

# NEWSLETTER

**December 2023 No. 501**

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**From the desk of the President – John Perkins FRAS**



The Art School Exhibition got underway with Guest Opener Barbara Konkolowicz. Some excellent works were received, and this made selecting award winners difficult. I wish to extend my congratulations to the successful students.

Thanks to Art School Director Greg, Secretary Christine and Vice Patron Judy for their contribution to this exhibition. Also, to all our tutors and students for another successful year's painting.

Unfortunately, prior to this opening we experienced a drama due to a burst water pipe in the Art School. This caused considerable damage to the Preston Gallery and Engine Room. The paintings in the collection had to be removed to enable the drying process, the electrical wiring had to be inspected for safety, and this work is still ongoing which has caused difficulties in staging our Christmas Exhibition.

I extend thanks to our members for their cooperation in meeting our request to enter smaller works at short notice due to limited space. This exhibition will also be featuring works by long-time member Warwick Fuller, and I extend the Society's thanks to Warwick for accepting the invitation to continue our program of featuring notable guest artists.

We were saddened by the passing of our dear friend and former Art School tutor Yve Close. I attended her funeral along with some RAS members and we have extended condolences to Yve's family.

Work on the Art School power points and lighting repairs have been carried out. We have also taken the opportunity to get quotes to improve the lighting in the studios. Due to the present circumstances, we have postponed the possibility of installing solar panels.

I extend the Society's appreciation to all volunteers who assist at the Society throughout the year, the RAS Council Members and Secretary for their continued service to the RAS. I extend Seasons Greetings to all our members, Art School students and tutors and look forward to a Happy New Year.

The opening of the Christmas Exhibition went well with a large number of Members present who enjoyed viewing our invited artist Warwick Fuller's excellent paintings.



## Vale Yve O'Hara Close FRAS

Yve had a long association with the Royal Art Society over many years as a member and teacher in the Art School.

She studied at the Julian Ashton Art School when she was a teenager, also at East Sydney Technical College and at the RAS Art School in 1968 under Allan Hansen, Frederic Bates, Garret Kingsley and Arthur Murch.

In 1974 she attended the Joshua Smith School in Lane Cove. Within a year she was elevated to teacher and invited her to join him in painting murals for a Balmain church. Following this Yve was his full-time associate which led to their twenty-year painting partnership.

Yve travelled widely with Joshua to country areas conducting workshops – Mitchell School of Creative Arts at Charles Sturt University, Canberra Art Workshop, Bowral and Mittagong. When Joshua Smith died in 1995, Yve spent three years writing a book on his life and work "Joshua Smith Artist".

During her lifetime as a dedicated artist, Yve has left a substantial body of artwork. This collection of paintings includes worldwide figures, family members and the substantial commission of the Grand Masters.

Her life legacy encompassed her impressive repertoire of paintings, with the enduring beneficial relationships of other artists whom she worked and interacted with throughout her long artistic journey.

Yve was a dynamic woman who steered her way with a steely resolve and always her principles intact. She is a woman to remember, stylish, interesting in everyone and every subject with an opinion on all.

Yve, you will be missed by us all at the RAS, especially on opening nights. On nights such as these she would arrive, typically in mauve/purple – elegant and like a moth to a light she would be surrounded by her many friends and admirers.

Rest in peace with your darling John.

### Members of the Royal Art Society of NSW (est 1880)





## RAS Art School Exhibition



Katherine Biden receiving the President's Award with Greg Hansell and Barbara Konkolowicz.



Geoff Vitlin, Winner of the Landscape Award with Greg and Barbara.



Paul Heffernan, Winner of the Alan Hansen Acquisitive Memorial Student Award.



Kai Lie Lin Winner of the Engine Room Prize.



Irene Holt receiving her Winning Prize, Tuesday Botanical Class



Lesley Edwards Commended for the Tuesday Botanical Class





Catherine Jensen Highly Commended  
Wednesday Botanical Class



Christine Mathews Highly Commended in the  
Marilyn P Hay Student Award



Rossan Travan recipient of the inaugural Marilyn P Hay  
FRAS Prize with her husband, son and daughter.



## Opening Speech by Guest Opener Barbara Konkolowicz

**Retired. Co-ordinator of the Brett Whiteley 1995-2001.**

**Curator Historic Houses Trust NW and Photographer**

In between my day jobs I've attended a lot of art classes and love to see what friends create.

Making art when you are part of a group is a unique process which includes many conversations both about art and life, which is indeed the title of the book about Brett Whiteley.

In the film 'Difficult Pleasure' Brett says 'painting is 90% contemplation and 10% perspiration.

When you're working in a group you can have many eyes to look at your work, and it's always exciting to have all the class works put up at the end of a session and discussed. It's interesting to see how your own work looks in the context and know it's also the result of a shared pleasure and often a struggle.

Speaking of groups, Greg Hansell, Daniel Pata and I feel lucky to be part of the Pens and Pencils, a group created over 30 years ago by Lou Klepac, an esteemed gallery director, curator and art book publisher.

When Lou first arrived in Sydney from WA, he met some older artists and observed that they worked long hours in isolation. He thought they needed to get out more and socialise with other artists.

We meet on the first Monday of the month for a ham baguette and a glass of wine, an art quiz and bad jokes. Now Lou has almost finished writing a book about Greg's work, which will include photos of his many beautiful paintings and drawings, and a launch is planned for early next year!

I have been a lucky beneficiary of Lou's connections and encouragement. In the 2000s three esteemed women artists were also members of the Pens and Pencils. They were Nora Heysen, Judy Cassab and Margaret Woodward.

These women would meet once a month at Judy's studio, to draw the model. Lou thought it was important to record these friends working together and asked me if I'd like to photograph them, as he had seen some of my photographs before and liked them. Wow! What an incredible gift that was and to expand the connection between all of us artists. I would like to gift you a plant from Nora's garden, which I grew from a cutting.

Extending the connections between us, in your latest newsletter, there's a piece from Daniel Pata who's been staying in the hotel 'Les Templiers' in Collioure, in France. Daniel writes 'Here is a most amazing hotel full of quality art adorned throughout all the rooms, hallways and bars. These are the works by many artists over decades that have stayed there, including Picasso, Matisse and many others of worth. It's nice to sense a continuity of camaraderie in a shared experience over time, which empowers the place to be important'.

When you take classes at the Royal Art Society, not only are you blessed with the camaraderie of fellow students and the expertise of your teachers but are also touched by an awareness of all those artists who have gone before you. And then there's the bonus of the extraordinary location you're in but actually belonging to a group is the key to it all.





## **Farewell to Barbara Duckworth**

### **Botanical Drawing and Painting**

Barbara has a Diploma of Art from Central Technical School Toronto, Canada and studied Natural History Drawing at the British Museum of Natural History, London. She has worked for the Australian Museum and at Macquarie University as Biological Illustrator/Artist.



Barbara Duckworth with several works by students.

Barbara joined the RAS Art School in 2009 and throughout these years her students have enjoyed the expertise of her knowledge and sound advice – especially on the use of colours!

Barbara has decided to retire at the end of this term and although we are saddened by her decision we completely understand and wish her all the very best. The doors are always open for a time when Barbara might like to take a term, or a workshop.

Featuring in the RAS Student show each year has been works by her students and once again this year, a truly excellent collection of paintings and drawings – a tribute to the teacher that Barbara is.

Greg Hansell FRAS, Art School Director, John Perkins, President, the teaching staff at the RAS and its members and friends.

## **A Message to Barbara Duckworth from student Lorraine Bloomfield on behalf of Barbara's Tuesday class and RAS Secretary Christine.**

I first met Barbara in 2007 at a holiday art school at Charles Sturt University in Bathurst. I was doing a mixed media course - a raw beginner but in the classroom next door there was quite some noise, mostly gales of laughter. I was intrigued. I saw the teacher at morning tea, tall reddish hair and a smiling face and warmly interacting with her group. They seemed like friends.

I decided then and there that I wanted to join that class at the Summer School. I didn't care much what she taught but it turned out to be Botanical Art, the medium was watercolour and the teacher was Barbara Duckworth.

The warm interest that I recognised in Barbara towards her students is one of the attributes of an outstanding teacher. One of five, according to a research study conducted by the NSW Dept of Education a few years ago. The other four are as follows: Of importance is a safe and supportive environment and, in this case it was the Royal Art Society School who recognised Barbara's qualities as a specialist art teacher and as a person.

On behalf of Barbara, I would like to thank all those involved with the RAS and in particular Greg Hansell, Art School Director, a very special thank you to Christine, and many thanks to Judy Pennefather who Barbara relied on for all those years to help with the judging of the prizes for the Art School Exhibition.

The third factor which indicates an outstanding teacher is a passion for the subject, in this case all things botanical. Not just in working hours but also in leisure time. There is no off switch for Barbara – garden- finding an orchid. An example, on long haul flights to Canada instead of a book, film or sleep to while away the time, Barbara gets out art paper and pencils and continues on with the latest project. Fourthly, there must be an in-depth interest, knowledge, and expertise in the subject.

Barbara had years of scientific illustration experience, she had a fascination for the chemical properties for different brands of watercolour products and she had the magical ability to mix these paints into just the right shade. She has an understanding of the various qualities of art paper, and I could go on.

And finally, and crucially, the teacher must have a very high expectation of the students. No raps across the knuckles though but great encouragement and a wonderful reassuring ability to rescue mistakes and solve problems.

As a teacher Barbara more than ticked all these boxes. She is warm, feisty, funny and with her passion and knowledge, and she has inspired us to achieve so much more than we ever thought possible.





## Members' News:

**Marlene Weaver** FRAS – won the St George Art Society Annual Members' Art Exhibition Acrylic Painting Section and received a Highly Commended in the Portraiture Section.

**Freda Surgenor** FRAS -Highly Commended in the Australian Society of Marine Artists Online Exhibition "Small Boats".

**Salwa Woodroffe** FRAS won 3 awards at the St George Art Society Annual Exhibition. The Award of Excellence for her landscape painting, Winner in the Portrait Section and Highly Commended in the Landscape Section.

**John Downton** OAM FRAS won the Australian Society of Marine Artists Online "Small Boats" Exhibition and also the ASMA National Exhibition with Best in Show.

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## RAS Artists in the Landscape

### En Plein Air

We are featuring artists of the RAS painting en plein air.

Today plein air painting is a flourishing trend in our art world. Artists come together for 'pain out' excursions, workshops devoted to the practice occur all year round and coast to coast, and landscape painters are finding that plein air painting is as rewarding and powerful an experience as it was for the first plein air painters all those years ago.

Next in the series is Fellow, Julie Simmons and her artist statement is:

"Plein Air painting makes me work quickly just getting basic shapes and tones but more than anything it's the connection to the subject and how it affects me emotionally. I get pretty excited when I start making marks onto the paper or canvas."





## From the RAS Collection by Secretary Christine Feher

Ray Wenben donated the painting as a memento on Henry Hanke's 80<sup>th</sup> birthday in 1981, when celebrated in the Art School studios upstairs.

Born in 1893 he was a painter, printmaker and illustrator. He studied with Julian Ashston and Elioth Gruner. He served with the Australian Field Ambulance in France 1915-1918, and upon his return he worked as a commercial artist and newspaper illustrator.

He joined the Society in 1966 and remained a member until his death in 1991. He was elected to Fellow in 1989.



Harry (as he was known) Hanke long time Fellow of the Society, won the Archibald in 1934 with a self-portrait and the inaugural Sulman Prize in 1936 with 'Lat Gatina'.



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### Stay Connected ... ..

Have you "liked" the Royal Art Society of NSW on Facebook? If you want to keep up to date with news and events at the Royal, simply "like" our page and invite your friends to "like" it too. Supporting us in this simple way helps to get the message out that we are continuing our tradition of great art and exhibitions, exciting classes and life-time friendships.

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received. Receipts and cards can be collected at the front desk.**



## RASNSW workshops with International Portrait Artist Tina Garrett January 2024

Art Renewal Centre Living Master and Faculty Artist for the Portrait Society of America, Tina Garrett shares with students the practical methods she uses in her award-winning portraiture. Student will learn how to see and simplify values, create form, and understand edges and chroma to control composition and create dramatic portraits. In the mornings Tina will demonstrate her oil painting techniques and, in the afternoons, she will work one-on-one with every participant to help them create their own artworks. All levels welcome. Coffee and tea will be provided but please bring your own lunch. 45 mins break for lunch.

### Two-Day Weekend Workshop: Flesh Tones

**Date:** 9am to 4pm Saturday 6 and Sunday 7 January

**Cost per person:** \$360 incl. GST (Numbers are limited)

This is a **painting from photos only workshop** and students will study flesh tones of varied ethnicities in multiple lighting scenarios. Tina will provide photos for those who need them or you can bring your own.

### Three-Day Workshop: Portrait Starting Methods

**Date:** 9am to 4pm Monday 8, Tuesday 9, and Wednesday 10 January

**Cost per person:** \$630 incl. GST & model hire (Numbers are limited)

This is a **working-from-life workshop** and Tina demonstrates three oil painting starting methods including **open grisaille**, **accurate colour wash** and her favourite, the **selective start**. Students will discover which process can help them achieve their best when working from life.

**To BOOK for either or both RAS of NSW JANUARY WORKSHOPS** please contact Christine on 02 9955 5752 and pay RAS NSW by direct deposit BSB 062-217 Acct No: 0000 0203. Please quote your name as a reference. Full payment is required to secure your spot. If you want more information about the workshop call Janelle Hatherly on [Janelle.hatherly@bigpond.com](mailto:Janelle.hatherly@bigpond.com) or 0419 717 937.

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ROYAL ART SOCIETY OF NSW



Art School



## 2023 Program of Events

### January

Monday 15 RAS Office & Gallery open.  
Sunday 21 Warwick Fuller & Members  
Exhibition. Finish at 3pm.  
**Friday 26 Australia Day. RAS Closed**  
Monday 29 1<sup>st</sup> Term Art School starts

### February

Friday 2 **Opening** Greg Hansell  
Book/Exhibition (6pm-8pm)  
Friday 16 RAS Council Meeting 4pm  
Sunday 25 Finish Greg Hansell Exhibition 3pm  
Monday 26 **Send in** Annual Autumn Exhibition  
(Thora Ungar Memorial Award)  
10am-3pm

### March

Friday 1 **Opening** Annual Autumn  
Exhibition (6pm-8pm)  
Friday 15 RAS Council Meeting 4pm  
Tuesday 19 Fellows morning tea 11am,  
Meeting 11.30am  
Tuesday 26 Annual General Meeting 6pm  
**Friday 29 Good Friday, Easter Saturday  
and Sunday and Easter Monday  
Closed.**

**President:** John Perkins FRAS

**Art School Director:** Greg Hansell FRAS

**Secretary:** Christine Feher **Ph:** 9955 5752 **email:** [lavender@royalart.com.au](mailto:lavender@royalart.com.au)

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**Deadline for the next Newsletter is 28 December 2023**

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The Society wishes to thank The Art Scene  
for all their support.