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**Welcome to our Summer issue!**

Happy Summer! We hope you had time for a relaxing Christmas break and are enjoying the warm (and sometimes quite wet!) weather this summer has brought so far.

In this issue we have a variety of interesting articles, including some valuable painting techniques, tips and tricks. Lesley Alexander follows up on her series on vellum with a fascinating and detailed tutorial on painting on vellum. You'll also find tips on managing your watercolour palettes and inspiration for your plein air painting kit!

Jennifer Duval-Smith reports on the experience of being an artist-in-residence at the Auckland Botanic Gardens which really highlights the importance of public engagement and the educational opportunities that botanical art provides.

We also include a piece celebrating Karen Bowman Atherton, past president of BASNZ and multi-talented artist, who sadly passed away early this year.

Thank you for the wonderful contributions from our members for this issue. If you have created any work you would like to share, we would love to include members' images in the gallery section of the newsletter. If you have anything you want to share please contact the Newsletter team at [newsletter.basnzinc@gmail.com](mailto:newsletter.basnzinc@gmail.com).

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## PRESIDENTS REPORT

Dear Members,

As I write this message to you all I am thoroughly enjoying the gentle tapping of rain on our roof! After weeks of glorious sunshine, it is a welcome change for a few reasons – I don't have to water the garden today, I can go outside for longer without worrying about getting burnt and our water tanks will fill up again!

Hopefully 2022 will not be as disrupted as last year – we are all having to learn to live with Covid and make plans accordingly. Lots of painting time as we probably spend more time at home over the coming months.

We had an exciting proposal recently from the Welcome Swallow Gallery ([www.wsgalleryandgifts.com](http://www.wsgalleryandgifts.com)) in Hamilton who wished to host an exhibition of member's work. They are a charitable enterprise, raising funds for children's charities in the Hamilton area. I was thrilled to get 12 members keen to participate and look forward to seeing the exhibition at the opening on May 6th. It will run for 6 weeks, so if you are in the area, or have friends and family there do let them know about it.

I was very saddened to hear of the sudden passing of Karen Bowman Atherton earlier this month. Karen was a well-loved and long-time member of the society, being President for a time and was Secretary when I first became president.

The website – [www.botanicalartnz.org](http://www.botanicalartnz.org) - is still seeing new activity – with the home page and 'Artist' page getting most views! I see that in the last month Carol Eaton's profile got the most hits, closely followed by Jane Zimmermann, then Jennifer Duval Smith! So, if you have a page on the website – and any Full member is eligible to have a page – remind your friends and family to have a look! Let's see who gets the most 'clicks' over the next months!

I have heard from the American Society of Botanical Artists that they are looking at another World-wide exhibition. They will be getting the Steering Committees together for a zoom meeting to see how everyone wants to go forward, so that will be interesting! I'll let you all know how we get on.

In the meantime, have a look at the web page dedicated to the previous Worldwide exhibition – it's now live. If anyone has any photos of the exhibition at any of the venues, I'd love to add them to the slideshow if you're willing to share them with me.

<https://www.botanicalartnz.org/events/ngi-tipu-taketake-indigenous-flora>

Happy creating,  
Lesley

## Karen Bowman Atherton

Karen joined the BASNZ in 2013 and very quickly picked up the botanical art techniques necessary to start producing a wide range of works in her preferred mediums of coloured pencil and watercolour. Within a year, Karen was one of the artists contributing to the BASNZ *Canterbury Plains Florilegium* exhibition held to celebrate the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Christchurch Botanic Gardens and the opening of the Visitor Centre. Karen's *Pseudopanax crassifolius* Lancewood, toured the South Island of New Zealand with the exhibition.



*Pseudopanax crassifolius* Lancewood  
Coloured pencil, watercolour on paper  
© 2013 Karen Bowman Atherton

In 2018 Karen's work *Dodonaea viscosa* "Ake-ake" was selected to be part of the Botanical Art Worldwide Exhibition 'Ngāi Tipu Taketake - Indigenous Flora' held at the Auckland Botanic Gardens in 2018.



*Dodonaea viscosa* "Ake-ake"  
Coloured pencil on paper  
© 2018 Karen Bowman Atherton

## Karen Bowman Atherton cont.-

Karen not only continued to produce works for the annual BASNZ Botanica exhibitions but also generously volunteered to take on the mantle of President of the BASNZ from 2014 - 2015. With her organization and dedication, Karen kept the BASNZ on track at a time when the Society was rebuilding following the challenges of the earthquakes.

In 2018 Karen took a year off to complete her BA in Art History at the University of Canterbury but before long was back producing highly detailed works in coloured pencil, sometimes with a watercolour wash and occasionally in graphite. Inspired by the specimens she would collect on her daily walks in her local neighbourhood, Karen created a wide variety of works including studies of Geraniums and Eucalyptus leaves and Rose Hips. Karen was also a member of the ASBA and in 2018 an image of Karen and her Lancewood featured in the journal as part of a piece on the BASNZ.



Rosehips with collared sepals  
Coloured pencil, watercolour © 2015 Karen Bowman Atherton

In 2016 Karen was also commissioned to illustrate a selection of plants for the *Annual*, published by Gecko Press and edited by Kate De Goldi. Karen worked under considerable time restraints to produce a beautiful selection of works for the publication.  
<https://www.wheelers.co.nz/books/9781776570775-gecko-press-annual/>



1. Weeping willow, *Salix alba* 2. Red flowered gum, *Corymbia dielsii* 3. New Zealand flax, *Phormium tenax*  
4. Hollyhock, *Alcea rosea* 5. Yucca fern, *Pteridium caudatum*

6. Sweet cherry, *Prunus avium* 7. Sierra redwood, *Sequoia nationalis gigantea* 8. Sweet William, *Ranunculus acris*  
9. Manuka, *Leptospermum scoparium* 10. Flax oak, *Quercus pedunculata*

## Karen Bowman Atherton cont.-

For a number of years Karen was also a tutor in silver jewellery making, for the Silversmith's Guild at the Tannery, Christchurch and in 2021 Karen returned to teaching but in her newly found passion of Linocut. Members of the BASNZ who meet at Avic Hill, were fortunate enough to spend a morning learning all about linocut with Karen and Jo Ogier, all taking home a printed work. Karen was not only teaching locally in her community but at the end of the year also exhibited with a group of local artists at the Mini Gallery at the Linwood Arts, Eastside Gallery.



Karen's enthusiasm and energy was infectious and she was always so keen to share her knowledge. Whether it was about techniques, materials or equipment she was experimenting with, her generosity of spirit always shone through. Her output of such a high standard of work in so many disciplines was inspirational and yet she always found the time to be so supportive of others, undertaking their own creative journey.

It is with great sadness that Karen passed away on January 11th, 2022. She will be greatly missed by all who knew her in the BASNZ and in particular by the Avic Hill group who had the good fortune to spend many Wednesdays with Karen, laughing, chatting and even finding a bit of time to paint and draw.

There is a lovely piece about Karen in Annual Ink: <https://www.annualannual.com/karen-atherton> Gecko Press Annual (2016), the book Karen illustrated for, [can be seen here](#).

## 27th Annual ASBA (American Society of Botanical Artists) Conference

Wednesday, October 13 2021

### *Thoughts from an online registrant*

2021 wasn't a good year for anyone and although New Zealand has managed to avoid the worst of Covid, to date our lives have been overshadowed by uncertainty, separation and disruption. I was therefore delighted to find what I consider to be a 'silver-lining' in the form of the second online, annual conference of the American Society of Botanical Artists (ASBA).

I quickly signed up. Because it was an online conference there were no number restrictions on the registration and I believe finally there were 750 registrants.

There was a selection of plans, and by enrolling for the Flexi Plan I was able to cover all of my particular interests on the programme. Each time block consisted of three one-hour demonstrations and the topics included, Botanical Art Instruction, Portfolios and Passions, Best of Botanicals (Focus on Florilegia) and a variety of social events including Bring-Your-Own-Banquet.

For approximately USD \$100 a day I was able to attend workshops on many aspects of Botanical Illustration and have a ringside seat at all demonstrations without stepping out of my front door. Without travel and accommodation expenses this was excellent value for money.

The variety of speakers was excellent with a thoughtful and broad selection of topics. One does one's best to choose wisely in advance from the offered programme and on this occasion my choices produced some wonderful surprises. I was completely blown away by a pen and ink demonstration by Heeyoung Kim called 'The Charm of the Crow Quill Pen Nibs' and charmed by Mary Dillon's demonstration of watercolour application entitled 'Going with the Flow'. All presenters were not only accomplished botanical artists but very good communicators. Four days of heaven...

A Global Gathering of Botanical Artists  
**ASBA 27<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL CONFERENCE**  
*Online in October – is Back!*

- No plane tickets, no hotel, no travel.
- Enjoy 4+ days of immersion in all things "botanical art" from the comfort of your own home.
- Connect with botanical art enthusiasts from across the country (and around the world).
- Share your passion and be inspired by the art of your fellow ASBA members as you engage in the rich content being offered.

ASBA | American Society of Botanical Artists  
Cultivating the Field of Botanical Art Since 1994

Registration Opens July 15th  
**asba-art.org**

ASBA conference advertising from [botanicalartandartists.com](http://botanicalartandartists.com)

Because of the time differences the days started at 3.00 am and finished at 2.00 pm, NZT. I watched these sessions live because of the open Question and Answer sessions at the end of each presentation. Needless to say, I didn't take part in much of the social programme and my only disappointment is that I did miss the usual social net-working associated with attending a conference in person. On the big-plus side, each presentation continued to be available online for registrants for 24 hours after the event. This would be a bonus at any conference as in spite of all of one's best efforts, concentration often begins to flag by the end of the day. I made really good use of this extra access.

I can heartily recommend attending this conference and I do hope the ASBA might provide online viewing in the future when hopefully, live attendance will once again be possible. At the end of the four days, I was seriously sleep-deprived but totally inspired.

- Jane Humble

## The Brilliant Story of Colour - YInMn Blue

*Have you heard of YInMn Blue? Discovered in 2009, YInMn Blue was the first new blue pigment made available for sale in 200 years... and you could buy a tiny tube for US\$179.40!*



YInMn Blue pigment

In 2009, researchers at Oregon State University discovered YInMn Blue—the first new blue pigment identified in 200 years—while developing materials for use in electronics. Eleven years later, the pigment finally made its way to artists' studios. In May 2020, the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) officially approved the pigment for commercial paint and artist use.

More vivid than cobalt or Prussian blue, YInMn derives its name from its chemical components, yttrium (a rare earth element), indium (a silvery white metal found in the earth's crust) and manganese (a hard, brittle silvery metal found in minerals). The pigment is noteworthy for its vibrant, near perfect blue colour, and unusually high reflectance - it absorbs red and green wavelengths while reflecting blue wavelengths to produce a bright blue colour. This has made it highly desirable in a range of applications, including industrial coatings and plastics, with the pigment approved for these uses back in 2017.

YInMn Blue is chemically stable, does not fade, and is non-toxic. It is more durable than alternative blue pigments such as ultramarine or Prussian blue, retaining its vibrant colour in oil and water, and is safer to make than cobalt blue (which is a suspected carcinogen).

People around the world have gravitated toward blue, which was the first man-made pigment, for millennia. Given the difficulty of extracting blue from natural sources, artists throughout history have had to create synthetic blue pigments. Traditionally these have been notoriously unstable and prone to fading. Prior to YInMn Blue, the last commercially manufactured, inorganic blue pigment was cobalt, which was discovered in 1802 and first produced in France in 1807. Blue has been associated with rarity and expense since antiquity. Ultramarine, a pigment originally made by grinding a semiprecious gemstone lapis lazuli, was once worth as much as gold.

Blue is one of the rarest colours in nature, and creating it for the artist's palette has been a challenge throughout history. Both rare and expensive, YInMn Blue is currently only available via special order. It is being produced by Golden (QOR YInMn Blue watercolour), but they are not currently taking new product orders, due to extremely limited access to the pigment. Gamblin also produce their limited edition YInMn oil paint, but at the time of writing, it was also out of stock, popular despite the steep price tag. The Italian Art Store and Pigment Lab Tokyo have a 40ml tube of Derivan acrylic for sale for the equivalent of around \$261 NZD. There



History of blue

## The Brilliant Story of Colour - cont:

are rumours of a black market in the pigment, with artist Michael Rothman obtaining some illicit YInMn blue to complete his Reconstruction of *Ecoracis brachyptera* + *Staphylea germanica* (see right).



Golden's QOR YInMn Blue watercolour

Since discovering YInMn Blue, chemist Mas Subramanian has shifted his focus exclusively to pigments. He continues to experiment with potential pigments, including bright orange, shades of purple, turquoise and green. The hunt is also on for a stable, heat reflecting, and brilliant red, the most elusive colour to synthesize.

- Lisa Dickson



© M. Rothman 2019

*Ecoracis brachyptera* + *Staphylea germanica* reconstruction by Michael Rothman

**If you'd like to find out more, here are some useful links:**

[Michael Rothman's Science Illustration Portfolio](#)

[Golden's press YInMn Blue press release](#)

The [Forbes Pigment Collection](#), which now houses samples of YInMn blue is an interesting place to read about!





## ARTIST RESIDENCY: Notes from Jennifer Duval-Smith on the experience as Friends Visiting Artist, Auckland Botanic Gardens Jan-April 2021



*Every two years the unstoppable Friends of the Auckland Botanic Gardens put some of their hard-earned funds into a visiting artist position. Their goal is to enhance the visitor experience by being able to observe an artist working in the gardens, highlighting a specific aspect of the plant collection. As a working botanical artist, for me this opportunity to work in the gardens was a dream come true.*

### Why focus on edible plants?

As an artist, edible plants offer immense visual interest, colour and structure. But what could be more important than food, especially in worrying times? Edible plants start conversations about food security, water use, land use, climate change and biosecurity. And given the incredibly diverse group of people who benefit from the Botanic Gardens, food plants provide a focal point where all generations and cultures can come together in common appreciation and shared memory.

### The incredible growing art table

I began the residency in January, working in the lovely light-filled Huakaiwaka gallery. People would come in and chat and watch me draw artichokes and okinawa spinach. But as my not-so-secret mission is to get everybody drawing, and noticing plants, I set up a table for people to draw with me. Pretty soon we had a queue and some sad little faces. So we added more tables until we had the giant drawing table and between 20 and 70 visiting artists per day. With the generous permission of the talented Edible Curator Angela Anstiss, and wielding my rockstar ABG lanyard, I would snip some foliage or flowers and create a living tableau for our aspiring artists. Art went up on our Wall of Champions to create a mural of artistic and scientific observation.

Whole families drew alongside scientists, garden group members, groups of adults with developmental delays, business people sneaking 'me-time' in between meetings and an entire Philippino wedding party. Many people did not initially recognise the plants their food comes from. One gentleman decided to test the concept by personally sampling all the edible flowers(!).

Opposite: Some of Jennifer's works as published in the Auckland Garden (Newsletter of the Auckland Botanic Gardens and Friends), Sept 2021.



During the residency I ran three nature journaling workshops in the Culinary Garden for three different groups, Children and carers, Adults, and Friends of the Gardens Art Group.

My overwhelming observation from these activities is that most people crave to express their creativity, but many fear to do so. I noticed that taking a prompt based approach such as 'I notice...', 'I wonder...?' and 'This reminds me of...' helped participants get beyond fear of drawing. Most people are confident in their ability to 'notice', and as a side benefit they started seeing and recording aspects of plants that they had never previously observed. Participants enjoyed sharing their observations that, for example, an opium poppy seedhead looks quite a lot like the Death Star.

### Work from the residency

My solo exhibition **Feast your Eyes- celebrating the colour and beauty of edible plants** opened on February 14, just before the lockdown but received a generous extension as we went in and out again. Sales were very gratifying and cards and prints from the exhibition are still available in the foyer of the Visitors' Centre.

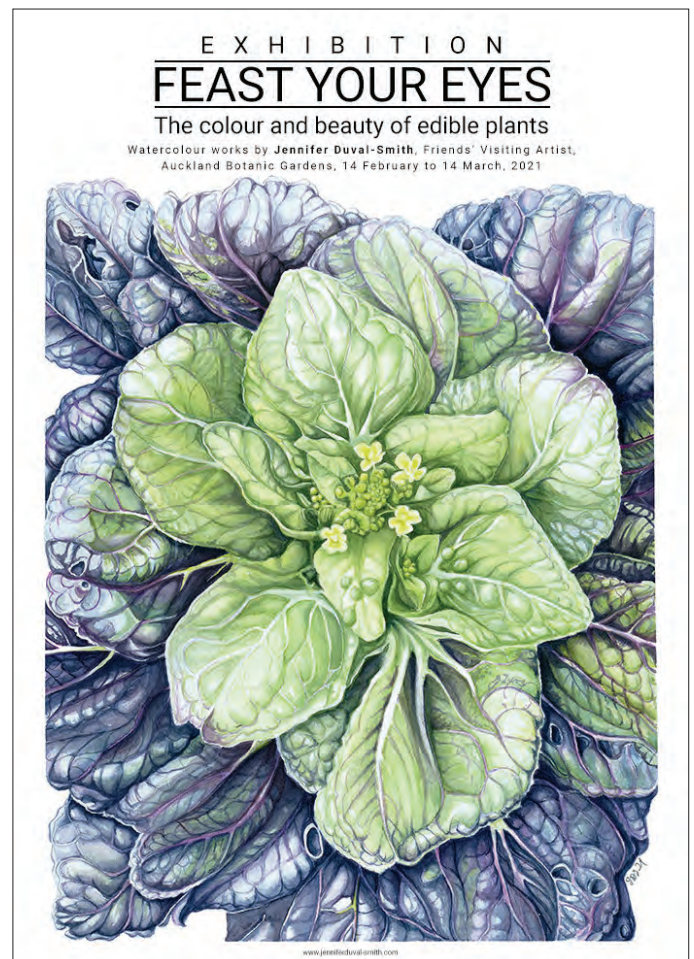
### Teamwork makes the dream work

Aside from the opportunity to really focus on my work, what made the whole experience really joyful was the wholehearted support from the ABG team at all levels, and especially Liz Powell of the Friends and Mich and the Visitor Experience team. I would like to take the opportunity to thank everybody who found me a fruit tree, took photos and video, helped me with the digital displays, or bought me a coffee when I forgot to have lunch (yes, coffee counts as an edible plant).

- Jennifer Duval-Smith  
www.jenniferduval-smith.com  
@jenniferduvalsmithart

Ref: John Muir Laws (2016). *The Laws Guide to Nature Drawing and Journaling*, Heyday Books, USA.

Please note this article originally appeared in the Auckland Garden (Newsletter of the Auckland Botanic Gardens and Friends), Sept 2021, and was republished on Jennifers blog here: <https://jenniferduval-smith.com/blog/artist-in-residence>



'Feast your eyes' exhibition poster.

See some of Jennifer's awesome watercolour palette tips and tricks on p. 17

## QUESTION TO THE MEMBERS

*With the warmer weather being with us, do you take your sketchbook and work outside? What does your plein aire art kit consist of?*



*I didn't tidy up my bag before taking the photos, just emptied out what was left in there the last time I used it!*

*It also contains a collapsible water jar  
tissues, rags  
bulldog clip to hold paper flat on windy days  
masking tape*

*My most recent addition has been the pocket size identification books which fit in the front pocket of the bag. I usually have some drinking water with me, but if not, any water - from sea water to stream/river water has been used.*

*When I want to work bigger, I take a board with full sheets of watercolour taped down, an easel and bigger brushes as well as my bag, but generally I work smaller.*

- Lesley Alexander



Lesleys plein air kit with a jandal for size!

*I always have my little Kathmandu bag ready to go - my daughter was going to throw it out so I repurposed it!*

*Although only 21cms high, I can fit into the 3 compartments all I need for a day out sketching or nature journaling and is always either in the car or by the door ready to go.*

*I have a couple of sketchbooks in the back compartment. In the main compartment I have: a palette with watercolours and travel brushes, an old plastic jar which has been used as a bug viewing chamber (turned upside down on one of the books) but also doubles as a container to keep various pens, pencils, aqua brushes, ruler, magnifying glass, small craft knife and even a spoon in order in the pack!!! Not sure why the spoon is there but I'm sure it will come in handy.*

## PAINTING ON VELLUM - PART TWO

*In the second installment of Lesley Alexander's series on vellum, she shares invaluable tips and techniques on working with this unique painting surface.*



Following on from my article about my visit to William Cowley in the Spring newsletter, here is the Part 2 as promised! How to paint on natural vellum! Read on to see how I prepare the vellum prior to painting, transferring image to vellum, the techniques needed, the tools I use and how to frame your finished work. There is a link at the end for a video of me demonstrating some of the techniques covered in the article.

Just to recap, vellum is treated calf skin, has been used for thousands of years as a substrate for paint, is far more resilient than paper to water, fire, repeated handling and does not rot, ensuring its survival over hundreds of years. It's also known for its ability to make colours, especially transparent

watercolour glow despite its off-white surface. Also remember, 'vellum' in the US is a type of tracing paper – they call their animal skins 'parchment'.

I often choose natural vellum over paper when painting subjects such as autumnal leaves, as the colours of the vellum, which go from very pale honey coloured to a darker, richer tan colour lend themselves to autumnal botanicals. The veining in the vellum which can be taken out or left in when treated, also adds another dimension to the artwork. If you carefully compose your paintings with the veining and the various colour gradations in mind, you can use the veins and colouring to your advantage, suggesting more veins or roots of plants.

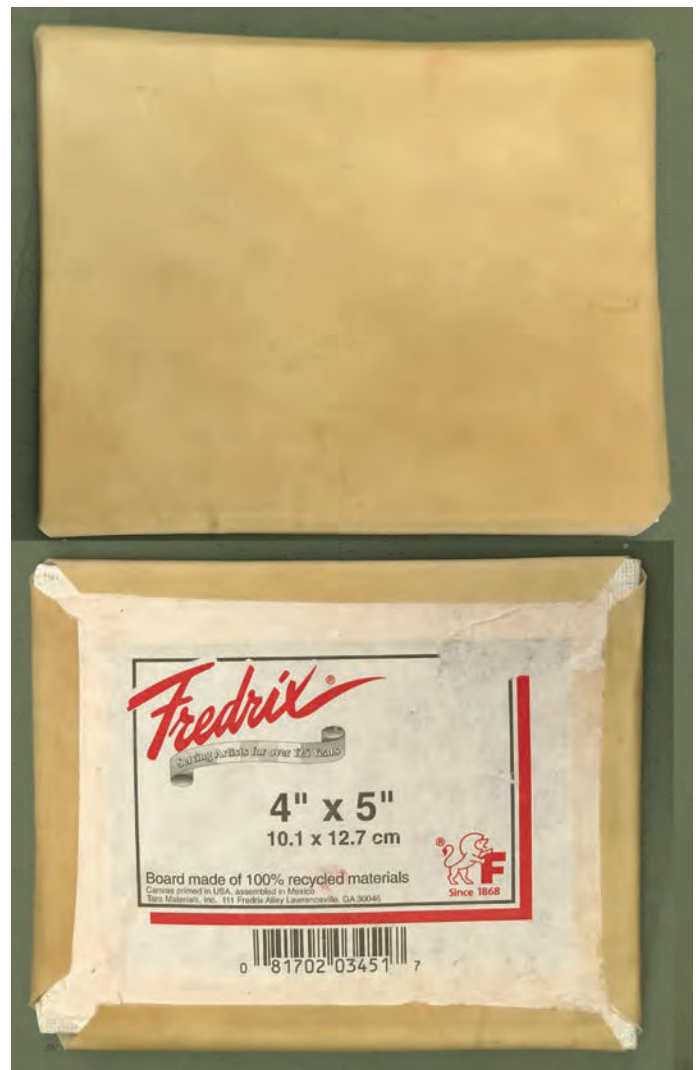
## *How to prepare vellum for use*

Natural vellum has a natural tendency to curl – after all it spent its life curled round the abdomen of the animal and was strong enough to hold the innards in place! So unless you buy vellum already glued to a panel, you will need to flatten it out. Kelmscott vellum – the treated vellum from William Cowley in the UK, on the other hand is thick enough not to curl.

If you have a small piece, it can be held flat by taping the edges to a board, much in the same way you do when stretching watercolour paper. However, DO NOT wet the vellum, just tape it down. Vellum is hygroscopic meaning it attracts moisture and will swell in any wet areas which are just about impossible to flatten!

If your piece is larger than A4ish size, you will need to glue it to a board. I used rabbit glue – not for the faint hearted as the smell is awful, but it is a very strong adhesive! I have read that you can use PVA instead but haven't tried it – I discovered that after I used the rabbit glue! Rabbit glue reacts to heat so if you place it incorrectly and end up with ripples, you can heat it carefully (hairdryer works) and the glue will 'unstick' allowing you to reposition it before letting it cool again. I then place it between dry pieces of paper and leave it under heavy books for a few days.

For this article I will assume we are using a small piece, so won't need gluing down, but if anyone is interested in learning how to glue vellum to a board, Dianne Sutherland has written a blog post about it which is how I learnt to do it <http://diannesutherland.blogspot.com/2015/04/day-13-and-14-sidetracked-by-vellum.html>



Vellum glued to a panel with rabbit glue, showing front and back

## *Transferring your image to vellum*

As the natural vellum is semi-transparent, a light box or a bright window will work to trace the outlines. Ideally try not to use graphite on the surface – or if you do, use it very lightly as it is tricky to remove. Despite the surface being smooth, it's not perfectly smooth and bits of graphite can get caught in the tiny ridges making them nearly impossible to remove! A mechanical H or 2H pencil works best. You could try painting the outlines using dilute watercolour or even watercolour pencils in a similar colour to the subject. I haven't tried that but again only use them lightly – you don't want a hard outline which may be too strong for the image!

## *Techniques for painting on vellum*

The main points to remember about painting on vellum are that vellum doesn't like water and that the paint sits on top of the vellum surface, it doesn't sink into the surface like it does on paper.

You need to use a 'dry brush technique', using a nearly dry/slightly damp brush. I carefully lay a damp wash of dilute colour down first then once dry, apply many layers of colour progressively getting darker allowing each layer to dry before adding the next. You do need a delicate touch – think painting on butterfly wings - as once you have a few layers down, you can 'move' the dry paint around creating 'holes' in the layers especially if your brush is too damp. So go slowly and carefully, gently laying the paint down – the end result is definitely worth it.

Of course, the beauty of painting on vellum is that if you go wrong – and who doesn't, you can use a damp but not wet paper towel or cloth, wipe the whole lot off and start again! Depending on the colour you used, there may be a slight stain left, but usually that is covered by subsequent layers, or you can add another element to hide the stain.



Items used to degrease the vellum

Once your vellum is taped down, it needs to be degreased to remove any oil residues – either from treatment or your hands. Oil repels water and as the paint sits on top of the vellum, it won't stay put where there is any hint of oil! I used very finely ground 240 mesh pumice powder – jewelers use it to polish metal. I bought mine from L. Cornelissen & Son in the UK as I couldn't get fine enough pumice powder here despite living in a volcano scattered part of the world!

I made a small bag from a pair of old fine mesh tights to put the powder in and rubbed that over the surface of the vellum in circular movements. If you use pumice powder, make sure it is really fine otherwise you could scratch the surface of the vellum. French chalk or talcum powder would also work, I'm sure.



Degreasing the vellum with pumice powder in a bag made from old tights

*“..the beauty of painting on vellum is that if you go wrong – and who doesn’t, you can use a damp but not wet paper towel or cloth, wipe the whole lot off and start again!”*



Wiping the paint off with a paper towel

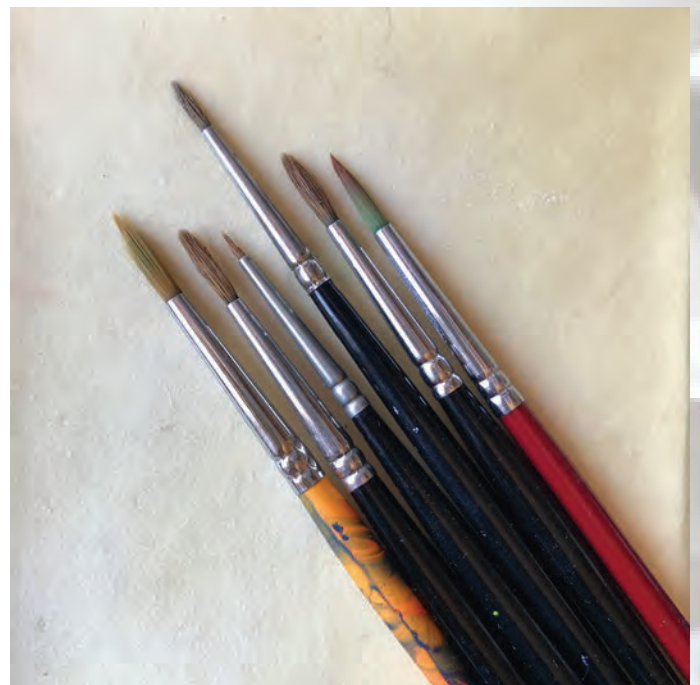
As the vellum isn't white or cream like paper, painting white or very pale subjects can be a problem – your pale areas or highlights are only going to be as light as the vellum. If you need areas to be lighter or you've lost your highlights, it's perfectly acceptable to use white gouache. That bit of extra bright white used sparingly will really make your paintings sing! I used it on my paintings of '3 Pōhutukawa Leaves' to good effect.



Showing where white gouache was used

### ***Brushes***

I tend to use synthetic brushes as the vellum surface can ruin brushes quite quickly. I used to use Winsor and Newton series 7 brushes, but they needed replacing regularly as the tip would literally wear away. I have since found that cheap synthetic brushes work just as well. If your brush has a good point, doesn't 'dump' paint and is small – a size 1 or 2, any brand will do. Brushes smaller than that will need refilling all the time and I like to be able to work for a while with one fill of the brush.



A range of brushes I use- some synthetic, some sable. Note how the hairs on the middle sable brush have worn away

## *Framing*

I am always surprised at how the paint stays on the vellum, that it doesn't fall off and just how robust painted vellum is – if it doesn't get wet of course. Touch wood, the unprotected demonstration pieces I take to workshops are as good as the day they were painted! However, I would always choose get work framed as soon as I have finished it.

Ideally have a double layer mount which allows more distance between the vellum and the glass. This is because, as mentioned earlier the vellum is very susceptible to changes in humidity. If the frame isn't sealed properly at the back or the glass is loose, moisture can get in and there is the potential for the vellum to warp and touch the glass. If this happens, the layer of paint could stick to the glass and pull away from the vellum.

PS – I have recently found a vellum importer in Nelson – suggested by artist Terrie Reddish who buys vellum for her book binding. He imports them from Pakistan for drums skins and was intrigued to hear I wanted to paint on them! They aren't made the traditional way but are much cheaper! I've yet to try them and will let you know how I get on once I do!

-Lesley Alexander



Framed work with double-mount

**If you'd like to find out more, here are some useful links:**

Link for video <https://youtu.be/aPnI2miDjZo>

Links for buying vellum –

UK - <https://www.williamcowley.co.uk/>

US - <https://www.pergamena.net/>

For a very in-depth read about vellum see -

<https://www.botanicalartandartists.com/vellum.html>



## TIPS: Working with your palette

### Switching up your palette!

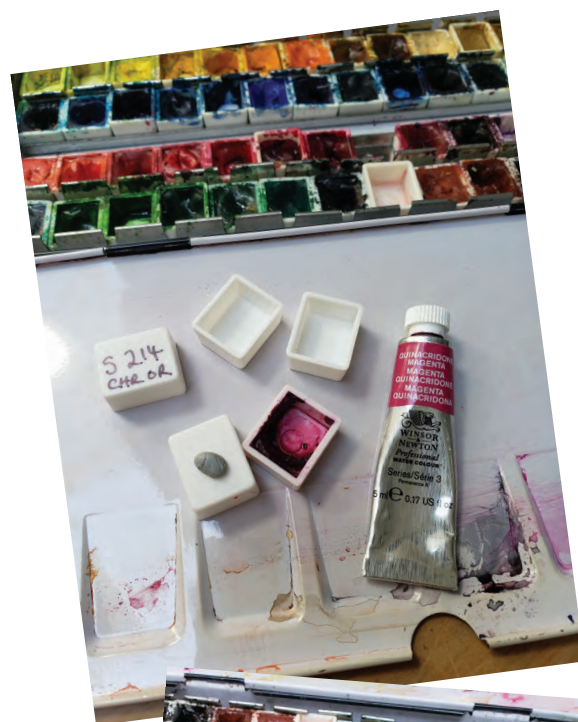
Empty half pans: If you are working with different metal paint box palettes, a big one and one for travel for example, or different palettes for different paintings, it can be handy to buy bulk empty half pans online (Wish or Ali Express) and fill them from your tubes. Note that the paint will be more liquid and stickier than your pre-bought half pans which are filled and dehydrated several times to get that hard consistency. You can buy both big and small metal paint box palettes from those sources too.

I always write the brand and pigment number on the bottom of the pan with a fine sharpie, as it is so very easy to forget what you have. When I have a favourite colour and I go to reorder I always thank my past self for this small favour!

Another good hint is to stick a bit of blutac on the bottom of your half pan before you insert it into the palette. Perhaps I am exceptionally clumsy but I cannot tell you how many times I have dropped my palette and had all the half pans fall out, requiring me to put them back in order.

Colour test sheet: For my main palette box I keep a test sheet with my paints in order, so I can quickly refer to the colour when choosing what I'd like to use. I like to note the characteristics of the paint such as brand, name, pigment number and transparency. This chart was a fun thing to do (when I was really meant to be doing something else) and it has been incredibly useful as a reference.

- Jennifer Duval Smith



## INTERNET

Just for a change I have not spent a great deal of time cruising the internet. Summer and the garden calls plus multiple visits by and to our family.

I have been reading on Facebook about making your own handmade watercolours - has anyone had a go? Would you like to share your experience with us? Drop us a line.

If you are tempted, here is an interesting article on Jacksons website. They are great for buying all sorts of supplies at a good price, don't overcharge on postage and things arrive reasonably quickly.

[Making Handmade watercolours with Jackson's Artist Pigments](#)

Kew Gardens have an interesting article on How to Be a Botanical Artist with tips from their Botanical artists. Written 2018.

<https://www.kew.org/read-and-watch/how-to-be-a-botanical-artist>

*"A basket is in the first place needful, and if the student should leave home without one, a profusion of lovely and rare objects will be certain to strew his path; in which case there are but two alternatives, to dissect on the spot, always an imperfect operation, or to carry away the spoil in hat or handkerchief, when on arrival at home, a heterogeneous mass of caps, stems, etc., presents itself—disjecta membra!"*

- Anna Maria Hussey, from 'Illustrations of British Mycology' (1855)

A real treat is the online exhibition of Women Botanical Artists on Google Arts and Culture. Quite a few images and information about the historical female botanical artists including Maria Sibylla Merian amongst many others. See the [original exhibition here](#), and [the second part of the exhibition here](#).



Illustration of Bleach Cup (*Disciotis venosa*) by Anna Maria Huseey (1865). Source: Illustrations of British mycology, 2nd ed.

## MEMBERS GALLERY

*We would love to share members recent (or not so recent) work! Please let us know at [newsletter.basnzinc@gmail.com](mailto:newsletter.basnzinc@gmail.com)*



'Wreath for Anna' by Jennifer Duval Smith, 2021

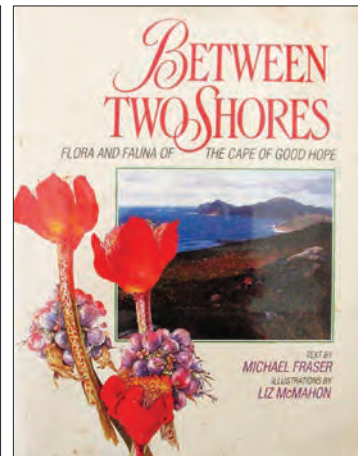
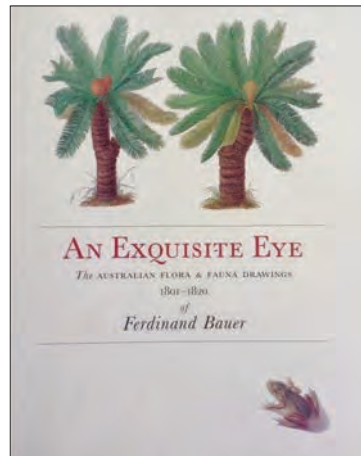
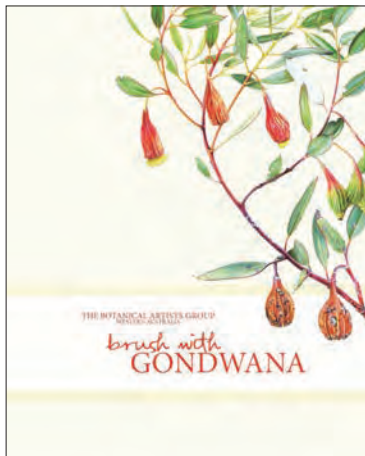
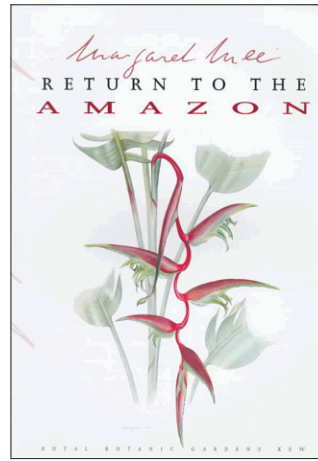
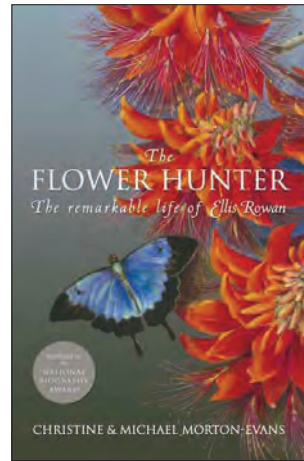
### Our new BASNZ flags!

Exciting news for the society, we now have two BASNZ flags, which will be used to promote the societies events. Organised by Lorraine Thompson, the plan is for one flag to remain in the South Island and the other in the North Island. When an exhibition is organized in the North Island the flag will be couriered to the member involved with the show. The flag, stand and pole all come in a very compact and transportable bag.

Thanks Lorraine and the Committee for organising this!



## My Botanical Book List - Sandra Morris



*Chrysalis (Maria Sybilla Merian and the Secret of Metamorphosis)* by Kim Todd, pub. by Harcourt.  
ISBN 0 15 101108 7

*The Flower Hunter (The Remarkable Life of Ellis Rowan)* by Christine & Michael Morton-Evans, pub. by Simon & Schuster  
ISBN 9780731812851

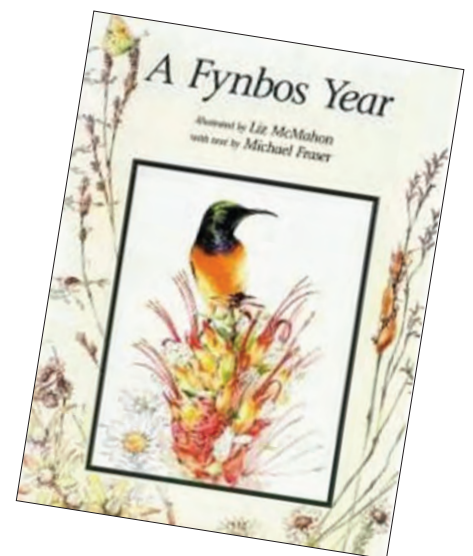
*Margaret Mee - Return to the Amazon* by Ruth Stiff (Royal Botanic Gardens Kew)  
ISBN 0 11 250113 3

*Brush with Gondwana (The Botanical Artists Group Western Australia)* by Fremantle Press  
ISBN 9781922089298

*An Exquisite Eye (The Australian Flora & Fauna Drawings 1801-1820 of Ferdinand Bauer)* by Historic House Trust of NSW  
ISBN 0 949753 70 3

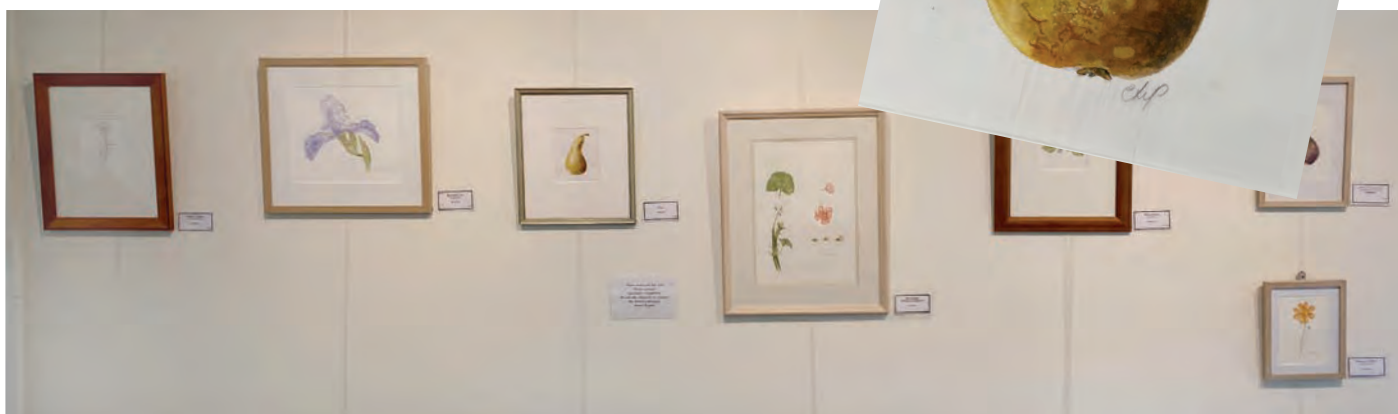
*A Fynbos Year* by Michael Fraser, ill by Liz McMahon (David Philip Publishers, SA)  
ISBN 0 86486 644 5

*Between Two Shores (Flora and Fauna of the Cape of Good Hope)* by Michael Fraser & Liz McMahon (David Philip Publishers, SA)  
ISBN 0 86486 224 5



## Exhibition - Elizabeth Yuill Proctor

I was offered a solo spot in the Amuri Community Art Gallery, Hanmer Springs, for this last December (2021) and January 2022. It was with great trepidation I accepted, the offer was made two years ago. I thought sure, plenty of time to put something together of a quality I could be proud of. Being someone who often leaves things to the last minute though....this was tougher than I thought it would be. The exhibition was a mixture of Botanical and Animals (my other love) . I managed to borrow back two commissions (dogs) for the show. I decided not to have a formal "opening" - it was enough of a strain to just have the exhibition! Maybe next time.



### Get in touch!

General enquiries

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*Quarterly newsletter of the Botanical Art Society of New Zealand*

**botanicalartnz.org**