

eNEWSLETTER

May 2023 No. 494

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From the desk of the President – John Perkins FRAS

Artist, master printmaker, academic and curator Michael Kempson kindly accepted the offer to display some of his wonderful prints together with other works from Cicada press artists in the Grace Cossington Smith Room, along with prints and still life works by our members. An enthusiastic crowd enjoyed this excellent display and I wish to thank Michael and all who contributed to this Exhibition.

Presentations were announced and made to newly elevated members. A Fellow's Certificate to Salwa Woodroffe and the Associate's Certificate to Elizabeth Austin. Art School Director Greg Hansell presented the RAS Diploma to Hugh Cross and congratulations were extended to these members.

Unfortunately, we have not been able to distribute the AGM Balance Sheets as yet. I thank you all for your patience and you will receive these as soon as possible. The Flights of Fantasy Exhibition is next so we will look forward to some different and unusual works. There will be no official opening for this Exhibition but please come and enjoy a drink with us on Saturday 27 May.

Happy Painting and Drawing.

From the Archives – Secretary Christine Feher

Quotes from the RAS Catalogues – To be continued in future Newsletters

1932

The Royal Art Society of NSW is essentially an Australian Institution. Art is universal but the art of each country should be an expression of the national characteristics of that country and its people. The Society whilst welcoming portraiture, which is almost necessarily cosmopolitan in its style, and good work of every school of art, nevertheless has always striven to encourage Australian national feeling. The Society aims by every means in its power, to develop a fuller appreciation of the efforts of Australian artists to produce figure work imbued with Australian sentiment and landscape paintings pervaded with the spaciousness, air and sunlight characteristics of our typical Australian scenery.

1933

By its exhibitions, the Society not only places the works of the principal Australian artists before the public but gives the promising younger artists an opportunity of testing their work alongside that of men well known in the Australian art world, many of whom have passed through the Society classes and made a reputation in Europe.

Printmaking, Still Life and Sculpture Exhibition with Special Invited Artist Michael Kempson



Michael Kempson and Greg Hansell



Salwa Woodroffe receiving her Fellow's Certificate
with Greg Hansell and John Perkins



John Perkins with Hugh Cross after receiving
his RAS Diploma Certificate



Greg Simpson and Jacqui Dinklo



Michael Kempson's Opening remarks for Royal Society Exhibition 2023

Thank you for the invitation to be a featured artist at this venerable institution. It may not be the first time you have heard this, but you are taking an awful risk asking an artist to open a show in which they feature. The consequence being that they drone on about themselves for far too long. Fortunately, my natural disposition leans towards the opposite, meaning a short speech which, no doubt, will be a relief to you.

I came to Sydney in 1980 fresh out of high school to pursue two dreams. The first was to be a professional cricketer and the second to study art at what was then Alexander Mackie. There is only one other practicing artist in Sydney that I know who also played cricket at a very serious level. His name is Steve Lopes, who coincidentally you recently had him judging your Autumn exhibition.

The good thing about being an artist is that it is a more sustainable endeavour as it didn't take long, after a number of serious injuries, for it to be my total focus. I've been very fortunate, via my art practice, to have exhibited all over the world and work with some amazingly talented people, something I couldn't have imagined possible when I was a student.

Parallel to this has been a long career in art education advocating my passion for the mysteries of the print discipline. Technically focussed processes like printmaking require access to a medium specific studio, for in a very practical sense, there needs to be a sharing of expensive specialised facilities and plant equipment. The positive outcome of this is the altruistic sense of community that can be built in what is usually for us a solitary pursuit. Cicada Press, which has worked with over 230 artists of national reputation, was and continues to be a project that has sought to be educationally focussed by connecting artists with students of printmaking through the custom printing process. In this collaborative engagement insights into rigorous professional practice, the development of high-quality skills and the nurturing of longer-term mentoring relationships have been established, which are crucial in the development of emerging artists.

This is also true of the Royal Art Society of NSW which has been committed to bringing artists together, in the mediums and creative values you promote, for far longer than most in this city. I've checked out your schedule of events for 2023 and it is a packed program offering invaluable opportunities for creative development and community building. In addition, you have an aligned art school of dedicated artists offering instruction that will save students considerable time in their development. With teaching artists of the calibre of Greg Hansell you are in exceptionally good hands.

The still life theme in the printmaking, painting and sculpture displayed in this exhibition certainly has some parallels to my practice. I'd never really pegged myself as a still life artist, but I have actually had to rethink and claim this moniker. I must admit that for as long as I can remember my work has been about arranging natural and man-made objects in playful ways so that they act as metaphors for broader personal, societal and geopolitical issues.

Of course, the still life genre has been a vehicle for personal expression and existential commentary by artists for centuries. One example is the tradition of vanitas painting. While overtly focussed on addressing the inevitability of our mortality by pricking the egos of the privileged, it was also laden with social and political meaning understood by most at the time, with an obscure complexity that is lost to us now. But this is also true of the etchings of Goya, or even the late paintings of near contemporaries like John Brack, and any number of artists who have had something topical that they needed to communicate. While a clear understanding of the intent of an artwork might not always be evident it doesn't diminish its power and efficacy.

While I understand that I'm preaching to the converted here, there is nothing more life affirming than to be given the freedom to express ourselves as artists. To use the mediums of this show, with centuries of history, in ways that can vary between formal investigations into composition, considered observations of place and visual essays of satirical critique. And it is right and proper that it should be celebrated in exhibitions like this.

This core value is reinforced in what could be an apocryphal story attributed to the British painter and printmaker David Hockney, known to have produced a few still life images in his time.

Can I conclude by congratulating all of the artists for their contribution and formally open the Exhibition.

Members' News:

Annette McCrossin – Combined Art Societies of Sydney – Highly Commended in the Miniature Section.

Diana Garth – Combined Art Societies of Sydney – Commended in the Miniature Section. Tumut Art Exhibition 1st Prize in the Small Painting Section and 2nd Prize in the Miniature Section of the Deniliquin Autumn Exhibition.

John Perkins FRAS – Combined Art Societies of Sydney – Highly Commended in Oil Section. Drummoyne Art Society – Best in Show and Very Highly Commended in Members and Small Works Sections.

Wendy Fare ARAS – Drummoyne Art Society – Winner of the Drawing Section and Highly Commended Awards in the Portrait and Traditional Sections.

Dee Jackson – Sydney Royal Easter Show Art Awards – 2nd Prize – Figurative Painting.

Karen Bloomfield ARAS – Drummoyne Art Society – Winner of Modern Section.

John Woodland FRAS – Sydney Royal Easter Show Art Awards – 2nd Prize – Marine and Seascape and Drummoyne Art Society – Highly Commended – Watercolour Section.

Susanna Chen Chow FRAS is having a solo exhibition at The Old Fireshed Gallery, Wollombi Cultural Centre. Exhibition weekend 10am to 4pm, 28 April until 14 May.

Morning Tea in the Margaret Preston Gallery

We are trialling a morning tea once a month at the Society during exhibitions and our first one will be during the Art Ballot Fundraiser.

This is an opportunity to enjoy a relaxing morning tea and viewing the yearly Art Ballot Fundraiser, a truly magnificent exhibition and one that raises funds for the Society.

Date and Time: Wednesday 19 July, 10.30am to 12.30pm.

Cost: \$10 coffee or tea with a choice of slice of cake.

As space is limited, please make a booking by phoning Secretary Christine on 9955 5752 or email to lavender@royalart.com.au

Felting Workshop with Denise Lithgow

An enjoyable 1 day workshop was held at the RAS on Saturday 1 April.



FROM THE RAS COLLECTION – Secretary Christine Feher

BOB BAIRD FRAS

Bob Baird studied at St George Technical College undertaking the 5 year Art Diploma Course, also at the National Art School. His main genres are in portraiture, the human figure and landscape. He has taken part in many exhibitions over the years and a finalist in the Doug Morgan Portrait Prize, Archibald and Dobell drawing Award.

His works are in collections at the National Gallery Canberra, Reserve bank, University of NSW and many regional galleries around Australia TO NAME BUT A FEW.

Bob taught at the RAS Art School for a number of years, served on the RAS Council for several years and is a long-time Fellow.

'Summer in the Garden' forms part of the RAS Collection.



ROYAL ART SOCIETY OF NEW SOUTH WALES.

ART BALLOT FUNDRAISER

The major fundraiser for the Society each year is the Art Ballot Fundraiser and it's a time when we ask our members to support this by donating a painting/s. The painting can be any size, medium and a subject of your choice, except portraits – these simply do not suit the fundraiser. All works need to be well framed and presented, after all this showcases your painting and advertises you as an artist.

If you cannot donate one of your own paintings, then a painting of high standard by another artist is acceptable. Please be generous this year for the benefit of the Society. Contact Secretary Christine and arrange a time to deliver your donation, or, alternatively if you cannot do so Christine will arrange collection.

If you would like a little history – the RAS 1880 – 2023 – in the late 1940's the Society decided to find a home for the Society instead of renting in various rooms around Sydney, so the search was on and in order to raise funds for this project, the Art Ballot was formed. Members donated a painting, tickets were sold and on the day of the draw and ticket holders took home a painting. It took some five years to raise sufficient money and in 1956 the Society purchased 25 Walker Street North Sydney and in March the following year, number 27. These premises had been turned into flats during the depression years and were in need of renovation. Over time this was done, and all helped by the fundraiser that were held in the following years.

Today the Art Ballot is the major fundraiser for the Society and with rising costs of rates, insurances, maintenance is needed more than ever.

Please donate to the Society and encourage people to purchase tickets. Spread the news on Facebook, Instagram wherever you can. Flyers are available at the RAS and online just speak to Christine at the RAS.

Together let's make this the most successful Art Ballot in the long history of the RAS.

The Art Ballot paintings are online on the RAS website, promoted on Facebook, Instagram, North Sydney Council, Look Magazine.

If you have any questions at all, please speak to Christine on 9955 5752 or lavender@royalart.com.au

Our fabulous Art Ballot Cocktail Party is scheduled for the 11 July 2023, and this is for the RAS to say a huge thankyou to those who donate a painting, in some cases more than one. This year we are going to have fun with 'It's Medieval at the RAS' – information in RAS Newsletter. A fun night where we can dress up (optional) have some fun and mingle with members.



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

ART SOCIETY OF NEW SOUTH WALES

'2023 RAS MEDIEVIL BALLOT COCKTAIL PARTY'



*(An exclusive evening for the artists who donate a painting/s to the
Art Ballot
Tuesday 11 July 2022
6pm-8pm*

*We are in Medievil times -with King Arthur and Guinevere, Excalibur,
Sir Lancelot and the Knights of the Round Table; goblets, Crowns,
great costumes - join in the fun or your head in the pillory!!*

You are invited

(RSVP to Secretary Christine is a must)



2023 Program of Events

<u>May</u> Friday 19 Council Meeting 4pm Sunday 21 Finish Still Life Exhibition Monday 22 Send-in 'Flights of Fantasy' Exhibition 10am-3pm Saturday 27 Opening Non Official 'Flights of Fantasy' Exhibition	<u>June</u> Monday 12 King's Birthday Gallery Closed Sunday 25 End 2 nd Term Sunday 25 Finish 'Flights of Fantasy' Exhibition. 3pm Monday 26 Last send-in for Ballot paintings Friday 30 Council Meeting 4pm
<u>July</u> Saturday 8 1 st Viewing Ballot paintings Monday 17 3 rd Term starts Friday 28 Council Meeting 4pm	<u>August</u> Sunday 6 Ballot Draw 12 noon Monday 7 Closed Tuesday 8 Closed Friday 25 Council Meeting 4pm Monday 28 Send-in Annual Spring Exhibition (Medal of Distinction) 10am-3pm
<u>September</u> Friday 1 Opening Spring Exhibition 6-8pm Friday 15 Council Meeting 4pm Tuesday 19 Fellows Morning Tea 11am and meeting 11.30am Sunday 24 Term 3 finishes	<u>October</u> Sunday 1 Finish Annual Spring Exhibition Monday 2 Closed Labour Day Holiday Monday 9 4 th Term starts Friday 20 Council Meeting 4pm Monday 30 Send-in RAS Art School Exhibition 10am-3pm
<u>November</u> Friday 3 Opening RAS Art School Exhibition 6-8pm Friday 17 Council Meeting 4pm Sunday 26 Finish RAS Student Exhibition Monday 27 Send-in Christmas Exhibition 10am-3pm	<u>December</u> Friday 1 Opening Christmas Exhibition Thursday 14 Council Meeting 4pm Sunday 17 End 4 th Term Friday 22 RAS closes at 2pm

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Deadline for the next Newsletter is 27 May 2023