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Welcome to our Autumn issue!

Welcome to our latest Newsletter - a tad late but packed full of good articles.

Jane Fitzgerald has written about her experiences thus far on the SBA Diploma course. If any of you are interested in completing this course, the contact details are at the end of the article.

Lisa Dickson continues her series 'The Brilliant Story of Colour' with Vermillion. I hope you are all enjoying these articles, I certainly am.

Lesley Alexander writes about the opening of 'Botanica', the Welcome Swallow Gallery's exhibition of Botanical Art. A number of our members entered works, many of which have already sold.

Gillian Receveur has reviewed two excellent books in this issue. 'BOTANICAL ART TECHNIQUES, A Comprehensive Guide' - a great book and 'GEORGIANA MOLLOY - The Mind That Shines' - which I found on my bookshelf last week during a tidy-up and still have not read!

(Apologies to Lorraine Thompson for hanging onto it for so long!) I will certainly be reading it after reading Gillian's review.

-continues next page.

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Congratulations to our member Gillian Receveur whose painting “Lemon Squeeze” was awarded Best Pencil at Keirunga Artists Exhibition, held recently in Havelock North. Not surprisingly this delightful painting was sold as well!

We haven't asked the members a question for a while, but Vicki Jones asked Lesley at the opening **“How and where do you get cards and prints made.”** We thought it would be a good question to ask our members what they do and who they recommend in their area. Send your replies to: newsletter.basnzinc@gmail.com

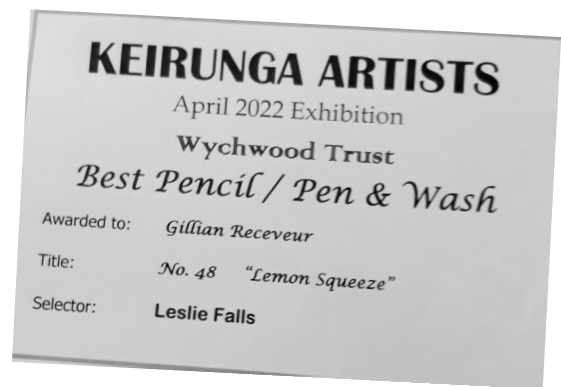
A warm welcome to our new full member, Noelene Hung. Some of us were able to ‘meet’ Noelene at the recent Zoom General Meeting.

We are always looking for articles for our Newsletter so if you have anything you would like to share with us or any questions you would like us to put to the members please email us at the above address.

Now, grab a cuppa, put your feet up, settle back and enjoy the Newsletter.



'Lemon Squeeze' by Gillian Receveur.



*The whole culture is
telling you to hurry,
while the art tells you to
take your time.
Always listen to the Art.*

- Junot Diaz

**Annual General Meeting
Thursday 19th May 2022, 7pm**

via Zoom: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81780288019?pwd=WEhzdGFVbTFwTW44T3R5N3h4S01zUT09>

PRESIDENTS REPORT

Hi everyone,

Well Autumn is nearly over but as I look outside, you'd believe it was still summer – with blue skies, warm temperatures and people still at the beach and even in the water! However, deciduous trees are losing their leaves and we are getting those autumnal colours that I favour in my work. I spent ten days in the Wanaka area recently to attend a plein air painting course and the colours were absolutely stunning. We stayed in 'Maple Lodge' which didn't disappoint – the maples were just turning so the combination of bright green, red, purple and yellow leaves were a sight to behold.

Our members' exhibition at Welcome Swallow Gallery in Hamilton is up and running. I went along to the opening on Friday 6th May where I was delighted to see that since the preview day on the 5th May, eleven paintings have already sold! More about the opening later.

We now have confirmation that the next Botanical Art Worldwide exhibition, in 2025 will have the theme of Heritage and Useful Plants so if you are thinking about submitting work, now is the time to start thinking about which plant/s you might like to do.

Our latest general meeting had a good number of members enjoying hearing how a few of us have been spending our time when not working on botanical art projects. Heiki Jane Zimmermann informed us about a trip she will be doing on an arctic icebreaker vessel, as a scientific illustrator for scientists researching microscopic organisms under the ice! Jane Fitzgerald and Noelene Hung talked about setting up a group in the Dunedin area – so if any of you live a reasonable distance there will be a chance to meet up in the near future. Jane is the area rep for Dunedin, so you can find her contact

details here - <https://www.botanicalartnz.org/contact>

Suzy Abbott gave a very interesting talk on how she became interested in Zentangle – and she took it one stage further by training to be a Zentangle teacher in Germany. For more information - <https://zentangle.com/>

Lastly, I spoke about the plein air course I took in Wanaka – I recommend getting out of your comfort zone occasionally! At best you will love challenging yourself and return to botanical art with new vigour and at worst you will be reaffirming your commitment to botanical art, but at least you will have given it a go!

I was very saddened to hear of the passing of Susan Worthington earlier in the year. She was a member of the society at various times, lastly being our guest artist at our annual exhibition last year at Auckland Botanic Gardens. Apart from meeting her briefly when I attended a workshop in Christchurch with Vincent Jeannerot, I didn't really know her, but in the last year or two we communicated and chatted about all things botanical via Messenger! An astounding botanical artist, she has work in the Highgrove and Transylvanian Florilegia as well as being known for her rhododendron paintings. Susan's contribution to art was recognised in 2013 when she was made a Member of the New Zealand Order of Merit for services in New Zealand as a botanical artist. For more information about Susan, go to <https://www.watercolournewzealand.nz/directory/w/worthington%2C%20susan/index.htm>

Enjoy the cooler days and the beautiful autumnal colours,
Lesley

The SBA Diploma In Botanical Art (Distance Learning) 'A Course to Consider'

Three years ago, I was just a novice painter with a taste for botanical art. Wanting to improve, I took a plunge and embarked on a Diploma in Botanical Art.

The SBA Diploma runs for twenty-seven consecutive months, and in my opinion, to do well you will need to invest a minimum of 20 hours to study every week. All assignments are posted to London, and you receive a grade for the assignment and written feedback on such aspects as tone, line, color, composition, botanical accuracy, choice of subjects, naming and presentation as well as some hints on how to improve specific issues. The tutors are accomplished freelance artists with a wide variety of interests and the feedback you will receive from them is very detailed - without it, I would have struggled.

The assignments start with pencil and ink work, with a focus on tonal change and accurate drawing. The stippled Dahlia 'Bishop of Auckland' shown in ink was part of our 2nd assignment and this really forced me to identify tonal variation carefully. After this, students are introduced to various methods of painting using gouache, coloured pencils, and watercolour as options. The subjects are initially leaves and flowers, progressing to a whole plant and finally combinations of plants. As the Diploma progresses, assignments become more specialized. One example is an assignment involving botanical nomenclature and dissections as shown here - *Solanum melongena* 'Ophelia'. In this eggplant painting done during our first lockdown, I developed confidence in dry brush technique creating textures on the calyx and stem, and had fun with lots of thorny, prickly details on the stems too. Other assignments had briefs that resembled commission work. After eleven assignments, you work independently and create a final portfolio, which requires you to repeat three of the previous assignments using different subject matter, alongside an essay on a botanical artist of your choice. A near mishap while sharing one of my portfolio paintings at a book club event, reminded me of the importance of protecting work while food,



Dahlia 'Bishop of Auckland'.

and in this case champagne, are being shared. Thank goodness for my thick plastic sleeve - the champagne just wiped off!!

Unlike many distance courses, there are no online tutorials or demonstrations. Instead, the course directors have written a textbook along with a course folder, which provides you with practical hints and demonstrations of the stages of painting, usually a single image. The style of painting emphasized in the course is formal, with a strong emphasis on portraying botanical features accurately, and despite a steep learning curve, I began to gain competence with this approach after the first four or five assignments. Often I was inspired by the images seen in the textbook, along with other finished work that I observed on websites devoted to botanical art.

A turning point for me was attending a short course in Wales open to diploma students and others, taken by Simon Williams and Julia Tricky. Here, I lapped up the demonstrations and hands on help with my own work. I was still not really confident with dry brushing and tonal depth especially depicting light convincingly.

Over the course of the Diploma, I became bolder in my application of colour, and developed a very careful eye for plant form through observing living plants, supplemented by photos. My painting desk had a cornucopia of specimens which I became very used to transporting, and on one occasion, I even managed to survive the vigilance of customs officials and take a few camellias into England and Wales.

While my artistic journey was a challenge with occasional stormy moments and mishaps, in the end it was very rewarding, and I can now say that I am an artist. After an interlude, I find myself quite at ease again with a paintbrush or pencil, but with smaller tasks, even reworking some diploma work. If you are interested in the SBA Diploma, contact the director - Simon Williams. He is an excellent director and artist, very approachable and quick to respond to any queries.

simonwilliamscoursedirector@soc-botanical-artists.org

If you wish to find out more you can also follow this link: <https://www.soc-botanical-artists.org/wp-content/uploads/DLDC-19-prospectus-and-application-form.pdf>

- Jane Fitzgerald



Solanum melongena 'Ophelia'



The Brilliant Story of Colour - Vermilion

Vermilion conjures up images of a brilliant and distinctive red. The colour has a long and interesting history, having been used extensively through thousands of years of art history. Vermilion was the most widely used red pigment in the world, prior to the discovery of cadmium red in the early 20th century.



Cinnabar.

Vermilion was originally derived from grinding the powdered mineral cinnabar. Cinnabar is a mercury sulfide mineral associated with volcanic activity and hot springs. Cinnabar was a side product of mining mercury, and was toxic, due to the residual mercury content. Naturally occurring vermilion is an orange-red pigment. Efforts began early to find a better way to make the pigment and synthetic vermilion has been credited to the Chinese from as early as the 8th century. Mercury and sulphur were mixed and heated, creating vermilion, which was ground. The more it is ground, the redder the pigment becomes. The control over the synthetic process created a superior pigment over that derived from the natural cinnabar. The synthetic pigment was known as China Red and was seen extensively in Chinese lacquers



Cinnabar lacquer box

and calligraphic inks. Vermilion was used to make red calligraphic ink reserved for use by emperors.

Vermilion has been prized by many civilisations and cultures. The Romans painted the faces of triumphant generals with it, European monks used it in illuminated manuscripts, and Hindu women use vermilion along the parting in their hair to indicate they are married. It was used as a rouge-type cosmetic in the near east and was an ingredient in Chinese traditional medicine.

Vermilion was the primary red pigment used by European painters, from the Renaissance until the 20th century. Titian used vermilion robes to draw the eye to the main characters in his painting Assumption of the Virgin. Because of its cost and toxicity though, vermilion was almost entirely replaced by a new synthetic pigment, cadmium red, in the 20th century. Today vermilion is synthesised by reacting mercury with molten sulphur, and any naturally produced vermilion is most likely to come from cinnabar mined in China.

-Lisa Dickson



Assumption of the Virgin, Titian.

INTERNET

Someone kindly sent us a couple of links to two very talented ladies - Clarissa Munger created a herbarium while a teenager in the early 1800's. As well as being a very talented Botanical artist, Clarissa also wrote delightful poetry.

https://www.themarginalian.org/2022/04/24/clarissa-munger-badger-flowers/?mc_cid=f3aac154b4&mc_eid=c5d2f1d958

The second being about Marianne North. In 1876 Marianne painted a picture of a plant with blue berries. In recent times a botanical illustrator working at Kew Gardens noted the plant with the blue berries had named the plant as Psychotria, wild coffee, but Yu knew this blue colour was not so. This started Yu investigating.....read more on the website https://www.atlasobscura.com/articles/marianne-north-chassalia-northiana?mc_cid=89996526f4&mc_eid=3d6cb44e95

To me, this shows how valuable a Botanical Illustration can be - even years after it has been painted!



Wildflowers by Clarissa Munger Badger, 1859

“In drawing, one must look for or suspect that there is more than is casually seen.”

- George Bridgman



Wild Flowers of Sarawak, Borneo, a canvas painted by Marianne North during her visit to the Southeast Asian island (Image: RBG, Kew)

EXHIBITION NEWS

The opening of the 'Botanica' Exhibition. Friday 6th May 2022

An exhibition of 30 artworks by members Annette Judd, Birgit Rhode, Claire Broughton, Gillian Receveur, Janet Marshall, Jennifer Duval-Smith, Lisa Dickson, Vicki Jones and myself.

On 6th May, we drove down to Hamilton from Auckland for the official opening of 'Botanica', our members exhibition at the Welcome Swallow Gallery in Hamilton East. We arrived a little late as the Auckland traffic was horrendous, in fact just in time to hear the MC announce that the speeches would be delayed as we were caught in traffic.



Lesley Alexander with Lynda Hallinan

The gallery was abuzz with about 40-50 people all chatting and looking very enthused about the very high quality of work on show which ranged from traditional botanical plates to larger contemporary work. Mediums used varied from watercolour, colour pencil as well as graphite and ink & wash.

The guest speaker was Lynda Hallinan, celebrity gardener, former NZ Gardener editor, broadcaster and author. She gave a very informative and entertaining speech about her love of plants and botanical art in general. She certainly did



Jennifer Duval-Smiths' winning painting- Kakabeak, the Glory Flower.

her research and chatting to her afterwards she mentioned that she would be keen to have a go herself!

I was delighted to see that by the end of the night 11 paintings had been sold (5 during the preview day the day before and 6 more over the course of the evening!) Clive is hopeful they will go beyond their average sales percentage of 50% so great for botanical art in general and for the charities



General buzz in the gallery.

they support. It was lovely to catch up with Claire Broughton and Vicki Jones who also came along and very rewarding for them to see their paintings sell and be able to chat to the buyers.

Congratulations go to Jennifer Duval-Smith as her painting of 'Kakabeak – the Glory Flower' was voted the Volunteers' Choice Award Winner. I was delighted to accept the award on her behalf – a framed certificate and \$250.00 prize money. I was very impressed with how they curated the exhibition and the added extras such as photos of the artists and botanical art books around the place. Montana Catering did an amazing job of providing and serving delicious canapes and wine - we felt very spoiled!

A catalogue was produced which is available for download on their website – scroll down past the photos of the opening and you will see the pdfs of all the recent catalogues.

A short video of the opening can be seen here - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=65jOCjfwTjU&ab_channel=WelcomeSwallowGallery and more photos can be seen on their website.

The gallery and shop are run by husband-and-wife team Clive and Dorothy Gilson who are Trustee and Trust Chair/Chief Executive respectively of the 'Achieving Change for Children Charitable Trust (ACCCT). Through their gift shop and gallery sales raise money for children's charities in the Waikato.

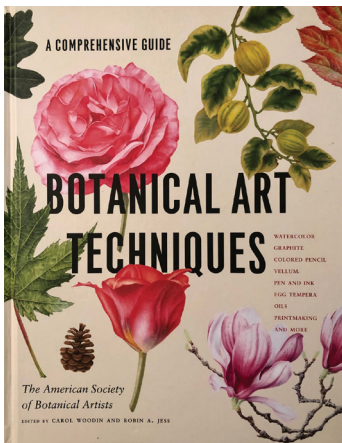
<https://www.wsgalleryandgifts.com/>

-Lesley Alexander



1. Clive Gilson extolling the virtues of botanical art, wife Dorothy beside him; 2. Vicki Jones with her artworks; 3. Our new flag in position; 4. Claire Broughton very happy with one of her paintings.

BOOK REVIEWS

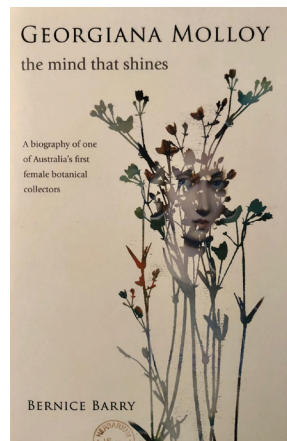


BOTANICAL ART TECHNIQUES, A Comprehensive Guide Published by The American Society of Botanical Artists

I was fortunate to be given this book by a friend at Christmas and I personally think it is a very good reference from the experts.

This definitive guide is a thorough how-to of every major technique of botanical artistry. The experts at The American Society of Botanical Artists offer step-by-step projects that move from introductory to advanced- so any level of artist can build on acquired skills. Helpful tutors cover watercolour, graphite, coloured pencil, vellum, egg tempera, oils, pen and ink as well as print making. It includes examples of finished art by some of the best contemporary botanical artists, plus more than 1000 instructive photographs. It also includes a field sketch book and journal.

Editor: To purchase - ISBN 978-1604697902
[Amazon Australia](#) AU \$54.66
[Book Depository](#) - Hardback NZ\$66.14 post free



GEORGIANA MOLLOY - The Mind That Shines By Bernice Barry

This meticulously researched biography tells the extraordinary story of Georgiana Molloy, one of Australia's first female botanical collectors. I found this a fascinating read but it could be a little dry for some tastes.

It gives new insight into the life of this pioneering botanist. Following a swift marriage, Georgiana and Captain John Molloy, a handsome hero with a mysterious past, emigrated to Australia among the first group of European settlers to the remote southwest. Here despite personal tragedy, Georgiana's passion for flora was ignited. Entirely self-taught, she gathered specimens of indigenous flora from Augusta and Busselton that are now held in some of the world's leading herbarium collections. Using Georgiana's own writings and notes, accompanied by full-colour pictures of some of the stunning plants mentioned throughout, the author reveals a resilient, independent woman of strong values, whose appreciation and wonder of the landscape around her became her salvation, and her legacy.

Editor: To purchase - 978-1743549148
[Amazon Australia](#) AU\$39.99 (1 copy left, also on Kindle)
[Book Depository](#) - NZ\$44.08 Currently Unavailable

And that is a wrap until the Winter issue! Hope you have enjoyed this issue of our Newsletter. With thanks to our team:

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