



Gallery by Bacaro  
BACARO

## GALLERY BY BACARO

Enjoy having lunch, morning or afternoon tea in the beautifully situated licensed café with its magnificent views over the Tweed Valley and the Border Ranges. View the artworks and treat yourself to delicious cakes and great coffee or a light meal and a glass of wine.

The café is open from 10am - 4pm Wednesday to Sunday. For your preferred table, time or group bookings, please phone 02 6672 5088.

**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**  
www.tweed.nsw.gov.au/artgallery  
Cnr Tweed Valley Way and  
Mistral Road Murwillumbah  
PO Box 816  
Murwillumbah 2484

P: 02 6670 2790  
E: tweedart@tweed.nsw.gov.au  
Open Wednesday to Sunday  
10am to 5pm



Disclaimer: Please note that the information contained in *artifacts* is obtained from a variety of sources and that the views expressed are not necessarily those of the Friends of Tweed Regional Gallery Inc. or Tweed Regional Gallery.

Editor: Janice Jones  
Design: Hetti McDonald ~ 0421 952 983

## 50 Years of Murwillumbah Potters Inc

A seed is sown and, with nurturing, a tree grows numerous supporting branches. These carry water from the soil to the leaves and in return the leaves provide food to the rest of the tree.

This metaphor reflects the Murwillumbah Potters (MP) - their seed was planted in 1971. The structural branches of their tree have been formed by the vision and commitment of members for over 50 years and the entire membership base are the leaves that keep the Club alive through their ongoing love of clay and creativity. After all, the club house is in the old Fernvale School, nestled beneath a cedar tree that was planted by one of Fernvale's students many years ago.

In 2020, Lifetime MP member, Ann Lee, always looking to improve the Club planted another seed when she wrote to the Tweed Regional Gallery (TRG) suggesting an exhibition at the Gallery. A meeting was held with Sarah McGhee, TRG Exhibition Curator, Deb Hodge, MP President and Ann Lee. The outcome was an application for the Community Access Exhibitions Program.

On acceptance of their proposal and after much rejoicing, a sub-committee was formed by MP lifetime members, Ann Lee and Vicki Graetz, more recent members Sandy Younan, niece of historic member, Barbara Stewart, Pamela Payne and Robyn Tynan and later Beth Cavallari who shared her skills and knowledge of her father, founding member, Jim Hall's legacy. By October 2020 deadlines were in place and each sub-committee member embraced the tasks allocated to them. Some of the roles included, but not limited to, research from club records, historic membership, social media, photography, writing, editing, word processing, recording, digital media, scanning, cataloguing and project management.

In late 2020 the sub-committee members worked vigorously to compile lists of contacts, and where possible, each club member was contacted and given the opportunity to submit one piece of their work. Photographs, works and historic documentation were also gathered by sub-committee members and digitised by Beth. Pamela, revisiting her journalistic skills, wrote the storyline for the Club and Vicki undertook the daunting task of compiling a list of all

members since the Club's beginnings in 1971; all to be displayed at the exhibition.

There were various challenges but it was the cohesiveness of the sub-committee that permitted them to meet each deadline and it must be said, even though they would humbly dispute this, that the success of the exhibition from the Club perspective is dedicated to their diligence.

By the December deadline we had received all of the exhibiting members biographies and photos including those taken by Sandy. Each biography was edited by Pamela and collated by Robyn for submission to TRG. Historical artefacts from the club were selected with Sarah McGhee TRG, to be displayed and were catalogued by Ann and Beth.

In the meantime, Meredith Cusack, TRG Public Programs Curator, contacted the sub-committee regarding Guest Speakers, Tour Guides, and Friends Studio Visit. After a visit by Meredith to Fernvale, the Studio Tour of Fernvale Club House by Friends of the Gallery was scheduled for 16 March 2021. With pride in their heart's MP members worked together before the tour to ensure their club and garden was viewed in its best light. On the day of the tour, members were available to meet and mingle with their guests. Two weeks later on 28 March 2021, experienced Potters, Jo Armstrong, Dinah Watson, Sandy Weekes, Robyn Porritt, Ronda Luland and Ann Lee, offered their time and knowledge to be Tour Guides at TRG to answer questions about the exhibition and the art of pottery. The Soft Opening followed at 2pm on the same day, with TRG Meredith Cusack as Facilitator and guest speakers Deb Hodge, MP President, members Ann Lee and Pamela Payne, plus 50 Members and guests who have all been part of nurturing our "tree".

If you've ever planted a seed, I'm sure you are aware not all seeds flourish. Therefore, all members of Murwillumbah Potters, past and present, should be proud of what they have achieved. Without the seed being planted with vision and nurtured by a group of dedicated people, the structure of the Club wouldn't exist as it is today. Well done all. Here's to the next 50 years of Murwillumbah Potters.



### FROM THE DIRECTOR

It has been a privilege to host the touring exhibition of Sidney Nolan's *Ned Kelly series*, on loan from the National Gallery of Australia. The exhibition continues to attract visitors from far afield, all keen to see the iconic series here at Tweed. There's such a strong narrative in these paintings. As we know, the story did not end well for Ned, however Nolan painted a tale of drama and suspense, forever embedding this social bandit in our nation's cultural history. It's been wonderful to see school groups visiting the Gallery to view the Ned Kelly works, and there's no doubt that social groups have begun to arrange outings, as the Gallery's driveway has been filling up with buses again. Great to see! Don't miss out on seeing this stunning series of paintings - the show continues until 22 August.

For information and ticket details, visit our website: [artgallery.tweed.nsw.gov.au](http://artgallery.tweed.nsw.gov.au)

The month of June was a busy one for us, and we were delighted to host a number of events, whilst being sure to keep all of our guests, visitors and volunteers safe. We were able to celebrate Margaret Olley's birthday, and officially open the Margaret Olley Memorial Garden on Saturday 19 June. It was such a lovely occasion, and a treat for our guests to have the Honorable Dame Quentin Bryce AD CVO speak to Margaret's love of flowers and gardens. The Gallery is honoured that the memorial garden is the final resting place for Margaret - it is fitting as she loved the region and was so generous to the Gallery.

This event coincided with the Gallery's annual Community Picnic and Artist Paint Out held in the grounds overlooking the Tweed River. We also welcomed Guest Artist-Mentor Nicholas Harding, who spoke of his mentorship by Margaret, their shared love of flowers and his time spent here working from the Nancy Fairfax Artist in Residence Studio, responding to the Gallery's re-creation of Margaret's home studio. Nicholas set up his easel outside with artists of the region, all taking in the stunning views that have inspired so many artists in the Gallery's collection. Many visitors enjoyed observing artists at work en plein air.

June saw the closure of the Gallery's annexe space in Murwillumbah's M|Arts Precinct, Gallery DownTown. Initially launched as a 12 month pilot project in January 2019, Gallery DownTown was an initiative of the Tweed Shire Council to act as a driver of creative and economic

Some of our merry band of volunteers at our Education Session during National Volunteers Week



development in the heart of Murwillumbah. Extended for a second year via a resolution of Council, Gallery DownTown hosted over 25 curated exhibitions and offered opportunities to more than 60 regional artists through an extension of our Community Access Exhibition Program, as well as showcasing the Gallery's collection.

The final exhibition from the collection was my pick - *Director's Choice*. I enjoyed curating this exhibition, drawn entirely from the Gallery's collection. In working with the collection it's a rewarding challenge to envision and care for the collection, which I believe to be a significant asset for our community today and into the future.

When considering this exhibition I enjoyed reflecting on the history and growth of the collection - I selected some personal favourites; some works that we hadn't had the opportunity to exhibit in recent years; and works that reflect the diversity of artists and art forms across our four collecting profiles. For those of you who had the chance to see the exhibition, I hope you enjoyed my selection! The M|Arts team will continue to activate the Precinct and host a myriad of events. Stay informed about what's happening in the Precinct by subscribing to their e-news at: [m-arts.com.au/sign-up/](http://m-arts.com.au/sign-up/)

Since the previous issue of *artifacts*, we had the chance to celebrate and recognise our enthusiastic and dedicated team of volunteers during National Volunteers' Week. Our volunteers, many of whom are Friends of the Gallery, perform such important tasks for us, from greeting visitors at our front door with COVID Safe check-in procedures to serving as Gallery Guides. A huge thank you to our volunteer team from all the staff.

For those of you who enjoy a little bit of retail therapy or have the need to find that perfect gift for someone (or yourself!), the Gallery Shop proudly continues to support over 50 local artisans, makers and designers of our region. The Gallery is privileged to be located in a district that is home to a plethora of talented artists and creatives. In 2021 our focus is on forging new connections with artisans and expanding the aggregate of locally-made products. The Shop has welcomed several new jewellers, ceramicists, wood workers, textile designers and print makers this year. Come along and check out the treats in the Gallery Shop!

Until next time,  
**Susi Muddiman OAM**

Installation view of *Director's Choice* exhibition at Gallery DownTown



Installation view of *Earth 'n' Fire: Fifty Years of Murwillumbah Potters* at Tweed Regional Gallery.

## Olive Cotton Award

The 2021 Olive Cotton Award for photographic portraiture opens to the public on Friday 16 July. Thanks to the ongoing support from Olive Cotton's family and gallery dealer Josef Lebovic as well as the Friends of the Gallery, the Olive Cotton Award is an important and much loved part of the exhibition program. The \$20,000 Biennial National award dedicated to the memory of Olive Cotton is an opportunity for both emerging and established artists and the winning work is acquired for the Gallery's collection.

This year's exhibition showcases a stunning selection of 75 works from entrants across Australia. Guest judge Michael Cook certainly had his work cut out for him with 2021 being the first time entrants could submit up to two entries and the Gallery receiving over 600 entries online. A Brisbane-based artist of Bidjara heritage, Michael Cook is one of Australia's most significant photo-media artists, and has worked in photography for over 30 years. Since transitioning from commercial to fine art photography in 2009 Michael's work has been included in major exhibitions all over the world and his work is held in major collections from the British Museum, to the National Gallery of Australia, and here at the Tweed Regional Gallery.

Michael's ability to create cinematic and psychologically-charged works made him an ideal judge for the Olive Cotton Award, and he was indeed a generous and thoughtful judge who carefully considered each entry looking for initial impact but also for layers of meaning. Over two days Michael contemplated the portraits submitted online, taking into account technical ability, composition, storytelling and what the image revealed about the relationship between the sitter and the photographer. He was a joy to work with, and his knowledge and understanding of the medium was evident throughout the process.

As the guest judge, Michael will travel to the Gallery again to view all the works once they are installed, revealing the winner at the official Opening and Prize Announcement on Saturday 17 July. This is an especially rewarding part of the process as it is when each judge meets the works in the flesh for the first time. The chosen print medium, the quality and size of the work is often surprising and can pull a single work out from the pack. Scale of course has impact but often in surprising ways. At times the scale can feel more intimate than anticipated, pulling you forward and into the world of the sitter,

its expansiveness inferred rather than demonstrated. Other times the sheer size and quality of a print is breathtaking. A photograph may be printed on a quiet velvety paper, a hushed translucent glass or harder cooler aluminium. Whether the interiority of the sitter radiates out from their gaze or whether the photographer has captured something fleeting, the way in which an image makes us *feel* something, maybe recognise something in ourselves, this empathy, trepidation, wonder – this is surely what makes the Olive Cotton Award such a rewarding prize to present to Gallery visitors. For this reason we always look forward to the People's Choice Award, and this year will be no different.

**Meredith Cusack** Curator, Public Programs

**The 2021 Olive Cotton Award will be on display at the Tweed Regional Gallery from 16 July 2021 until 19 September 2021.**



2019 OCA Guest Judge Marian Drew congratulates winner Belinda Mason live via Instagram at the Official Opening and Prize Announcement



ABOVE: Margaret OLLEY  
*Dieppe view* 1952  
monotype and watercolour  
on paper

Tweed Regional Gallery collection  
Gift of the Friends of Tweed  
Regional Gallery and Margaret  
Olley Art Centre Inc., 2020  
© Margaret Olley Art Trust

TOP: Margaret OLLEY  
*Wildflowers and pears* c.1973  
oil on board

Purchased through the bequest of  
Phoebe McNamara and the Tweed  
Regional Gallery Donations Fund,  
2019  
Tweed Regional Gallery collection  
© Margaret Olley Art Trust

## A life in art: Margaret Olley

This year marks the 10 year anniversary of Margaret Olley's death at 88 years of age. The latest exhibition in the Margaret Olley Art Centre (MOAC) celebrates her life-long dedication to painting.

*A life in art: Margaret Olley* is a new exhibition featuring artworks by Margaret Olley AC (1923-2011) from the Tweed Regional Gallery collection. Artworks in the exhibition date from as early as 1938, when Margaret was just 15 years of age, through to 2011, the year of her death.

Also in this exhibition are nine beautiful monotypes made by Olley in 1951 and 1952 when she was travelling in Europe for the first time. Two of these monotypes - *Dieppe view* 1952 and *Exhibition poster* 1952 - were gifted to the Tweed Regional Gallery collection by the Friends of the Tweed Regional Gallery and Margaret Olley Art Centre Inc. The generous support of the Friends secured these important works for the collection, which would have otherwise been taken into private collections.

The monotypes reveal her strong observational skills as an artist through drawing as well as the exciting places she visited. In a letter to his parents, Olley's artist friend David Strachan wrote of Olley's arrival in France in the early 1950s, telling them that when she disembarked after crossing the English Channel, she found the landscape at Dieppe so beautiful she couldn't believe it and burst into tears.

From these early years Olley went on to dedicate her life to art, not only as a successful artist but also as a generous philanthropist to regional and metropolitan public galleries, and as a supportive mentor to several emerging artists.

Since the Margaret Olley Art Centre opened in 2014, we have been developing our collection of artworks by Olley, mainly through fundraising and working with donors and this exhibition is a showcase of this development to date. The unique collection tells a wonderful story and the support of the Friends in this endeavour is greatly appreciated.

*A life in art* is a chronological exploration of Olley's extraordinary life via her greatest legacy – her art. Collectively, the artworks illustrate stylistic evolutions in her practice while revealing stories from her eventful life. It is a unique celebration of Olley's incredible career and her significant role in the history of Australian art.

***A life in art: Margaret Olley* currently on display in the Margaret Olley Art Centre at the Tweed Regional Gallery until 31 October 2021.**



### FROM THE PRESIDENT

The Friends catered for the opening of *Void* on 7 May. It feels like life is returning to some semblance of normality when we can present food to guests at the Gallery. The raffle of the artwork on paper by Judy Oakenfull was drawn and Peta Gow from Stanthorpe was the lucky winner. Our next raffle prize a work on paper by Chelle Wallace titled *Hey Hey it's Saturday*.

Forty Friends visited the HOTA Gallery at Bundall on 11 May. It was a perfect autumn day to see this spectacular Gallery set in dramatic landscaped gardens. The Gallery is an impressive space to visit and a great addition to the arts in our larger region. Coffee and cake were enjoyed by many of the Friends in the upstairs bar.

Our next outing was to GOMA to see *European Masterpieces from The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York*. It is an uplifting experience to see artworks that one is familiar with "in the flesh".

On Tuesday morning 13 July the Friends will be hosting the filming of *Leonardo - The Works* at the Kingscliff cinema. Tickets will be available soon.

The Friends' Mission Statement is; "to foster and support the continuing development of the Regional Gallery and Margaret Olley Art Centre Inc and its programs". We do this by raising money for acquisitions through a variety of activities such as shop sales, hosting events, catering and running raffles. The Committee is always open to new ideas that would enhance our role in the Gallery.

**Penny Hall** President

## Still Life Challenge Unlocked

During the tumultuous year that was 2020 the Gallery, like so many art institutions, had to rethink ways to engage with visitors both locally and further afield. But exactly how could we foster engagement if we were closed to the public? This was the question that led to the online Still Life Challenge series launched in June 2020. At a time when most people could not access a Gallery, the Still Life Challenge would be this portal. Better still, we could 'unlock' Margaret's house and give special access to the re-creation and objects stored in the Gallery's collection.

Indeed the seed had already been planted by MOAC Curator Ingrid Hedgcock who knew that access to Margaret Olley's re-creation had inspired artists for some years. Invited by the Gallery, contemporary artists like Nicholas Harding, Pam Tippet, Adam Pyett, and Monica Rohan had all produced new work by responding to the multitude of objects or 'characters' that Olley lived amongst and painted so often.

Taking inspiration from Margaret Olley's incredible collection of objects, we began creating still life challenges, releasing them on the first Sunday of each month. Ingrid was filmed collecting the objects found in such paintings as *Hyacinth* c.2000 and *Hawkesbury wildflowers with lemons* 1971, and carefully re-creating a corresponding composition. For the first time, viewers were able to vicariously move through the re-creation as Ingrid sought out and removed each item, following her into the Store, or watched as tissue was gently lifted to reveal the original wallpaper from Olley's bedroom. Behind the scenes there was much preparation – which paintings to use; what objects could be moved; what flowers would be in season; whether to paint a backdrop or use a Gallery wall? Such a process has the added bonus



Ingrid Hedgcock and Ruth Parry-Williams carefully prepare Margaret Olley's wallpaper for still life challenge setup.

of revealing more and more of Olley's mastery with composition and colour as we would refer back to her paintings for answers. Apples or eggs were gently tilted left or right, fabrics folded and refolded, and various vessels and vases hunted down until the original object – or something very close - was positioned just so.

Each month a video and a corresponding still image was uploaded

to the Gallery's website, YouTube channel and Instagram, inviting viewers to make a work in response. Whether through painting, drawing, mixed media or photography, we wanted to see how viewers responded to the challenge and asked them to share their creations on social media with the hashtag #unlockingmargarethouse. The response from the first challenge was perhaps the most gratifying as we weren't sure whether audiences would engage with our challenge at all. Within 24 hours we were beginning to see responses and if you look up #unlockingmargarethouse you can now view over 200 responses and growing! We watched as the viewing numbers steadily increased over subsequent challenges – each regularly having over 1,000 views.

Over 10 months there would be 8 still life challenges taking inspiration from Olley's paintings, but also from exhibiting artists Pam Tippet, Adam Pyett and Nicholas Harding – who graciously agreed for us to film him making work inside the re-creation. Seated on a chair with ink and paper Harding effortlessly produced beautiful ink works of Olley's poppies and ceramic horse figurine. For the final challenge for *Margaret's House* we worked with local artist René Bolten. His delight in being inside the re-creation was infectious and his talent as an artist and teacher are obvious in the video as he responds to Olley's painting *White Still Life* 1977.

As restrictions continue to ease the Still Life Challenge will continue in some form with plans to bring it back into the Gallery where visitors can sit and respond to objects and works on display. For now we are busy planning the next challenge in conjunction with *Margaret Olley: A Life in Art* and we can't wait to see what our visitors create in response.

**Jodi Ferrari** Education and Audience Development Officer