

WINTER NEWSLETTER 2020

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Newsletter

Elizabeth Yuill Proctor
Lesley Alexander

Welcome to our Winter Newsletter. This morning was certainly cold enough for winter, but I love how in NZ the daffodils are already flowering along with primroses and violets showing us Spring is just around the corner.

Who would have thought that Covid19 would cause some of us to return to Alert Level 3 which has sadly affected our exhibition, and the rest to Alert Level 2. Difficult times. But at least the garden is slowly waking up and the days are getting longer and warmer.

We hope you enjoy this issue of our Newsletter. Remember we are always looking for contributions from our members.

Inside this Issue

| Page | Title | Author |
|------|--|-------------------|
| 2 | President's Report | Lesley Alexander |
| 3 | Images from the Auckland Botanic Gardens - The Big Show of Small Works | |
| 6 | Featured Artist | Susan Worthington |
| 9 | The Brilliant Story of Colour | Lisa Dickson |
| 10 | What is Your current working Palettes | Various members |
| 15 | Welcome to our new members | |

Newsflash!

The art group attached to the Christchurch Horticultural Society who meet the 2nd and 4th Wednesdays of the month at the Kiosk in the Botanic Gardens, are looking for someone, or more, who would like to run Botanical Art courses for them. They are a delightful group of ladies who are very keen. Just email me at the address on the bottom of each page if you are interested.

Until the Spring Issue,

Elizabeth

President's Report and Exhibition News

Well, I certainly didn't expect to be writing this in another Covid19 Alert Level, but here we are again. I hope you are all coping with this lack of freedom and are keeping well. I always try to look at the positives and although I am unable to work through Level 3, I do have more time to paint, time to improve my Photoshop skills as well as time to do those jobs that never seem to reach the top of my to-do list. I hope you are also finding some positives in this 'new normal'.

As far as the Society goes, it is encouraging to see that we are still attracting new members. Over the last few months we have had a number of new Associate and Full members join us. A huge welcome to you all, I hope you find being a member of BASNZ fulfilling and worthwhile.

Our annual exhibition, 'A Big Show of Little Works 2020' went off to a great start. It would appear that having all that time in the March/April Covid19 lockdown meant lots of painting time which resulted in twenty-four of you sending me small 77 works – thank you all!

The matted artworks looked fabulous, despite the framer initially having a problem with our chosen mat board. As they started on the mats, they noticed that all the boards had blemishes on the surface and 'bits' between the layers resulting in a very rough surface. After a quick check in with me, followed by a frantic race, not by me, across Auckland in rush hour to pick up new boards, all works were successfully matted and ready in time for us to hang. Unfortunately, all the stock of our chosen mat board had the same blemishes and so a different, same quality but ever so slightly lighter board was used.

It was an exciting day when six of us - seven if you include my very obliging and hammer happy husband, Phil, met at the Auckland Botanic Gardens on July 31st to hang the exhibition. Usually the longest part is deciding where to put everything – and this was no exception!

In the end we decided that unless anyone had specifically asked us to hang their artwork in a set, we went with hanging the artwork in colours in a rainbow scheme. This worked really well and I'm sure helped with sales once we opened.

Despite not having an opening, we sold two very quickly, and then, while manning the gallery, I had a long chat with a visitor who wanted to buy four – she was looking at the 'yellows' as they would match her décor! She took photos and was due to come back, but that was just before we went into Level 3. I hope she came back the next day, but I haven't heard yet.

In the short time we were open, we had a good number of visitors and some lovely comments in the visitor's book. Susan Worthington was our 'featured artist', and her 3 beautiful framed works were keenly viewed and discussed, adding another dimension to our exhibition.

Looking ahead, we are still hopeful that we will be able to open again to the public, and possibly be able to push our finish date out! We will also reschedule our 'Meet the Artist' day which has been put on hold as the Gardens were very keen for that to go ahead, and most of the Auckland based artists were very keen to take part!

A video has been made of all the artworks, so please take a look – the link is below – and share it far and wide! Grab a cuppa, sit back and enjoy the exhibition! Please feel free to share with family and friends, on your social media etc!

<https://youtu.be/Wrfb69b2jI0>

With a website in the works, a presence on Instagram, a members-only Facebook group and committee members working on how we can interact with tutors, and finding ways to be more visible nationwide, we have lots to look forward to in the coming months.

Keep safe!

Lesley Alexander

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/196593324405258/>

Instagram- <https://www.instagram.com/botanicalartnz/>

Exhibition - A Big Show of Little Works 2020

A great deal of work goes into setting up an exhibition. Here are a few photos to give you an of idea of what the process is.



Images laid out, waiting to be hung



Phil making sure everything is hung at the same level



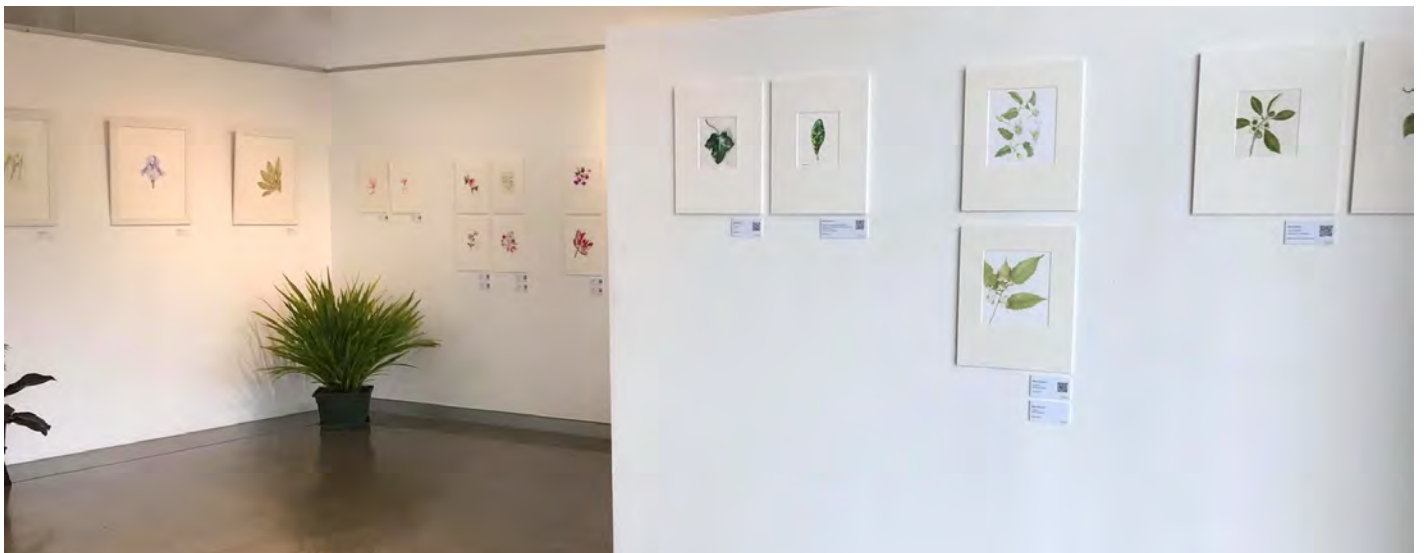
Jennifer Duval-Smith & Russell Greenwood sort out the labels!



Diana Tormey & Helen Gunter pondering where Susan Worthington's paintings will go



Labeled, nearly all set for the opening



Finally, all ready! Just need the public to come and view and even better - buy!



Photos above & on previous page all by Lesley Alexander

These photos were contributed by a friend of Irene Blair's - work by various member artists



I am sure we are all very grateful to Lesley Alexander and her team for putting together a beautiful show. It is a great shame that the current Lockdown has stopped the show. Lesley is hoping it can be extended. So with that thought in mind, do pop a long and take a look once lockdown is over and the visitors centre at the Auckland Gardens reopens.

Featured artist Susan Worthington MNZM



Susan receiving her award in the 2013 New Year Honours from Sir Jerry Mataparae

We ask Susan to answer a few questions about herself

Who or what inspired you to start painting?

My mother and grandmothers were keen gardeners and they instilled in me an appreciation of the natural world. I spent my early childhood in Waverley, Taranaki. Bike-rides into the surrounding countryside would see me return home with wildflowers and plants, plus the occasional tadpole.



I remember when I was about 7, painting butterflies and flowers at school. Even then art was my favourite subject. My first formal art lessons were received at Marsden Collegiate School in Wellington. I was a boarder there. Besides the school art lessons, I received extra-curriculum art lessons that gave me a very good beginning in drawing and painting.

When in my later 30s, I attended the Whitecliffe Art School, gaining a Diploma of Art, Honours with Distinction, followed by a BA in Art History and English from Auckland University. I also qualified as an art teacher but did not enjoy secondary teaching, preferring to teach adults.

2001 saw me in England taking botanical art instructions for the first time. I exhibited 4 times in Royal Horticultural Botanical Art Exhibitions, each time receiving a silver medal. Dr Shirley Sherwood purchased one of my paintings. The painting was shown at an exhibition called A New Flowering, 1000 years of Botanical Art, at The Ashmolean Museum in Oxford, and included in a book of the same name.



Work (in both above) was done in 1961 while at school, showing wild parsnip drawings before being used in a design.

Six of my paintings of New Zealand bred plants were chosen for a set of stamps in 2004.



Over the years I have painted many of the large leaf rhododendrons, very rhododendrons and many other plants in the Pukeiti Garden, Taranaki. The Puki Ariki Museum have shown my paintings in two Exhibitions.

During 2006 I attended the English Botanical Art School in the Chelsea Garden where I gained a Diploma of Botanical Art with distinction.

Three of y paintings were selected for inclusion in the Highgrove Florilegium, two in the Transylvania Florilegium.

In 2013 I was awarded the Member of the New Zealand Order of Merit, for my contribution to Botanical Art.

Do you have a botanical hero?



My botanical art hero would have to be Sydney Parkinson, who was employed by Joseph Banks to draw and paint plants and animals on Cooks first voyage to the Pacific. He recorded thousands of plants, working in difficult conditions. One time flies tried to eat his paints as he was working.

If you had to choose a six colour palette

which would you choose and why?

I work with a limited palette. The colours are French Ultramarine, Raw Sienna, Permanent Rose, Viridian, Burnt Sienna, New Gamboge, Cadmium Red, Aureolin and Indigo. I could manage with just six, these being French Ultramarine, Permanent Rose, Viridian, Aureolin, Burnt Sienna, and Indigo.



What is your favourite paper to work with?

The watercolour paper I use is Fabriano Classico 5. It is no longer available. Fortunately, before it disappeared I imported enough paper to last until I died. There are still about 2000 sheets.

Is there one book you would particularly recommend?

'An Approach To Botanical Painting', by Anne-Marie and Donn Evans I consider is the best instruction book on botanical art. It is out of print. Sometimes a copy is for sale on Amazon. The last time I looked it was selling for over \$400. A good substitute is 'How to Draw Plants'. The techniques of botanical illustration, by Keith West.

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

The best piece of advice I can give is to be kind to yourself. Every piece of work is worthwhile. Not every painting is going to be a masterpiece.



Drawings of magnolia ready to decide on a composition.

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

I like the strict discipline of recording plants that are rare or hard to find. To me, botanical art is art science. There is no trick to it, just a lot of hard exacting work.

Because of my art training in Auckland, I still paint and draw other subjects like landscapes and portraits. These allow me to let loose and throw paint around.

Happy painting,

Susan



Lisa Dickson lives over on the West Coast of the South Island in Westport. She has come fascinated about the origins of our pigments. This is the first in a series about colours, researched and written by Lisa.

The brilliant story of colour!

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.

French Ultramarine PB29

"Glorious, lovely and absolutely perfect pigment beyond all pigments."
Cennino Cennini, 15th century.



One of the oldest blue pigments, even the name ultramarine invokes thoughts of amazing places and scenery. From the Latin 'ultra' meaning *beyond* and 'mare' meaning *sea*, the colour was not named for the ocean, but for where it came from – a far distant place, 'beyond the sea'. Ultramarine in its original form, was a rare and precious pigment. Lapis Lazuli, a luminous blue semi-precious stone, was mined in Afghanistan and transported via the Silk Road, loaded onto ships in Syria and sent via the sea to Venice, where it was traded throughout Europe. The stone was ground and mixed with resin, linseed oil and then heated and kneaded (like bread). It was then placed in a lye solution, allowing the blue flakes to separate, sink and dry, resulting in a blue powder pigment. The process was repeated again and again, to produce a finer grade of pigment each time. The production of ultramarine was incredibly time intensive, from the distances travelled from the East to Europe, to the extraction process (1kg of mineral produced around 30g of pigment). The result was a very expensive pigment, considered more precious (gram for gram) than gold. As a result, the paint was used sparingly, often reserved for depictions of the robes of the Virgin Mary or other holy figures.

Synthetic ultramarine was invented in 1828. The French chemist Jean-Baptiste Guimet successfully created the first synthetic Ultramarine blue, named French Ultramarine (to differentiate it from the natural ultramarine). Made by heating kaolinite, sodium carbonate and sulphur in a kiln, he created a pigment that was chemically identical to Lapis Lazuli, but more vivid in colour.

A rich transparent warm reddish-blue, French Ultramarine (colour index PB29) is highly lightfast, with medium tinting strength. Mixed with other pigments, it is a great sky pigment, and makes wonderful greens, brown greys and purples.



Ultramarine was used as a pigment in manuscript illuminations and frescos in Europe from the twelfth century. Giotto, Raphael, Leonardo da Vinci and Michelangelo all used the colour. Dutch artist Johannes Vermeer also used the pigment extensively in almost all his painting.

Alizarin Crimson PR83

Very topical for botanical artists, the history of alizarin crimson began with a plant. *Ruba tinctorim*, the rose or common madder, is a member of the coffee family. The roots of the plant can be over a meter long and up to 12mm thick.



They have been used as a source of red dye - known as alizarin, for over 3000 years (the British Redcoats were dyed with madder). The dye was later made into a lake pigment (pigment made from a dye), and was used across Europe, the Middle-East and Asia. The early, natural version of Alizarin Crimson (known as Madder Lake or Rose Madder) was a fugitive pigment (non-permanent, can lighten, darken or change appearance over time) that was used extensively through the Renaissance. Although classed as a fugitive pigment, it is one of the more stable natural pigments. Vermeer was a fan, he used madder as a glaze for the gown of his *Girl with a Wineglass*, and also in *Girl with the Red Hat*. Rembrandt used it in his portraits, and it can be seen in the paintings of Titian, Raphael and Bosch.

Since the middle of the 19th century, Alizarin crimson has been synthesized as PR83. As well as being cheaper to produce than traditional rose madder, it has improved lightfastness and tinting strength. The pigment is used in oil, tempera, acrylic and water paints, and can be known as Alizarin Crimson, Alizarin Madder Lake, Madder Light or Madder Deep, Madder Lake or Carmine.

Alizarin Crimson is bluish-red hue that makes beautiful dark maroons and purples when mixed with ultramarine blue. It can equally be used to create vibrant, fiery oranges. Viridian and alizarin will desaturate each other, creating a dark neutral tint. It is a deep, cool red, with a high tinting strength.



Alizarin Crimson (PR83) is more lightfast than its predecessor madder lake but is still known to fade when exposed to UV light. If you are after a 'permanent' version of the colour, there are a range of options.

Several well known watercolour brands produce a permanent alizarin crimson that are remarkably similar in colour and strength, Daniel Smith (PR177, PV19, PR149) and Winsor & Newton (PR206, PV19) are just two. As you can see from these two examples, permanent alizarin crimson is a manufacturers construct, not a single pigment, and each company will have reached their alizarin alternative in different ways. Personal preference and performance will guide your choice, but be sure to check that the pigments used are lightfast if this is important to you, as these can differ.



Ruba tinctorim

As a follow on to Lisa's very interesting article, I asked for images of your current working palette and must have colours. I have found it interesting how others interpretation of what the word "palette" means.

The dictionary defines palette as:

noun: **palette**; plural noun: **palettes**

- a thin board or slab on which an artist lays and mixes colours.
- the range of colours used by a particular artist or in a particular picture. "Pollock's hard, bright palette"
- It can also be the container in which you store your tubes or pans

What is your current working palette and must have colours?

Jane Fournier

I am attaching a photo of my palette(s) in response to your recent news flash. I have one "working" palette (the larger folding one) that I use for trying colors and sketchy things and then for every major work I usually work from a separate smaller palette with only the colors needed. I always have more than one piece on the go at a time and often jump from one to the other as the season progresses so I label the smaller palettes.

My six must-have colors would be a warm and cool of each primary. If I had to live with only six colors, these would be my current choices because they give the best range of mixes and are mostly transparent. French ultramarine (PB29), phthalo blue - green shade (PB15:3), new gamboge (PY153), hansa yellow light (PY3), scarlet lake (PR188), quinacridone rose (PV19). Of course, like most of us I suspect, I am constantly trying new pigments and occasionally changing my favorites.

Who knows when I will be able to get back to New Zealand and family with things as they are but I thoroughly enjoy staying up to date with the BASNZ community through your news releases. Thank you for that.



Claire Broughton

My six must have colours are all Schmincke artists watercolours:- Aureolin Yellow - nearly always my very first underwash, 90% of the time to add depth. Transparent Orange - a lovely warmth to add to yellow to deepen or red to create coral/peachy colours and to green to broaden the variety of greens. Sap Green - nearly always used for leaves, often with orange or blue added. Alzarin Crimson - such a rich colour for many pink/crimson florals and a great staining depth and mixing my own black. Phthalo green - invaluable for mixing my own black. Ultramarine blue - a must primary for skies, water and florals.



Jennifer Duval-Smith

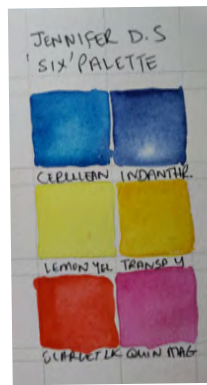
Here is my limited palette:

Schminke Lemon yellow, Schminke Chrome Light, WN Transparent yellow, S. Quinacridone gold, S. Cerulean, S. French ultramarine blue, WB. Red shade, WN Indanthrene blue, WN Scarlet lake, WN Quinacridone red, WN Quinacridone magenta, WN Permanent rose. **Pre mixed extras** I love and would include if I could: WN Perylene green, WN Violet, WN Perylene Violet.

As you can see I have many, many colours some I rarely touch! Others have had to be refilled many times over. Were I to go back to the beginning I would spend much more time with the three basic primaries of magenta, a blue and lemon yellow and build my knowledge from there.

I barely touch my premixed greens now but I am having a play with Sandrine Maugy's method of adjusting premixes and quite enjoying it. Pic attached.

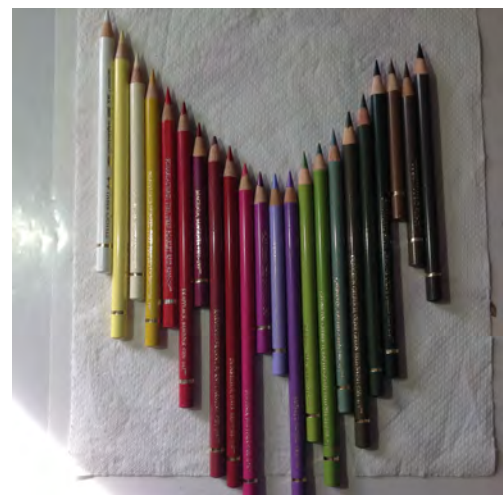
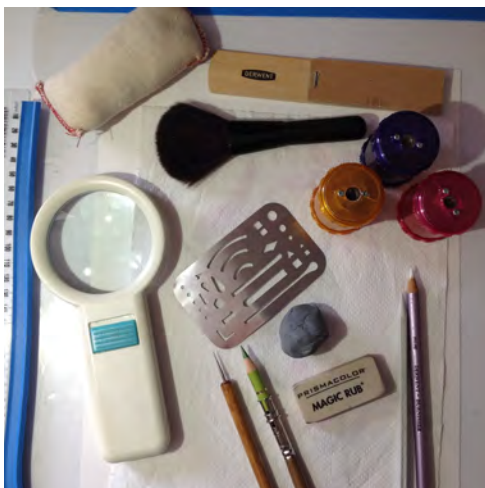
The six I sent through before would be my 'desert Island six'. But I would definitely miss a few.



Gillian Receveur

This is basically what I use all the time when working with coloured pencils. I have not put my pencils on as they would cover the kitchen floor and beyond.

Warm and cold greys are useful for a starter palette



Michelle Watson

You asked for a photo of our palettes and must have colours. This is my palette for my latest project, I use small ceramic dishes from TFE (I think they are for dipping oils etc) . But for each project I start afresh, with what ever colours I will be using. I do also have the Daniel Smith tin, which I use just for my journals. As for my must have colours, that's a bit trickier, I use Daniel Smith almost exclusively, have a made passion for the Quinacridones. But the basic six are Quinacridone Gold, Van Dyck Brown, Sepia, Lemon Yellow, Mayan Dark Blue and Quinacridone Pink. The yellow and pinks vary according to the project, so could be a red. I discovered Mayan Dark Blue after doing the Julia Trickey online course, and I have to say it is wonderful, so much nicer to mix with, rather than French Ultramarine.



Lesley Alexander

My palette is actually just a ceramic plate from an op shop - I have a pile of various sizes and shapes to suit just about anything I need to paint. My 6 favourite go-to colours are made up of 6 primaries, 3 warm and 3 cool. These are Phthalo Blue, French Ultramarine, Pure Yellow, Lemon Yellow, Quin Magenta and Scarlet Lake - all W&N except the Phthalo blue and Pure Yellow which are Schminke. I find I can make just about any colour I need from these although I do use a few other colours on occasions but always start with these. I use both pans and tubes, often sticking the pans around the edge of my palette with blue tac. This palette has Phthalo blue, Quin Mag and Pure Yellow, with a bit of Permanent rose and Perylene Violet.



Janet Marshall

I use a limited palette. Mainly primary red, yellow, blue with burnt sienna, raw umber, black and white. I mix colours from these and I use black and yellow mostly as a base for any greens I mix.



Lorraine Thompson

My water jar, the one brush I do pretty much all my work with and my wiping cloth. The cloth has done the rounds of three babies and many more years of art. They don't make nappies like they used to !!!



Irene Blair

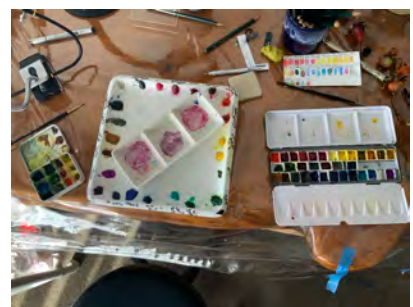
Michael Wilcox's circular palette and the other three are all the Barry Hernimans Cloverleaf Palette which is very transportable.



Elizabeth Yuill Proctor

I have a few easily transportable palettes - great for travel. My current favourite is the Etchr. It is about the size of a powder compact (remember them?) and porcelain which I love.

Must have colours are all Winsor & Newton: Indanthrene blue, French Ultra, Scarlet Lake, Perm. Alizarin Winsor Lemon & Transparent yellow.



We are delighted to welcome 8 new full members to the Society this quarter. The Full Members had to fill in the application and send images of current work which goes before the committee to be juried. All of our new applicants had unanimous confirmation. We also had a new associate, who works in a completely new media to us.

W elcome to the following New Full Members

Carole Eaton



Birgit Rhode



Russell Greenwood



Melissa Bell



Moya Deacon Radley



Fion Li



Lorna Ward



Three Associate Members have moved up to Full Membership:

Diana Tormey



Sandra Morris



Erin Forsyth



And a warm welcome to a new Associate member Jill Newman who works in 3D

