



The Botanical Art Society of New Zealand Inc

PO Box 36687 . Merivale. Christchurch 8146
botanicartnz@gmail.com www.botanicart.com.au

SEPTEMBER 2016 NEWSLETTER

COMING UP IN THIS NEWSLETTER!

- **Dianne Sutherland Workshops**
- **Florilegium: Sydney's painted garden**
- **Sketchbook workshop review**
- **BASNZ Annual Exhibition 2017**
- **Worldwide Botanical Art Exhibition 2018**
- **BASNZ Christmas party**
- **Botanical Bits and Bobs**

Dianne Sutherland's 3 day Study Page Workshop

One of our members, Elizabeth Yuill Proctor, has been undertaking an online botanical art course with UK based Dianne Sutherland. Earlier in the year Elizabeth discovered that Dianne was heading to Auckland in September 2016 to teach. So together they organized for Dianne to come down to Christchurch and hold a tailor made 'study page workshop' which Elizabeth has kindly reviewed for us below.

"We experienced a wonderful 3 day workshop with Dianne last week. A study page is where you get to know your plant, noting key features, with the parts of the plant, accurate measurements, notes on habitat etc all noted down along with colour notes, in preparation of a final work. This is often a beautiful work in its' own right.

Day one was graphite. Often doing a full graphite version helps with noting where the lights and darks are, along with perspective. This was done using continuous tone. We also learned the best way to compose the work. With the roots at the bottom, leaves towards the middle and flowers towards the top, rather like the arrangement on the actual plant but as they say in cookery, deconstructed.

Days two & three we introduced colour to our work. Starting with wet in wet, wet on dry moving into dry brush methods.

Dianne is an experienced teacher who managed to answer "just one more question" - frequently. We watched many demonstrations as Dianne troubleshooted the students' work.

This was a joy filled three days, learning and practicing some new techniques and being refilled with the joy of Botanic Illustration. Dianne is a wonderful tutor (and guest). I am sure everyone came away filled with renewed energy and love for our art."

For more information on Dianne's online courses please check out the link below.

<http://www.botanicalart-online.com>



Dianne's work in progress



Dianne's study page in journal



Botanical artists hard at work!



Dianne's study page

Dianne Sutherland - One day vellum workshop

A small group of artists joined Dianne for her one day workshop on vellum. Calfskin vellum has long been the surface of choice for many botanical artists, including the great Rory McEwan. As Dianne says, "When used correctly it gives a beautiful luminance with translucent colours which cannot be matched on paper." But as we were soon to find out, it is not as easy as it might seem!

To ensure a smooth and even surface, the vellum is first prepared by rubbing it with ground pumice stone. Once the subject has then been lightly drawn out, the first and only wash is laid down. Each subsequent layer is carried out using the dry brush technique with 'dry' being the operative word! Dianne painted a rosehip and leaf and in both paintings, demonstrated how little water is needed to create beautifully luminous paintings.

We were all delighted however to discover that any unsuccessful paintings can be completely wiped off with a damp cloth! In light of the cost of vellum, this was an added bonus! We chose between small pieces of either natural calfskin vellum or Kelmscott vellum. Natural vellum is darker in colour with individual markings whereas Kelmscott, which is regarded as the ultimate medium for botanical artists, is prepared with a special organic coating and is much paler and more even in colour. Our vellum supplies came from William Cowley, the last remaining suppliers of vellum in the UK.

The workshop was thoroughly enjoyable and despite the challenges of painting on a completely different surface we all left with a greater understanding of how to tackle a painting on vellum and were delighted to have had the opportunity to learn from such an encouraging and generous tutor.

The link below is a review of Dianne's visit to William Cowley .

[http://diannesutherland.blogspot.co.nz/2016/05/a-visit-to-william-cowley-works-trying.html?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Feed:+DianneSutherland+\(Dianne+Sutherland\)](http://diannesutherland.blogspot.co.nz/2016/05/a-visit-to-william-cowley-works-trying.html?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Feed:+DianneSutherland+(Dianne+Sutherland))

Dianne Sutherland
Florilegium: Sydney's Painted Garden until Oct 30, 2016

Presented as part of the 200th birthday celebration of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Sydney, this exhibition celebrates the renaissance in the long tradition of botanic art and demonstrates the botanical and horticultural development of the Royal Botanic Garden and its links with domestic gardens and the public landscapes of NSW over 200 years from 1816 to 2016

Dianne was one of the 23 international artists invited to contribute a botanical painting to the Gardens. 64 artists in total, the majority Australian and nearly all represented in major public and private collections around the world, painted 87 plants, chosen for their botanical and historical significance. The artists have gifted the botanical paintings to the Gardens in honour of the bicentenary of the Royal Botanic Garden Sydney.

Dianne chose the Jade Vine, which must have been an incredibly challenging subject, not least because of the colour. To understand more fully the labour of love and expertise involved in the painting process, click on the links below. The first is Dianne's and includes information on Dianne's subject, the Jade Vine, as well as a great short video. It is amazing to watch the flower magically develop!

<http://diannesutherland.blogspot.co.nz/2014/05/the-jade-vine.html>

This link is to a great 20 minute video on Angela Lober painting her Norfolk Island Pine right from start to finish. It is well worth watching!

<http://sydneylivingmuseums.com.au/stories/watch-art-botanical-illustration>

This link is for information on the exhibition

<http://sydneylivingmuseums.com.au/exhibitions/florilegium-sydneys-painted-garden>

Ann Clay's Sketchbook Workshop

“Ann Clay gave us a very useful workshop on how to make our own high-quality sketchbooks. We found that even the best commercial sketchbooks widely available have paper that you cannot tape a specimen to without tearing. They also have either a hard spine or a wire spine that creates a big ugly bump in the middle of the spread page. I will always make my sketchbooks now that I know how to do it.

When you make your own book you buy the paper in large sheets according to what you want to do with it. I used 185 and 300 gsm Arches for sketching and watercolour. The main work is to cut the paper to the size you want, fold the sheets carefully and assemble them into groups or “signatures” that are sewn together to form the pages of the book or “text block.” You add decorative hard covers (but no spine) that allow the books to lie flat. The best results require meticulous measuring and attention to details -- familiar disciplines to botanical artists! -- and take a few hours to assemble. The actual work is easy with no particularly difficult techniques to master.”

Thanks very much to Ann for her tutorial and her promise to present the class again some time. Excellent value.” **Karen Atherton**

Many thanks to **Karen Atherton** for her review above.

BASNZ Annual Exhibition 2017

We are delighted to announce that the Selwyn Gallery in Darfield will be presenting our annual BASNZ exhibition towards the end of 2017. Located in the main street of Darfield, just 30 minutes from Christchurch, Selwyn Gallery is a modern community gallery that showcases and retails a wide variety of New Zealand art.

The exhibition will be made up of a diverse collection of works. As well as showcasing some of the Canterbury Plains Florilegium paintings, members are also invited to submit new ‘small’ works .

Further details will be sent out in a newsflash early in 2017.

Worldwide Botanical Exhibition 2018

Talking of exhibitions, here is a really ambitious one!

Although it is still early days, Lesley Smith, one of our Auckland members, has been liaising with Carol Woodin, ASBA Director of Exhibitions and organizer of the Worldwide Botanical Exhibition, to ask if New Zealand could participate in this extraordinary event. The answer was a definite YES! So watch this space!

A rough outline of the project concept is as follows:

“Exhibitions of contemporary botanical art will be curated by participating countries around the world based on an indigenous plants theme. A digital compilation of images from all exhibition worldwide will be shown continuously at each participating venue alongside that country’s original artwork.”

There will also be a Worldwide Day of Botanical Art to be held on May 18, 2018!

The committee is meeting in Pittsburgh USA this October so we will update members when there is more information to hand.

BASNZ Christmas Party

Watching the cherry blossoms burst into life along Harper Avenue in Christchurch, Christmas seems a little distant however advance notice for our annual Christmas celebration (and food extravaganza!) might be prudent. The date is **Wednesday December 7th**, and the venue is the same as last year: **French Farm, Banks Peninsula**.

For more information please contact Suzy at <mailto:rsabbott@xtra.co.nz>

Wednesday November 30th will be our last meeting at Avic Hill for 2016 and we will start up again on Wednesday February 1st 2017.

Botanical Bits and Bobs

Fabriano Artistico Paper issues

If there are any BASNZ members who have been having difficulties with recent batches of Fabriano watercolour paper, then the following two articles may well go some way to explaining the unpredictable nature of the paper. Dianne Sutherland, our recent tutor, writes in her blog very comprehensively about the issues with Fabriano and also trials some alternatives.

Dianne has been painting on vellum since 2007 and at our recent workshop commented that she is now painting the vast majority of her work on vellum. Dianne says,

“Vellum seems to be to be the most accommodating surface for my chosen subjects and technique and its organic nature seems to 'fit' the subject perfectly.”

One reason for Dianne choosing vellum has also been in light of the Fabriano paper issues.

<http://diannesutherland.blogspot.co.nz/2016/04/paper-matters-st-cuthbert-mill-vs.html>

<http://sandrinemaugy.co.uk/2016/08/what-did-happen-to-the-fabriano-artistico-paper/>

New Book!

Billy Showell's "*Botanical Painting in Watercolour*" is a new addition to the BASNZ library and has had very favourable reviews from our members. Every aspect of botanical painting is covered, including the materials and tools you need, preserving your specimens, drawing, painting, color mixing and composition. Don't forget to check it out when you are next at Avice Hill.

Newsletter Editor
Suzy Abbott