... a special treat

W&N Indigo

Not sure how I would cope without the primary colours but I would just beg borrow or steal!

4. What is your favourite paper to work with?

My preference is either Arches or Fabriano Artistico both 350gsm. I have had issues with Fabriano so at the moment am working on Arches paper.

5. Is there one book you would particularly recommend?

Three favourite books. I often find myself dipping into any one of these three, either for inspiration or for an up close view of technical detail.

"Colours of Reality" Rory McEwan

"Treasures of Botanical Art" Shirley Sherwood & Martyn Rix

"Flowers A Celebration of Botanical Art" Rosie Sanders

6. Which artists do you find most useful to follow online?

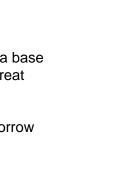
I really enjoyed Anna Mason's online course some years ago. I credit her with getting me back on track but I don't really follow anyone online as such.

7. What one piece of advice would you give to a new artist?

I would tell a new artist to keep experimenting. Try out different tutors, check out online tutorials, find a mentor, try different materials, find artists whose work you admire and then just keep at it. Practice might not make perfect but it goes a long way to improvement and ultimately enjoyment.

8. Do you have a special 'hack' or trick which works for you?

I don't really have any special hacks but when I am close to finishing a work, I will often look at it upside down or in the mirror or take a photo and look at the photograph to see what needs improving. Sometimes I will just leave it for a week or so and come back to it.







The Brilliant Story of Colour! - Lisa Dickson

Lately, as I have been reaching for my watercolour half pans, I have been wondering how my paints are made, where the pigments come from, who created the hues and how they acquired their interesting and varied names. A quick read later, and I am even more intrigued. From the earliest pigments used in prehistoric art through to our modern pigments, the history of the watercolourist's most obvious tool is both colourful and intriguing.



Cobalt

Cobalt is a naturally occurring ore that can be used to produce a surprising array of pigments (think cobalt violet, blue, green and yellow). Cobalt ore is not mined for itself, it is generally recovered as a by-product from mining more valuable metals, such as iron, nickel, copper or silver. German miners named *Kobolt*, which translated to an underground goblin or rock troll. It was a superstitious term used by the medieval miners for ores which did not produce the sought after valuable metals, only toxic fumes and cave-ins. Cobalt was essentially "the goblin of the mines".

Cobalt violet PV14

An inorganic pigment, Cobalt violet was discovered in 1859 by Salvètat (a French chemist) and was the first truly 'violet' pigment. The first cobalt violets were made from cobalt arsenate, a highly toxic compound (due to the arsenic content) that is rarely used today. Modern cobalt violet pigment is made from cobalt phosphates, replacing the toxic arsenates of the original. Historically, the limited resources and arduous processes needed to obtain purple pigments made them an expensive luxury, a symbol of status, wealth and majesty. Unlike shades of purple (which can be formed by mixing red and blue pigments), cobalt violet is one of those hues that cannot be created by mixing other colours. Cobalt violet pigment was a favourite of Claude Monet, Georges Seurat and Vincent van Gogh.

Although muted in its tint, it is an incredibly versatile pigment. As well as being useful in watercolour washes for morning skies, cobalt violet is a staple for the watercolourist, used to create glowing shadows in botanicals, landscapes and portraits.

A delicate, semi-transparent purple, cobalt violet (colour index PV14) is highly lightfast (ASTM I), extremely permanent (Rating AA), granulating pigment. Cobalt violet is very stable, and is also the only truly lightfast violet pigment. Modern cobalt violet is non toxic.

Cobalt blue PB28

"Cobalt [blue] is a divine colour and there is nothing so beautiful for putting atmosphere around things..." Vincent van Gogh.





A violet clad angel from the Resurrection of Christ by Raphael (1483 – 1520)



Frances Shearing watercolour showing strong use of cobalt violet in the stonework.

Cobalt blue is a clean blue pigment. Although smalt (a pigment made from cobalt blue glass) has been known since the Middle Ages, cobalt blue was not manufactured commercially until the early 1800s. A

Minister of the French Government appointed a chemist (Louis Jacques Thénard) and a Professor of Drawing (Léonor Mérimée) to create a new blue pigment. Ultramarine, the blue of the day, was coveted by artists but wildly expensive. Thénard was to find an alternative.

Thénard discovered Cobalt blue in 1802 after experimenting with roasting cobalt arsenate and cobalt phosphate with alumina in a furnace. Production begin in France in 1807 (it was originally



called Thénard's blue) and it quickly became an alternative to the very expensive Lapis Lazuli blue pigments. Prized as a fine, deep blue - neither too purpley, nor to green - and economically viable to boot, it became an artist favourite. Cobalt blue was used extensively by Turner, Renoir, Monet, and van Gogh.

A cool blue, Cobalt blue is able to function as the only blue in your paintbox if need be. It has excellent covering power, is bright, and is a good workhorse for making a wide range of blues, lovely clean greens and exquisite violet shades.

A neutral, non-staining primary blue, Cobalt blue is great for mixing, as it will subtly modify most pigments. It's ability to create soft edges, to lift and mix readily, makes it a valuable contribution to watercolour palettes. Cobalt blue (colour index PB28) is a highly lightfast (ASTM I), extremely permanent (Rating AA), low-staining and granulating pigment.



Monet's Iris's included a palette of cobalt blue and cobalt violet.

While the ancient miners may have despaired when they found *cobolt* in their ores, the modern artist has lots of reason to celebrate these wonderful colours!







Van Gogh Starry Night, Renoir's La Yole and Picasso's Les Demoiselles d'Avignon, show the love of cobalt blue.

Internet

To link in with Lisa's fascinating article, I found this link to a wee video on the **Winsor & Newton** site about colour permanence: http://www.winsornewton.com/uk/masterclass/permanence-in-colour/

What use would our lovely paints be without **brushes?** There has been some talk lately about use of synthetic brushes - they have come a long way and some artists are recommending them over natural bristles. Here is an article by **Jackson's** (suppliers of art materials): https://www.jacksonsart.com/blog/2020/04/08/the-development-of-synthetic-brushes/

Dianne Sutherland discussed her suggested materials - including brushes in this blog:

http://diannesutherland.blogspot.com/2020/08/

For those of you who order online, Ken Bromley has a sale on: https://www.artsupplies.co.uk/?utm_source=Ken+Bromley+Art+Supplies+Newsletter&utm_campaign=335c20c355-EM_WC_13102020&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_4fa86c4fb8-335c20c355-423761586&goal=0_4fa86c4fb8-335c20c355-423761586



Question to our members

This issue we asked our members to send in photos of their workspaces - ideally not all tidied up for the photos!

Rebecca Brown-Thompson (Oregon)

I have a huge very cluttered space to work in and if I lived in NZ I could donate quite a few books. This building was originally a RV garage when we bought our house so we had it converted to my studio and the space above is a room we can use for visitors. My must have is my white drawing table and lots of storage and file cabinet.





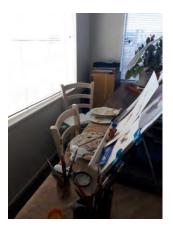
This is looking at the front door.

This is looking back the other way

The big table and red stools are where I teach every now and then. The nude guy painting I didn't do but bought at a GNSI conference it was painted for a book on drawing anatomy. He actually was a police officer that volunteered to pose. :-). All my various art works are stored here. U might be able to see some of the felt work. :-).

Suzi Pearce (Hanmer Springs)

My workspace is actually a small portion of our dining table so my 'must have' is the spare dining chair that serves as extra space!



Janet Marshall (Nelson)



Entrance to studio



Winter studio



Jennifer Duval-Smith (Auckland)

Jennifer described her space as "tidy"! Think we can all understand that!



Michelle Watson (Christchurch Area)

I am fortunate to have a room and can spread out as much as I like.

The room has lots of natural light, but I also have three desk lamps. My work table is a large sheet of MDF atop a desk I had made for my son. On the wall in front of me is a page of quotes, handy when the going gets tough I recently made these shelves, by converting a tall two door cupboard, at the bottom is a steel set of drawers to store artwork, I built the shelves to fit them. Then above is a fixed shelf for large folios and above that two slide out shelves for paper. I used the handles from the cupboards on these, nothing wasted. The top is another piece of MDF, so it gives me a long bench to spread out and I can use for sewing or whatever.

For a "must have", that would probably be some music playing on the iMac.







Book Review - Susan Worthington

Have you read any good books lately? With spring rain across much of the country, it's a good time to sit down with a cuppa and a good book.

The lockdown and You Tube took me to John Muir Laws nature journaling site. Nature journaling has become popular as a way of recording observations in the natural world, and another way of extending botanical art skills.

Painting and drawing nature in sketchbooks is not a new endeavour, Beatrix Potter, The Country Women's Diary are two that immediately came to mind.

While staying in England a friend lent me a great book called 'The Undercliff', by Elaine Franks, published in 1989 by J. M. Dent & Son Ltd. The wonderful Undercliff Nature Reserve is on the south coast of England





between Axmouth in Devon, and Lyme Regis in Dorset. The range of habitats in this area are remarkable - cliff face, woodland, fresh water ponds, rock covered scrub, and sea shore with an abundance of flora and fauna.

The book contains the studies of Elaine Franks. Her paintings and drawings are beautiful recordings of her observations. Useful to the artist interested in doing something similar, is her sharing of how she works in the field and puts her observations all together in a composition.

"Armed with notebook, camera and binoculars, I quietly watch and listed, aiming to merge into the landscape and absorb the surrounding images, smells and sounds.

Elaine continues, 'Taking my notes to the Exeter Museum, I handled the skins and mounts, learning the form and structure of the birds, taking colour notes and making drawings of details such as the beak and feet. Back in the drawing board all these fragments were worked together into the completed painting'.

Every time I get out my copy again, think I should use my own garden and surrounding countryside as a nature reserve and keep a journal.

I recommend hunting out this lovely book. It is available secondhand at Abe books and Amazon. How about for Christmas?

Susan Worthington

Susan will be doing a regular book review for us - Editor

I have found the links to this book very reasonably priced at: https://www.abebooks.com/servlet/SearchResults?sts=t&cm_sp=SearchF-_-home-_-Results&an=Elaine+Franks&tn=The+undercliff&kn=&isbn=

 $https://www.amazon.com/Undercliff-Naturlists-Sketchbook-Devon-Dorset/dp/0~8~2~1~2~1~7~2~9~1~/r~e~f~=~s~r~_~1~_~1~?~dchild=1\&keywords=The+undercliff\&qid=1602649280\&sr=8-1$



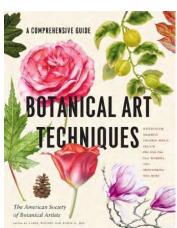


The following review is copied from Book Depository the price is \$60.95 NZ - to order: https://www.bookdepository.com/Botanical-Art-Techniques-American-Society-Botanical-Artists/9781604697902?ref=grid-view&gid=1602649612079&sr=1-1

Botanical Art Techniques

Hardback English. By (author) American Society of Botanical Artists

Botanical Art Techniques is a beautifully illustrated and comprehensive guide to one of the most delicate art forms. From the experts at the American Society of Botanical Artists, this essential reference features how-to tutorials for all the major techniques: pen and ink, watercolor, coloured pencil, egg tempera, oil, acrylic, gouache, silverpoint, and etching. The tutorials move from basic and introductory to advanced, so the reader can build on their skills as they progress. Additional information





includes a detailed overview of the necessary materials, basic information about the principles of composition, and advice on how to develop a personal style. Filled with 900 photographs, Botanical Art Techniques is a must-have for creative people everywhere.

The following review iscopied from Book Depository the price is \$60.95 NZ - to order: https://www.bookdepository.com/Botanical-Art-Techniques-American-Society-Botanical-Artists/9781604697902?ref=grid-view&qid=1602649612079&sr=1-1

Very difficult to get a hold of - think it has sold out! Editor

Exhibition News

Auckland Botanic Gardens & Hanmer Springs

When the Auckland exhibition finishes, everyone who exhibited there is invited to have one piece of their work sent to **Hanmer Springs for a Summer Show of Botanical Art** from 1 December - 31 January. Please let Elizabeth Yuill Proctor know if you are interested (elizabethayp@gmail.com) South Islanders, are also welcome to send 3 other pieces along as well. (numbers depending on interest.) As it is a Cash & Carry exhibition, I am happy to hold a couple of extra pieces here to fill in as works are sold. Expressions of Interest will go out by early November.

Suzy Abbott - Christchurch

Suzy & a friend are having an exhibition at the Art Centre, Christchurch of combined works. The way I understand it, the each worked on a piece separately then each amalgamated them as they wanted. It sounds a very fascinating show. If you can not bee there - email Suzy for the online Gallery from 22 October. suzyhabbott@gmail.com



Lesley Alexander - Auckland



Puka leaf

For those in Auckland, I have work in the 'Overwintering' exhibition at Estuary Arts Centre in Orewa which closes on Sunday, and have a solo show at Kumeu Arts in Huapai with the opening tonight for any of you who would like to come along! We would love to hear of any exhibitions/ awards/newsworthy items that you are involved in! I hear a few bits through the grapevine, but we would love to celebrate them

here too!



The Artful Lodger' watercolour on Arches 300gsm
A Grey warbler nest found on our property, made up of numerous bits of lichen and grasses - eggs grey warbler (cream mottled) and Shining Cuckoo (olive green), feathers - Shining Cuckoo.



Gillian Receveur - Havelock North

I am a member of the Keirunga Artists, based in Havelock North. Each year they endeavour to have two selected exhibitions. This year it was a little later because of Covid. For each exhibition an artist can submit three paintings for selection. I was fortunate to have the three I submitted selected. The selector was Freeman White, a well known landscape artist.

The Iris was awarded 3rd place, Freeman said he awarded my piece because it showed skill and expertise in the media I work in. It is always good to receive accolades for ones work to know that Botanical Art gets some recognition. The magnolia is also mine.

Well done Gillian! We are all very proud of you....editor





Michelle Watson - Christchurch

I have been quite stunned to have my three artworks accepted into the 15th Exhibition The Art of Botanical Illustration 2020, run by The Friends of the Royal Botanical Gardens Melbourne 19 September - 31 December, the link is below.

https://tabi.rbgfriendsmelbourne.org

Sandra Morris - Whanganui

There is an exhibition happening here in Whanganui that I have put together for Space Gallery. It hangs from 9 December until 19 December 2020. It features works from 13 botanical artists from around NZ.

Finding yourself - Michelle Watson

Sitting here in my room, surrounded by my paints and brushes, I was thinking back to when I started my journey, what a ride!

In the beginning it was all very overwhelming, so many tutorials, books. It is endless and confusing, every tutor uses different paper, paints, brushes, so off you go and buy up large.

How many of us have paint etc that we never use? We collect, it can be addictive and none of it makes us paint any better. That comes from practice, patience and perseverance.

But, it is part of the journey - experimenting and then something clicks and you can leave behind all those things that just don't work for you.

Perhaps the most important lesson is once you have found what suits you and makes you happy, then stick with it and above all enjoy, have fun. Happy painting.

Buy Sell Exchange

In view of her having a surplus of materials - Michelle has come up with the idea of us having a Buy Sell Exchange section in the Newsletter. Just email newsletter.basnzinc@gmail.com with any items you wish to dispose of or exchange or find. Include your contact details, price if any and postage estimates. **Email:** newsletter.basnzinc@gmail.com



Tutors

Another addition to our Newsletters. A section showing which members offer tutoring. If you are prepared to tutor or mentor students send me an email with your details as below, to newsletter.basnzinc@gmail.com

Lesley Alexander (Auckland)

Website: https://www.lesleyalexanderart.com

Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/lesleyalexanderart/ https://www.instagram.com/lesleyalexanderart/

Email: contact@lesleyalexanderart.com

I run weekly botanical art classes at Kumeu Arts, and monthly classes at

Fernglen Native Gardens, Birkenhead, both in Auckland.

I facilitate monthly art group meetings at the Auckland Botanic Gardens.

Rebecca Brown-Thompson (Oregon USA also usually spends time in NZ)

Website: rbrown-designs.com
Email: rbrownbotanical@gmail.com

Sketching classes, "How to Draw Accurate Dimensions."

Jennifer Duval-Smith

Website: https://jenniferduval-smith.com/

Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/Jennifer-Duval-Smith-

Art-219019235353383

Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/jenniferduvalsmithart

Email: jduvalsmith@gmail.com

Botanical art for keen beginners Nature journaling for young and old Creating a dynamic nature sketchbook practice

Jane Fournier (Montana, USA) Website: www.janefournierflora.com

Facebook: <u>www.facebook.com/JaneFournierFlora</u>

Email: jfourniernz@gmail.com

Botanical art classes for beginners and classes in "Keeping a Botanical

Sketchbook"











Sandra Morris (Whanganui and Auckland)

Website: https://www.illustration.co.nz/

Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/sandramorrisart/

Email: sandra.morris@illustration.co.nz

I run a number of workshops for adults and children, mostly in

Whanganui and Auckland, but sometimes in other areas.

Workshops include: Nature Journalling, Botanical drawing and painting, simple book binding, simple linocut and drypoint printmaking, and Childrens book illustration (character

development, storyboarding and dummy book making, and techniques- dry and wet).

Jo Ogier (Christchurch)

Website: https://www.JoOgier.co.nz

Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/joogierartist/

Email: art@JoOgier.co.nz

I run a number of workshops from home and away including: Nature Journaling, Botanical Illustration, Drawing Bugs and Butterflies, Woodcut prints, Drypoint

etching & Solar etching





And finally.....

.....remember if there is something you would enjoy reading about in our next newsletter, please let us know.

Anyone have a technique they would like to share with step by step and photos?

Next Issue will be our *Summer Newsletter*. We are aiming to get the newsletters out 3 monthly, January, April, July and October.

Articles for submission for the next issue, due 30 December (or earlier).

Members Question for Summer: What are your favourite subjects to paint and where do you find them? Send your answers, photos welcome, to: newsletter.basnzinc@gmail.com

The current list of Regional Reps are on the first page of the Newsletter and highlighted in yellow on the members list. Wouldn't it be good if each area had a get together?

Here at last, (on the next page) is the current list of members who are happy to share their emails with the Society. If I have inadvertently left anyone off, please get in touch. Please respect their privacy and **do not share to non-members.** Any mistakes - please let me know

Get Back To Painting!

Elizabeth & Suzy



Regional Reps are in blue

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Broughton	Claire	claire.broughton@xtra.co.nz	Matamata



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