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Nelson - Janet Marshall
Wellington - Jane Humble
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Sandra Morris
Hawkes Bay - Gillian
Receveur
Auckland - Lesley Alexander

Newsletter Editors

Elizabeth Yuill Proctor
Suzy Abbott

Welcome to the Autumn Issue (slightly late) of our Newsletter

This is the first newsletter following this year's AGM. For the first time we had a guest speaker - Shevaun Doherty. Shevaun gave a very interesting talk on Beyond Botanicals. Most Societies, it would seem do not "allow" insects etc in the work. We are lucky that since its inception, our society does include insects & birds and other pollinators.

AGM highlights - the rule changes were passed, unopposed. This means we can now accept three dimensional artists as full members. One of our new members, Tracy Byatt, as well as sketching and painting beautiful pieces is a three dimensional artist. She is our featured artist this issue.

Committee: Lisa Dickson joins us on the committee as secretary, but as Lisa is still completing further studies at the University, she will be aided in this role until she can take over fully.

Jane Zimmerman has also joined the committee. Jane is currently living in Norway. She has suggested that we have regular meetings (membership wide) via Zoom.

Our first **virtual meeting** will be at **18:30 on the 8th July**. Jane will be talking about Norwegian Alpine flowers and **Vicky Jones** will tell us about how she made paper from Harakeke then painted her entry of Harakeke on the paper for the exhibition For the love of Botanicals on it.

This is a somewhat shorter Newsletter than usual - as I want to get it out before the Winter one!

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SHEVAUN DOHERTY -UPCOMING WORKSHOP - DATES TO BE CONFIRMED**

After our interesting talk on Beyond Botanical with Shevaun Doherty at our AGM, we have decided to hold a Zoom workshop with Shevaun. The focus will be Bees as Pollinators. There will be more information coming as soon as we firm things up. The workshop will be held on two separate days for approximately 3 hours each time with a week in between. Numbers will be limited, expressions of interest called for and a wait list will be started. Shevaun is an inspiring tutor and has a fund of knowledge. She is also very entertaining!

Contact Elizabeth if you are interested: basnzinc@gmail.com

We will send a separate email out later with all the relevant information.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT AGM – 27TH MAY, 2021

By Lesley Alexander Smith

Good evening everyone, it's great to have you all here this evening.

This time last year, we were all in various stages of lockdown, having to quickly upskill in various digital applications to work and socialise. Last year's AGM was via Zoom – a steep learning curve for me, and I hoped that would be the last of it!

But no, here we are, zooming again for our AGM! We have conducted our committee meetings throughout the year via zoom and are all slowly getting the hang of it!

Membership

However, despite Covid and lockdowns or perhaps because of them our membership continues to grow. Over the past year we have gained 14 new members, and with a couple leaving, our membership is now 58 which is excellent.

This year we have introduced 'Student membership' and a 'Friends of the BASNZ membership' which we hope will encourage much needed younger members and other botanical art lovers who will hopefully have other strengths and talents to broaden our skill base.

Exhibitions

We were very fortunate to have the chance to show members work in 3 exhibitions this past year.

Our annual BASNZ exhibition, 'A Big Show of Little Botanical Works' was held for 6 weeks in August and September 2020 at the Auckland Botanical Gardens. However, it had to close after only a week due to Level 3 Lockdown but reopened and was extended and eventually was open until the end of October! We sold an amazing 15 paintings, and gained a few more botanical art appreciators!

The next show was in Hanmer Springs over the summer months in December and January. This was held in the Library gallery in Hanmer, and organised by Elizabeth Yuill Proctor. Unsold works from the Auckland exhibition as well as new works from members were exhibited and enjoyed by locals and holiday makers alike. Five artworks sold which was brilliant.

Lastly BASNZ and Space Studio and Gallery collaborated to bring a juried exhibition together to celebrate World Day of Botanical Art on May 18th.

This was an open exhibition, open to all artists and all media. We were keen to see what botanically inspired work was being produced in NZ today. We emphasised 'as botanically accurate as your media will allow' and were astounded by beautiful submissions in copper, jade, embroidery to name a few. The selection panel of Sarah Williams (gallery owner) and Desmond Bovey (a well-known natural history artist) chose a wide range of mediums and curated a varied and exciting exhibition. I would like to have seen more members submit work, but was really pleased with the outcome. We offered selected non members free associate membership with the option of upgrading to Full Membership (usually conditions apply) and have already had artists take up the offer. So far 8 artworks have sold and the exhibition doesn't close til Saturday.

A huge thank you to committee member Sandra Morris for taking botanical art to Whanganui. It is through Sandra that there have been 2 botanical art exhibitions at Space in a year. Last November Sandra invited botanical artists to show at Space alongside local artists and it was the success of this exhibition that led Space and BASNZ to organise 'For the Love of Botanical'.

Next year I hope we can introduce botanical art to other provincial towns in New Zealand.

Social Media and Website

Our social media presence is still slowly growing with 24 members of the private FB group, and after setting up an Instagram account in August 2020 now have 143 followers.

With the 2 new membership levels and a bigger social media presence we hope to grow our membership, and alert more people to New Zealand botanical art.

We are in the last stages of creating a website. This has been in the works for the last few years and after a few false starts we are now working closely with Annemarie at Cusp. We are really pleased with the progress so far and hope to have it up and running in the next month, adding more information and sections as we go along.

Workshops

We did not organise any members workshops this year but aim to run some this coming year. We are in talks with overseas artists who are keen to run Zoom workshops for us.

We did however continue with our Nature Journaling sketchbook exchange for a second year which is coming to an end very soon. It's been a great way to connect with other members, keep sketching and perhaps most importantly to work without the stress of having to produce a finished accurate piece of botanical art – there were stresses of course, but these related to deadlines rather than anything else!!

Lastly, on a personal note, I have really enjoyed working with our dedicated committee members, who voluntarily give up their time for the good of the Society. I would particularly like to thank Elizabeth Yuill Proctor who tirelessly juggles roles of treasurer, secretary, newsletter editor and general 'go-to for information' person. The Society would surely collapse without her dedication to our Society.

I know many of you have, as yet hidden, talents that would help the society to run smoothly. We are looking for a couple of members to share the workload – we would like someone to be secretary and another to be the newsletter editor allowing Elizabeth to concentrate more on her art! She is happy to continue on as treasurer!

If you want more info about what is involved with being secretary or organising the newsletter, get in touch with Elizabeth.

I look forward to seeing where we will be in a year's time. Our website will certainly allow us to be more easily found and show we are a Society to watch! So keep painting, drawing, being inspired by the beauty of plants around you and think how you can help the Society reach new heights!

Thank you,

Lesley Alexander

President

Note: Lisa Dickson will be taking over, in stages as Secretary. Still need someone to take on the Newsletter.

FEATURED ARTIST: TRACY BYATT

I think that in view of adding 3 Dimensional artists to our Society, having Tracy Byatt as our featured artist is very apt. As you will see from the images, it is hard to tell these are not the actual plant material. They look incredibly real. As well as working in 3D, Tracy is a very accomplished 2 D artist as well.



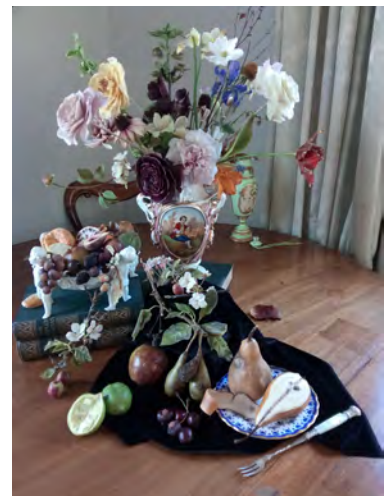
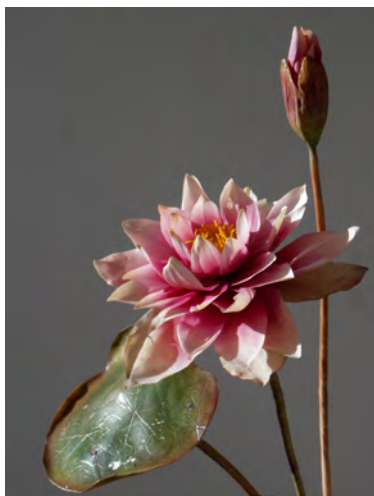
Growing up in the UK, heaven to me was unwrapping a set of Derwent coloured pencils on Christmas morning – opening the golden lined tin to reveal the 36 perfectly graduating colours was absolutely magical! I have always had a pencil or a brush in my hand as far back as I can remember, but after being scolded at school for trying to paint every single blade of grass in a landscape (because that’s what I could truly see no matter how hard I squinted!) I was convinced art wasn’t worth pursuing seriously. However, my love of nature, drawing, art history... and of course Derwent coloured pencils... has never waned.

About eight years ago, I stumbled across sugar as an art medium at a cake decorating class. It was a ‘Eureka’ moment when I discovered that by constructing a flower in sugar you have a ready-made 3D canvas! From then on my pieces took a sharp right turn into more sculptural, botanically correct specimens.

Sugar as an art medium certainly isn’t anything new. Its use was first documented during the European Renaissance where it was used to sculpt extremely grand and ornate centrepieces for royal banquets, particularly in Italy. Sugar at that time was extremely rare and expensive and so was a symbol of wealth and status – a kind of mediaeval one-upmanship! Due to the difficulty in handling such a fragile and costly material, only the finest artists of the time created these extraordinary pieces. Even da Vinci is said to have been commissioned to create some of these sculptures. As a lover of art history, I'm particularly intrigued by the idea of working in an essentially unchanged medium that was once so highly prized and extraordinarily expensive - yet we hardly give a bag of sugar a second thought nowadays, in fact it’s fast becoming positively evil! It almost feels like I am able to reach back and touch the past, with sugar sculpture being the constant while the world around us has



THE IMPOSSIBLE BOUQUET



changed beyond all recognition – and I feel not always for the better.

I battle the same arch enemies as those ancients did too – namely dampness, humidity and fragility. I’m also routinely mugged by bees from the hives at the bottom of my garden who are ruthless sugar thieves!

I find sugar is as rewarding to work with as it is challenging. Being an organic substance, even completed works are in a constant state of instability and always susceptible to moisture and breakages. I like to think its weaknesses are also its strengths however as it has a unique translucent quality, lending itself perfectly to the making of extremely fine petals, tiny plant parts, etc.

I’m driven to replicate every part of a plant as botanically correct as possible. I have no idea why but I feel like I would be doing the plant a huge injustice if I didn’t. It’s the impossible challenge to capture every minute detail that is my



motivation. I know I’ll never be able to reproduce what nature has created, but it doesn’t stop me from trying.

I also like to challenge the concept of what is perceived as beautiful. I believe that there is perfection to be found within imperfection and actively seek out those parts of a plant that are so often overlooked because they're not aesthetically beautiful when often they are the very essence of its beauty. Be it wilting petals, desiccated seedheads or insect damage, I feel it’s the plant’s way of telling us its life story, the season it has had and the stressors it has endured. Like painting, making 3D subjects is slow and intensive and requires a lot of pausing, thinking and taking note of the tiniest of details. This blending of science and art perfectly expresses my fascination with nature. Preferring not to work from photographs if at all possible, sketching is an integral part of my process and is the best way I find of truly ‘seeing’ a plant. I strive to tell the story of each plant through composition, form and detail by dissecting it under magnification, measuring and fashioning each part individually in sugar and finally reconstructing the plant before the final colouring phase for which I use ground pastels.

I’m a bit of a misfit in that I don’t fit into any particular pigeon hole with sugar work (eg sculpture, drawing, pastel work, painting, etc). Instead I hover around the edges of these different techniques but definitely not mastering any of them!



FOXGLOVE -DIGITALIS
A work in progress

I'm a keen but amateur gardener and find the garden an inexhaustible source of inspiration each and every day of the year. I only work with plants I grow myself, meaning I have a ready supply to hand and most importantly I can watch them emerge, flourish and deteriorate at every stage.

I love to recreate three dimensional still life 'paintings' and my pieces reference a number of traditions including works of the C17th Dutch artist, Jan van Huysem, and the glass works of the Blaschka family, a father and son from Czechoslovakia who moved to the USA in the 1800s and proceeded to make thousands of botanically correct glass models for teaching purposes which are still in use today at Harvard.



Earlier this year, I was extremely privileged to be invited to take part in the exhibition, "Ā Mua: New Lineages of Making" at the Dowse Museum in Wellington with a piece called "The Four Seasons", an arrangement of fruit, incorporating blossom, developing fruit and its eventual deterioration. In 2020 I was incredibly humbled and honoured to be awarded the Pattillo Open Art Prize for a study of "Parrot Tulips" part of which was the unique opportunity to hold a solo exhibition in 2021 at the Sarjeant Gallery in Whanganui. The centerpiece of this was "An Impossible Bouquet", a life size arrangement of more than 50 botanically correct plant and insect studies in the style of van

Huysum, so called as it would have been "impossible" for all these flowers to bloom simultaneously. I think it's called 'artistic licence'! It took a year to complete as each flower from my garden was made in real time. I tucked in a yellow rose as a nod to van Huysum himself who famously made a patron wait an entire year for such a rose to re-bloom so he could reproduce its form and colour correctly before completing his painting. I'm sure every botanical artist can relate to that!

We are extremely fortunate to have the wonderfully gifted Sandra Morris in our midst who is so generous in sharing her knowledge and enthusiasm for the natural world and for promoting botanical art in the region. My very amateur watercolours have certainly benefitted greatly from her guidance and expertise.

The recent BASNZ exhibition "For the Love of Botanical" at Space Gallery here was extremely well received and showcased perfectly the amazing skills of New Zealand botanical artists, beautifully expressed in both traditional and quite unexpected forms – it was a joy to see and certainly something to aspire to.



It's also thanks to Sandra that I've recently had the privilege of becoming a member of BASNZ and I would like to thank the Committee for their generous and warm welcome. It's been a revelation to discover that it's perfectly acceptable to paint each and every blade of grass!

With a busy farm, a growing family and working freelance as a medical proof reader, free time here is a rare and wonderful thing. It's something I certainly cherish when it does come along as botanical art is very much my calm in an otherwise

THE BRILLIANT STORY OF COLOUR!

By 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.

GREEN – THE COLOUR OF NATURE OR THE COLOUR OF POISON?

Most of us would associate green with nature and all things natural, so it can be surprising to learn that green pigments have been some of the most poisonous and deadly in history. Despite the wide variety of green that can be found in nature, traditionally it was a notoriously difficult colour to make. Green plant dyes quickly turn brown, and it was difficult to reproduce the natural hues. The ancient Egyptians tried using the mineral malachite, but it was very expensive and had a tendency to turn black. The ancient Romans came up with a solution. They soaked copper plates in wine, creating verdigris, the greenish-blue compound that forms as the copper weathers. Verdigris literally means “green of Greece” and the pigment was valued for its rare, luminescent green colour, the most vibrant green available to artists for much of the Middle Ages and Renaissance. While most pigments can change over time, verdigris was particularly fickle and its unpredictability remained challenging for artists. It was also very expensive, and very toxic. Verdigris poisoning became increasingly common, causing symptoms of nausea, anaemia and even death. Famous paintings using verdigris pigment include “The Magdalen Reading” by Rogier van der Weyden.

In 1775, a Swedish chemist synthesised a bright green pigment, using copper powder laced with chemical arsenic. Cheap to produce, the bright green pigment was called Scheele’s Green. It became a sensation, replacing the older green pigments, even though many people suspected the colour to be dangerous to artists and patrons alike (it released arsine gas as it degraded). Scheele’s Green was used as a pigment in paints, and as a dye for cotton and linen. It was also used as a colour for wallpapers, and it has been suggested that the Scheele’s Green wallpapers in Napoleon Bonaparte’s bedroom hastened his death in 1821. Scheele’s Green was more stable than verdigris, but still had a tendency to fade or blacken, so the search for a stable artists green was still underway. In 1814, another toxic green was invented by two Bavarian chemists. Paris Green was an attempt to produce an improved pigment that was less susceptible to darkening. Described as an emerald green, Paris Green (another copper and arsenic based pigment) was more stable, but just as toxic. Paris Green pigment enabled Monet, Cezanne and Renoir to create their vivid impressionist landscapes. It has been suggested that Paris Green may have been responsible for Cezanne’s diabetes, Van Gogh’s psychosis and Monet’s



**“THE MAGDALEN READING”
ROGIER VAN DER WEYDEN**



**PARIS GREEN IN A WALLPAPER
DESIGNED BY WILLIAM MORRIS**



**“MADAME ROULIN ROCKING THE
CRADLE”**

blindness. There was no doubt about its toxicity, it was also an effective insecticide, being used to kill potato beetle and tobacco budworm, as well as being sprayed from planes in Italy to combat malaria. It was also used to kill rats in Parisian sewers, (this inelegant use was how it acquired its name). It was eventually banned in the 1960s due to its toxicity.

Unfortunately, green is such an elusive colour to manufacture that some paints retain an element of toxicity in their content or manufacture. Today, paint health labelling standards follow the guidelines set down by ASTM, identifying if there are health risks. The greatest risks come from inhaling pigment powder when preparing watercolour paint by hand from raw pigment. As most of us use pre-packaged tubes or pans, our watercolour pigments are no longer a significant source of risks. However, given that elements of toxicity are not restricted to green pigments, you might just want to avoid shaping your bristles with your mouth or unscrewing stuck caps with your teeth.

“FOR THE LOVE OF BOTANICAL”



Tuesday, May 18, 2021

Tuesday, May 18, 2021

Local News

Botanical art in full bloom at exhibition

Mike Tweed

Space Studio and Gallery's new exhibition, *For the Love of Botanical*, features local and national artists and is a collaboration with the Botanical Art Society of New Zealand.

The gallery will open its doors especially for Worldwide Day of Botanical Art today.

Gallery owner Sarah Williams said the opening last week had attracted a full house and there seemed to be "a lot of genuine interest" in the works.

"There are 36 art works in total, and around 24 individual artists," Williams said.

"We did an open call out for artists, and that brought in art forms like embroidery and sculpture.

"A botanical-themed video piece by Andrea Gardner and Britt Bunkley will be showing in the event area of the gallery as well, which is actually the first time that part of Space has been used for an exhibition."

Botanical Art Society of New Zealand representative Sandra Morris, who is exhibiting some of her own works at Space, said the exhibition was a "follow on" from a global botanical art exhibition in 2018.

"America then said they were going to do a regular thing, but with Covid-19 and everything, it just hasn't happened.

"We thought we'd get the ball rolling again right here.

"For this exhibition we opened it up to include both 2D and 3D works, just to broaden the dimensions of what can be done, and to show what's out there."

Botanical art had enjoyed a resurgence around the world in recent years, Morris said.

"Way back in the 15th, 16th, and 17th centuries it was male-dominated, and then there was one female – Sibylla Merian – who became highly regarded by scientists for the accuracy of her work.

"It's just grown from there, and nowadays it is dominated by females.

"There are some really good male artists still working in the botanical area though."

Water colours, drawings, oils, and prints feature in the exhibition, along with a Pohutukawa sculpture made of recycled copper wire and sheets by Tauranga-based artist Stephanie Brebner.

Wellington's Susan Worthington, who Morris said was one of New Zealand's top botanical artists, was also featured in the exhibition.

"It's pretty neat that she agreed to show here with us.

"There's everything from traditional representations through to jade jewellery.

"The exhibition is something you can take your time over, and contemplate."

• For the Love of Botanical runs until May 29 at Space Studio and Gallery, 18 St Hill St. The gallery will be open today from 10am to 2pm.

We did an open call out for artists, and that brought in art forms like embroidery and sculpture.

– Gallery owner Sarah Williams

Sarah Williams (left) and Sandra Morris among the botanical artwork on display at Space Studio and Gallery.

Photo / Bevan Conley

SANDRA MORRIS & SARAH WILLIAMS INTERVIEWED BY MIKE TWEED FOR LOCAL PAPER

“FOR THE LOVE OF BOTANICAL”

Exhibition at Space Studio & Gallery, Whanganui
 Wednesday 12 May- Saturday 20 May 2021

OPEN NIGHT 12 May 2021 —Sandra Morris

Despite the chilly night the turnout to the opening of this exhibition was amazing. There were well over 70 people and the place appeared to be buzzing.

The show was extremely well curated by Sarah Williams (director of Space gallery) and a lot of thought had gone into placement of individual works so that works related to each other in a pleasing and harmonious way.

For me and many others, one of the star attractions was Mamakan Oustrup Laureijs’s – “Slægtskab”

Multi-sensory media: video, fragrance, cocktail, bark and mussel shell. (Slægtskab – a Danish word meaning ancestral relationship and connectedness – is inspired by a Māori legend called ‘The Whale and the Kauri’) Her artwork was a multi sensory presentation including a video of kauri and also a fragrance created with an oil infused with Kauri resin, to be applied to the top of the hand or below the wrist. There was a cocktail made from a wild ferment infusion made from Kauri cones, added to ice and soda water (or champagne) to create a cocktail celebrating the wisdom and longevity of the Kauri. Plus Kauri bark was placed together with mussel shells for a sensorial immersion into the idea of connectedness between the forest and the sea.

Mamakan was present and was very good at explaining all about her work to people during the event. The cocktail was interesting!!

The entire exhibition took up 2 galleries and was accompanied by a smaller exhibition in the Pop-up gallery of digital floral works “Dark Florals” by Whanganui artist Kaye Coombs. Her work was aptly described as ‘cascading floralscapes emerging from darkness’. Very theatrical and striking.

In the Event area there was the screening of the video by local artists Brit Bunkley and Andrea Gardner-The video focused on three 3D scanned Waiheke Gardens.

So what with the 2D and 3D works in the 2 galleries, and the digital “Dark Florals” and the video of 3D scanned gardens we had an enormous variety of mediums and techniques to admire. People seemed to be genuinely amazed at just what is being produced in this genre of art today.

In the speeches, Sarah spoke about her personal interest in botanical artwork and thanked the Society for their collaboration and made special mention of Lesley Alexander, Elizabeth Yuill Proctor and myself.

I gave a quick run down on the history of botanical art through the centuries and pointed out how it had been largely male dominated for centuries until the appearance of Sybilla Merian in the C17 and how it is now female dominated with a sprinkling of male artists.

On behalf of the BASNZ I also thanked Sarah for hosting this exhibition and thanked her and Des Bovey for the time they gave to select the works for the show and I presented Des with a koha- a \$50 book voucher and card from the society.

I am not sure what other BASNZ members were there but was pleased to see Jennifer Duvall Smith from Auckland.



Sandra Morris (L) with Sarah Williams (R) next to Sandra’s 3 paintings which sold at the opening.



During the night I had approaches from 2 other people for membership.

There was genuine interest in this exhibition and during the evening 5 works were sold. There have been more sold since and we hope for even more sales before it comes down on Saturday afternoon (29 May).

Sandra Morris (Regional rep for Whanganui/Manawatu/Taranaki)

EXHIBITION - LISA DICKSON

At the Hanmer Springs Library Gallery June/July 2021

Lisa is having her first solo exhibition at the Hanmer Springs Library Gallery. Opening night was 29th May (during the torrential South Island storm!). Three of our members went along. Lisa is exploring other ways of working as well as the traditional watercolour on paper. There were watercolour works on canvas, which have been waxed over as well as gouache pieces on display. Work was purchased at the opening. We wish you good luck and multiple sales!



L to R Suzy Abbott, Elizabeth Yuill Proctor, Lesley Alexander with Lisa Dickson at the opening



Lisa chatting with Hellen Bygate, gallery manager.

.....AND FINALLY

**DO NOT FORGET: OUR FIRST GENERAL VIRTUAL MEETING WILL BE AT 18:30 ON THE 8TH JULY.
LINKS FOR THE ZOOM ROOM WILL GO OUT NEARER THE TIME.**

All errors in this Newsletter are mine as I have rushed to get this out to you all and it has not been proofread -
Apologies for any mistakes

Elizabeth

newsletter.basnzinc@gmail.com