

GALLERY BY BACARO

Ciao! Welcome from Giorgia, Luca and team at Gallery by Bacaro! Open Wednesday - Sunday, 8:30am - 4pm, we're excited to also be open for dinner on Friday nights over spring and summer. In true Italian style, this includes a festive happy hour from 4pm-6pm with cocktails and pizza! Our delicious breakfast menu is available till 11:30am, and a fabulous lunch menu with delectable daily specials from 11:30am. Scrumptious home-made cakes, biscuits, Italian morsels and other goodies are available all day. And opening soon is a new takeaway station and, a deli with all local produce! So, come and enjoy our new menu and the spectacular view.

THE GALLERY SHOP has a beautiful range of wares in a wide range of prices. There are many new lines, some of which use images of Margaret Olley artworks and are ideal for gifts and souvenirs. Purchases at the shop help boost the Friends' contributions to the Gallery.

TWEED REGIONAL GALLERY & MARGARET OLLEY ART CENTRE
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Editor: Janice Jones

There's something about artists' prints ...

I am a bit of an unabashed fan of artists' prints. I remain fascinated by the processes, whether it be via the chemical alchemy of aquatints (surprising given I was never any good at the science-based subjects at school, other than making pretty pink fragrant soaps in organic chemistry), the metallic burring leading to the velvety result of a mezzotint, or the extraordinary cutting and accuracy of a linoprint. I love the idea of a multiple - the notion of something beautiful being able to be reproduced, yet each time with minute and unique differences, is so attractive to me.

When you consider what's involved in the production of an original artist's print, it's genuinely fascinating. Looking closely you can't help but be impressed with the range of technical skills. Apart from the draughtsmanship in creating the images, consider the expertise involved in executing the print, whether it's in the cutting, printing, mixing or grinding – there's so much precision involved.

The collection of prints in *Making their mark*, our current exhibition, reflects the complex mix of skills involved. The fact that we have these works in the Gallery's collection is due to the generosity and financial assistance of the Friends of the Gallery.

One such example of an artist and their work, that I regard as exemplary, and which is also a Gift from the Friends is Rew Hanks. Rew is a Sydney-based printmaker whose intricate linocuts are a combination of dry wit, satire and hard-hitting imagery, which engage social, political and environmental issues. His narratives are amongst the most complex and challenging in contemporary Australian printmaking, and I truly believe his work is extraordinary in its execution. The linocut *Banks, which one's mine?* is based on a well-known golfing image, L.F. Abbott's *The Blackheath Golfer* from 1790, which depicts a dandified gentleman out for a game of golf attended by his manservant carrying a load of golf clubs. The original image contains a grand country house, the windmill and the picket fence. Hanks reproduces the composition almost exactly, but imposes Captain Cook's face on to the golfing dandy, and the equally recognisable image of botanist Joseph Banks on to his manservant. It is the finer details that the artist adds to his image that beg us to have a closer look.

Rew's time-consuming technique appears to facilitate his humour as he adds improbable, yet convincing details. These 'great men' are out for a bit of (let's call it) suburban-style sport with the cane toads. Common local knowledge provides a raft of rather nasty methods to kill the toads - those that figure prominently are: hitting with golf clubs; and spraying with Dettol. Golf, perceived as a 'respectable' sport, and the domain of the professional classes, also has its status recast in this image as the 'great white men' are captured about to embark on an eradication spree.

Other than the sometimes less-than-subtle and amusing references in Rew's work, consider the

physicality involved in printing these works – the very idea of the size of the lino and printing an edition informs us of the endurance and strength required. Juxtapose that with the fragility of the paper that Rew's prints are transferred to. His judgement of the amount of ink required in creating those necessary tensions between positive and negative spaces in his resulting images is amazing. Too much or too little and he could ruin the work and transform the subtleties. It's extraordinarily clever.

A suite of prints which hasn't been on display for a while, included in *Making their mark* is by artist Judy Watson. *The holes in the land 1-6*, from 2015, are a suite of colour etchings. In 2013 Judy Watson was an artistic fellow at the British Museum with a project called *Engaging Objects*, a collaborative research project between the British Museum, the National Museum of Australia and the Australian National University. For this project Watson researched Aboriginal cultural material held in the Museum's collections since the 19th and early 20th century.

In 2015 from drawings made during her research, Judy produced a suite of six etchings. In four of the six etchings she has superimposed some of her drawings of objects over 18th and 19th Century architectural plans of the British Museum.

Watson included as part of her visual material Pituri, a native tobacco with narcotic properties, which was a valuable source of trade for Aboriginals in Western Queensland. The tobacco was carried in bags made for this purpose. One bag is made of cord from human hair tied along one side with string. The boat-shaped bags containing pituri are tightly woven with twine and wool from government blankets.

The suite also features an 'apron worn by Women' of the Mara Tribe from the MacArthur River and an apron made of a fringe of ochred opossum hair strings on a cord of human hair, given to the British Museum by Prof. Baldwin Spencer and J. Gillen Esq. in 1904.

The rich colour of the etchings draws us to the images, and then leads us into an investigation of the Aboriginal cultural material Watson has superimposed on the 18th, 19th and 20th century architectural plans of the one of the world's most prestigious and recognised collecting institutions. These prints are visually beautiful, but knowing the story of some of the objects they reproduce so sensitively adds many more levels to the images.

If there was the space, I'd happily write about so many more of the artists' prints featured in the exhibition! If you are able to visit the Gallery and see the exhibition, I just know you'll become fascinated by the intricacies of all the works featured in the show. Enjoy!

Susi Muddiman OAM – Gallery Director.

Making their mark: Australian artist prints from the collection, The Withey Gallery, from Friday 3 September 2021 to Sunday 5 June 2022



FROM THE DIRECTOR

It has certainly been a roller coaster of a year - one that's been a little topsy-turvy. From an incredible start with the popular 2020 *Archibald Prize regional tour* followed by Sidney Nolan's *Ned Kelly series* - to closed borders, postponed and cancelled events, closing the Gallery's doors in response to Public Health Orders,

and the celebration of reopening to the public again. As I write this, I feel sure that there will be additional changes to come as NSW's vaccination rates increase and the State's Roadmap to Recovery unfolds. Throughout all of these changes, the Gallery staff have been so grateful to have the support and encouragement of our Friends and our volunteers. We could not have managed without your support.

While the situation is ever-changing, we've so enjoyed ending the year on a high! We had some fantastic programming to round off the year, including the exhibition of legendary Ken Done's paintings. Titled *Up to 80*, this new exhibition of Ken's work created especially for Tweed Regional Gallery was a definite hit with our visitors, both in person and those who viewed the exhibition online. The virtual tour with special features allowing virtual visitors to zoom in to see the details of Ken's paintings and read the didactic labels received many lovely compliments. Apart from the positive feedback on Ken's paintings, there were so many great comments on the fabulously coloured walls of the Gallery. Our Curator: Exhibitions, Sarah Wallace chose such wonderful complementary, happy colours, making Ken's works sing. Thank you all so much for the tremendous feedback, which I know Ken enjoyed too. There's no doubt that colour genuinely makes us feel happier, and given the changing circumstances of the Gallery's recent closure, it seemed like perfect timing to re-open with such vibrant, vivid colours. Many of the paintings featured the artist's favourite and best-loved subjects – the beach, the reef and portraiture, as well as



Nadja KABRIEL
Natives 2021
Oil on board

Softening the eyes

When applying for the Community Access Exhibition Program I had only recently given birth to my second child. The early years of my children's lives have been an extraordinary time – whilst gaining a new powerful identity as a mother I simultaneously experienced a loss – a loss of the woman I no longer had time to be. My days were no longer my own so, I reassess my priorities. Time to myself was so precious – I let go of anything that wasn't important.

I stopped watching the news, listening to the radio, reading the newspapers, looking at social media, checking my emails, sending and receiving text messages and shopping for unnecessary things online. I turned my attention inwards, softened my eyes ... and painted.

Any mother knows that those early months are intense. Venturing into the outside world almost exclusively consisted of taking my children on drives to get them to sleep. On these drives I'd pull over and excitedly pick flora from the side of the road. Banksias from Lennox Head, Camellias from the Bangalow sports field, oranges from Possum Creek Road, all were huddled into the front seat and taxied back to the studio to paint.

The extraordinary forms and patterns that

his own personal environment – his garden and cabin studio in Sydney. A selection of works from the new publication *Ken Done: Art Design Life* was also included in the show. After many, (many!) changes of date to host the much-anticipated public programs in conjunction with this joyful exhibition, it was a thrill for us all to finally welcome the artist back to the Tweed to meet our excited guests.

The Gallery was also proud to present the exhibition *At Home: Margaret Olley & Ben Quilty*. This exhibition, which continues until February 2022, was initiated and curated by the Gallery's staff member Ingrid Hedgcock, and tells the story of mentorship, art and friendship between Margaret Olley and Ben Quilty, two of Australia's most celebrated artists. *At Home* is a sublime collection of recent still life paintings by Ben Quilty alongside still lifes and interiors by Margaret Olley from the latter half of her extraordinary career. The new, post-COVID world inadvertently offered a context for the making of work by Quilty that finds synergy with Olley's dedication to the genre of still life painting. During the 2020 COVID-19 lockdown Ben turned to ordinary objects as subject matter for his painting – indeed something Olley did for many decades in her own Duxford Street home studio.

The events associated with the *At Home* exhibition were spectacular too. It was certainly a wonderful opportunity to have Ben here, joined by Nick Mitzevich, Director of the National Gallery of Australia for their *'In Conversation'*. These two are both so entertaining, and it was a treat to hear some of their stories of their shared experiences with Margaret Olley in her home studio in Duxford Street.

Thank you everyone for your support throughout the year. Let's hope that 2022 has more opportunities to share visual arts experiences.

Until next time, **Susi**

occur in nature always inspired me, but I loved how effortlessly my foraged finds sat with the familiar timelessness of an empty jam-jar, or a worn enamel mug sitting on the kitchen table or with the thoughtful designs of fabrics that make my home warm. Through this process I discovered that for me, painting removed the veils that prevented me from seeing the beauty in the everyday and from connecting to myself. The bombardment of information and stimuli demanding and occupying my attention was suddenly a very unwelcome intrusion. We're always trying to make sense of our place and deal with the truth of our mortal position in the world, by slowing down and softening my eyes, I began to return myself to a reality and a presence that made me feel connected and at home.

My first visit to Tweed Regional Gallery and Margaret Olley Art Centre was during my second year of Fine Art at Queensland College of Art in Brisbane – we were all amazed by the beauty of the Gallery. Our painting Professor mentioned the Community Access Exhibition Program on offer and I remember thinking that one day I would apply. Six years later I'm making final preparations for my first exhibition at the Gallery and feel very excited and grateful for the opportunity. **Nadja Kabriel**

Softening the Eyes, Nadja Kabriel, The Macnaughton Focus Gallery and Kelly Wall, from Friday 3 December 2021 to Sunday 30 January 2022

A conversation with David Preston

I have been travelling around Australia for the past six months; consequently the last three issues of artifacts have been produced remotely, with great assistance from Susi and her wonderful staff and only hindered by intermittent and unreliable Internet access.

When I discovered that David Preston was exhibiting at the Gallery in November I felt that I couldn't miss the opportunity to interview him, despite being on the other side of the country. Luckily David agreed to my request, so from a small place called Hopetoun, on the south coast of WA, David and I discussed Greek philosophy, the cricket, music, cooking, God's creativity, gardening and of course art.

David, a much-loved local artist and staunch supporter of the Tweed Regional Gallery and Margaret Olley Art Centre, settled in Uki 6 years ago, after holidaying here as a child and even then thinking this was the "spot" for him, under the shadow of Mount Warning/Wollumbin.

His interest in Greek philosophy influenced the title of David's newest exhibition at the Gallery. *Beauty for Beauty's Sake* is a play on the mantra of the ancient Greek Stoics "Duty for Duty's Sake". David's "duty" to his art is a passion that he pursues with vigour. Such is his passion that he will have to go through 100 of his current works to choose the best 20 for the exhibition. He paints what artists have always painted (visual artists not conceptual) and has many to choose from; landscapes, figurative and surreal but this time he is going to promote flowers, trees and the Caldera.

Those of us who know David's work can't help but be aware that his art is inspired by nature's beauty, whether it is in his printmaking, drawings or paintings. He explains it thus: "If I see something that pleases my visual sensibilities, let's say it's a tree and I would like to see a painting of that tree, the only way I can do that is to paint it myself." To David that is the difference between visual art and modern digital art. "Visual means visual – I see a tree and then the vision goes into my eye through my brain and I intellectualise it and then it goes down into my 'X-box' where the art gets made and down my arm and into my pencil or brush - and then I hope the painting conveys the same visual sensibility to others, it might be the composition or the angle or the wind blowing through it."

David has very strong opinions about what is good art. In his opinion it must have two elements, it must be evocative and elegant: "Art may be in the eye of the beholder but good art is in the eye of every beholder. If you consider great art that is universally regarded as beautiful, for example the greatest paintings of all – who is going to criticise the Mona Lisa or Vincent's sunflowers? It's like saying "what an ugly rainbow." If you can get that "rainbow" happening in your painting then, you've got it."

It's a tongue-in-cheek David who admits that he quite often has conversations with God about his compositions. He feels that God created artists to show him where he got his designs wrong: "Hey God, you put one too many trees on that hill, it's not a very good composition so do you mind if I leave one out." God would reply: "Oh I wish I'd thought of that."

"That's why I'm an artist and you're God."

Irreverent he might be but who can argue with his compositions?

David prefers to paint in-situ, if he can't carry his easel and canvas to the scene he wants to paint, "it's too far away". He chooses the thing he wants to paint there and then. It might be the bird that visits, or his abundance of homegrown flowers. He is an avid gardener and grows his own flowers, preferring these to florist's flowers out of hot houses or plastic flowers. He does admit however; once when house-sitting for Brett Whiteley's sister Frannie Hopkirk in Millthorpe there was a vase of hydrangeas on the mantelpiece – after a week David thought he should give them some more water and he drew a picture of them. On her return Frannie was bemused as she explained, the flowers were silk! Even the artist can get tricked, happy to laugh about it and agree to sharing such a "good story"... maybe God was getting his own back?

I could go on to discuss David's love of cricket, his musical talents – he plays the guitar and harmonica and many more anecdotes that had me in stitches but there is only so much room...



David PRESTON
What the See Eagle Soar 2021
Oil on Canvas

However, David did want me to share with you why he loves the Tweed Gallery. David tells me, "Pierre Bonnard is known to have said; 'the best things in any museum are the windows.' Well the best windows in any gallery are the windows in the Tweed Regional and if Bonnard was alive he would want to paint them!"

He also notes - all places have their own smell and Tweed Gallery has a smell, and when he walks in, it has a distinct smell that he really likes.

We then had a chuckle as we envisaged Friends having read this will take a big sniff when they next visit the Gallery.

Sniff away my Friends, sniff away ...

Janice Jones – Editor, *artifacts*

***Beauty for Beauty's Sake*, The Boyd Gallery, from Friday 3 December 2021 to Sunday 30 January 2022**



FROM THE PRESIDENT

The Friends of the Gallery had their Annual General Meeting on 27 October in the Gallery foyer, and I am pleased to announce the makeup of the new Committee.

President: Penny Hall, Vice President: Janice Jones, Secretary: Heather McLachlan, Treasurer: Bronwyn Lewis, Membership Secretary: Karlene Polglase, *artifacts* Editor: Janice Jones, Public Officer: Rose Wilsher, Catering: Peter Taylor, Committee Members: Martin Sullivan, Ann Bullen and Shona Charters. We welcome Shona, who is new to the Committee but not to the Gallery, as she is also a Guide and a volunteer.

We are looking forward to the New Year, meeting new Friends, hosting morning teas, visiting galleries and other places of interest, catering for events at the Gallery and fostering and supporting the continuing development of the Tweed Regional Gallery and Margaret Olley Art Centre and its programs.

We have recently purchased several art works for the Gallery. A very exciting purchase was the Margaret Olley's *Still life with lemons* 1970. This was a major outlay for the Friends. It is a beautiful piece and Ingrid and Susi were very happy to add the work to the Gallery's collection.

Experimenta Life Forms

***"The human brain is a station on the radio dial; parked in one spot, it is deaf to all the other stations [. . .] the animals, rocks, trees, simultaneously broadcasting across the whole spectrum of sentience."* Blackfoot philosopher, Leroy Little Bear.**

Co-curator, Lubi Thomas and I began researching and discussing possible themes for the exhibition *Experimenta Life Forms* in 2018. Our process involves looking at artworks and listening to what artists are thinking about and discussing as well as keeping an eye on the conversations occurring in broader culture. Our focus is on the horizon where we seek to unearth the stirrings of fresh approaches and ideas. In 2018 what ignited our curiosity was the conversations about making new life while at the same time discovering new life. At this stage in our curatorial process the topic is deliberately broad and we begin to collate a long list of artists. We are constantly asking does this initial idea resonate and become more layered when we look at artists work through this lens. We recognised that internationally particularly in Europe there were exhibitions exploring similar themes. Equally we recognised that exploring this thematic in Australia's cultural context could bring a different view by including First Nations' perspectives. To achieve this we invited First Nation's curator Jessica Clark (palawa) into our curatorium for the exhibition. *Experimenta Life Forms* is the result. The exhibition features 20 artworks by 26 Australian and international artists who are making a significant contribution to the dialogue around the changing landscape of life as we know it, or indeed, as we don't know it.

When conceiving the theme for *Experimenta Life Forms* we were unprepared for how events in Australia would resonate with our exhibition focus. While developing the show more than 20% of Australia's forests were destroyed in bushfires and then a virus, "a kind of "borrowed life" because of its dependence on host cells⁽¹⁾, upended conventions and systems across the globe. These disruptions brought poignancy to our curatorial investigations. They reminded us of the critical importance of telling stories about the interconnectedness of all life, a theme evident in many of the artworks.

The contemporary artists featured in this exhibition are exploring notions of life, at a time when technological change and new research findings are making definitions of 'life' increasingly difficult to pin down. How are notions of our place in the web of life changing now that scientific research is identifying sentience in animals, plant-life, and may soon be found in our machines? While the focus of *Experimenta Life*

Forms is on biological life we have also selected works that point to the possible future sentience in machines as well as the possibilities afforded by biotechnology research. In making this exhibition we became acutely aware, as artists Oron Catts and Ionat Zurr argue, of the poverty of the English language. These artists whose work Biomess features in the exhibition write that we only have one word LIFE to deal with the living worlds immense complexity let alone for what may emerge in the future⁽²⁾. The paucity of our language is further revealed when we take the time to listen to First Nations' perspectives of land and seascapes alive with spirit, story and energy.

You will find an incredible diversity of artistic practices in the exhibition including bio-art, robotics, videos, installations, data driven work, creative coding and participatory art works which can all be described as Media Art. Media Arts is an eclectic form used as a descriptor more commonly in Europe and Asia than in Australia. It describes the plethora of artistic practices that were spawned in the 1990's by the introduction of the personal computer which vastly expanded the technological tools for art making. *Experimenta* is a curatorial platform dedicated to supporting Australian artists who fearlessly experiment with these tools often redefining what art is and what it can be. Our exhibitions are a home for all the artists who don't fit into traditional art form categories. For over 35 years, *Experimenta* has commissioned and presented these remarkable artworks. We believe the exploratory nature of experimental practices provides important seeding and testing grounds from which new forms of creative expression arise. We prioritise touring particularly to Australian regional centres that rarely have the opportunity to view this kind of work. *Experimenta Life Forms* is the only Australian triennial of contemporary art to tour nationally.

Our hope with this exhibition is that it fosters in audiences new connections or reconnections to the life that surrounds us all. The idea that all life forms and their environments are interdependent is central to many works in this exhibition. The voices of First Nations artists in the exhibition take these ideas well beyond inter-species relationships to a profound relational understanding between humans, technologies and Country.

Jonathan Parsons – Artistic Director, *Experimenta*

⁽¹⁾ Luis P. Villareal, "Are Viruses Alive?" Scientific American, August 8, 2008
⁽²⁾ Oron Catts & Ionat Zurr, "The Contract of Art that deals with Life (Sciences)", Art as We Don't Know It, Alto University, 2020

***Experimenta Life Forms*, The Temporary Exhibitions Gallery, from Friday 10 December 2021 to Sunday 30 January 2022**



Plugin HUMAN
PULSE: The Life Force of Trees 2020
Experimenta Life Forms, Plimsoll Gallery (2021).
Photo: Eden Meure