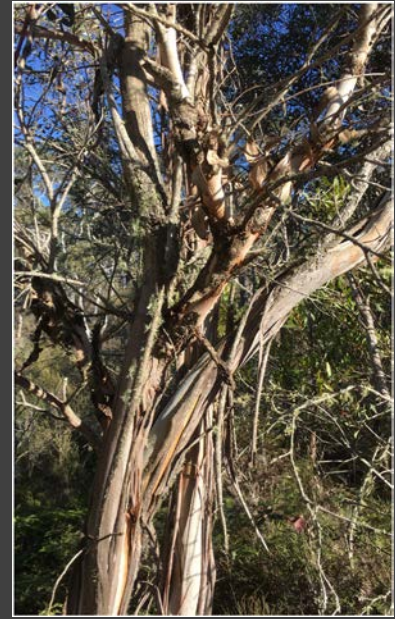


Tendrils

Australian Botanical Artists Regional Network (ABARN)



The amazing and very unique *Eucalyptus aquatica*, only found at Penrose in NSW, showing its shedding bark and swampy habitat

Editor's note

Tendrils is an online newsletter distributed across Australia. Commenced in 2017 by artists from Bowral, Canberra, the Shoalhaven and Sydney, it aims to share ideas and information in regional and metropolitan locations, among those who share a passion for the botanical art genre.

We welcome news and articles from individuals and groups across the country. You are encouraged to advertise workshops, events and exhibitions free of charge.

Please just send text contributions in a regular email. Images need to be jpegs that are easily emailed.

Enquiries and contributions to Cathryn Coutts, at: cathryn.coutts@gmail.com

Issues are published in March, June, September and November. Deadline for contributions is the first Friday of each month of publication.

News from Regional Groups

NSW - BDAS Botanic Artists, Bowral

Several new and exciting events are planned for our group in 2019. On April 17, led by our coordinator Rosie Wade, we will have a guided tour of Bundanon near Nowra NSW, the Boyd Family property, gifted to the nation in 1993. Later in the year invited guest speakers will visit us in Bowral. Details to follow when confirmed.

Our Threatened Species Florilegium continues this year, and we have another exhibition planned for October 2020, in Bowral Gallery.

Our 2019 meeting dates are as follows:

Term 1 – February 18, March 18, April 15

Term 2 – May 20, June 17, July 15

Term 3 – August 12, September 23,

Term 4 - October 21, November 18, December 2

Queensland

Botanical Art Society of Queensland

www.botanicalartqld.com.au

This year BASQ again offers a list of very interesting workshops. Events run through February to December. Details of each event and registration procedures can be found on the BASQ website, shown above.

ACT

NatureArt Lab in Canberra offers many exciting workshops for artists interested in botanical art and natural history.

NatureArt in Borneo promises to be just one of these events, held from 9-20 April, 2019. There are a few places still available for this trip. See details in the Workshops section of this newsletter.

Herbaria Collecting and Botanical Art – Creating a Florilegium

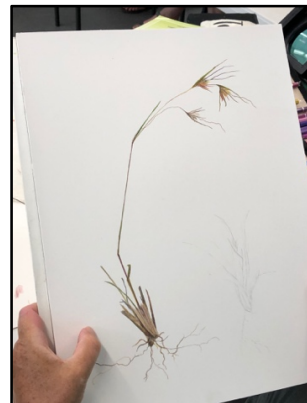
Mulligans Flat, in Canberra, is a unique place – one of the only remaining reserves protecting an endangered box-gum woodland ecosystem in Australia. In January this year, a group of artists participated in a special NatureArt Lab workshop with botanical artist Mali Moir to study herbaria collection techniques and botanical art skills.



Mali Moir demonstrating the press used for collecting herbaria

Julia Landford, Founding Director of NatureArt Lab has proposed the establishment of a Mulligans Flat florilegium to create a permanent art-science legacy of this unique area. Participants from the workshop were keen to establish a proposal for a Florelegium project,

building on the experiences of others. Expressions of interest in this worthwhile project are welcome from botanical artists, and a steering group will be established in 2019 to progress the concept. Pictures below are from the January workshop with Mali Moir.



Friends of the Australian National Botanic Gardens. Botanic Art Groups' 12th Annual Exhibition. March 16 – April 14. See Exhibitions section for details.

Cheryl Hodges, *Earthly Treasures of Our Shire*. Queanbeyan, April 2-20. See Exhibitions section for details.



Western Australia

From Margaret Pieroni

An exhibition by some of the state's finest botanical artists will be held in Albany WA, this year to coincide with the Australian Native Plants Societies' conference. Wildflower enthusiasts are expected from interstate and overseas.



Banksia seminuda (A.S. George) Rye by Margaret Pieroni

TRUE TO NATURE – A Celebration of Western Australia's Wildflowers will be held in the Pop-up Gallery of the Museum of the Great Southern, Residency Rd., Albany from September 28 to October 4, 2019 opening from 10am to 4pm, daily.

Exhibiting artists include: Maxine Holman, Penny Leech, Philippa Nikulinsky, Margaret Pieroni and Katrina Syme.

The Language of Flowers: tales of mothering.

From Marina Lommerse

My latest botanical work is a paper flower installation "THE LANGUAGE OF FLOWERS: TALES OF MOTHERING" in Claremont Town Centre from the 30th April – 12 May.

It may be of interest to readers that botanical artwork can extend to place activation and public art - and extend to three-dimensional media. This artwork created for the *Off the Page* installation exhibition will be presented by the Claremont Town Centre (CTC) and FORM in celebration of FORM's Scribblers Children's Literature & Arts Festival. Attached are some photos of my current botanically correct – Lifesize paper flowers.

Below is the didactic for this invited artwork and artists' bios.

TALES OF MOTHERING IS UNDERPINNED BY THE NOVEL 'THE LANGUAGE OF FLOWERS' BY VANESSA DIFFENBAUGH; A VIVID PORTRAIT OF A WOMAN WHO GIVES EXPRESSION TO HER FEELINGS THROUGH FLOWERS, ENRICHING THE LIVES OF OTHERS. VICTORIA'S ABANDONMENT AT BIRTH, EXPERIENCES OF THE FOSTER CARE SYSTEM AND SUBSEQUENT DIFFICULTIES IN FORMING AND MAINTAINING RELATIONSHIPS ARE PORTRAYED WITH A DEPTH OF FEELING, ENHANCED BY THE USE OF FLOWERS. A STORY OF SURVIVAL, ACCEPTANCE, LOVE AND STRENGTH, THE LANGUAGE OF FLOWERS DEMONSTRATES THAT EVEN THE THORNIEST OF PLANTS PRODUCE THE MOST BEAUTIFUL FLOWERS.

This artwork, created for *Off the Page*, celebrates flowers and how they touch people.

Tales of Mothering invites YOU TO PLAY, INTERACT, AND IMMERSE YOURSELF WITH THE MEANING OF FLOWERS TO EXPRESS YOUR SENTIMENTS AROUND MOTHER'S DAY, BE IT ADMIRATION, LOVE, FRIENDSHIP, GRATITUDE, SYMPATHY, DEVOTION OR CELEBRATION. THE WORK REPRESENTS MOTHERING AS A SOCIAL PRACTICE OF NURTURING AND CARING FOR PEOPLE, AND THEREFORE IS INCLUSIVE OF 'MOTHERS' OF ANY GENDER; BIOLOGICAL, NON-BIOLOGICAL, MULTI-GENERATIONAL AND MULTIPLE^[1].

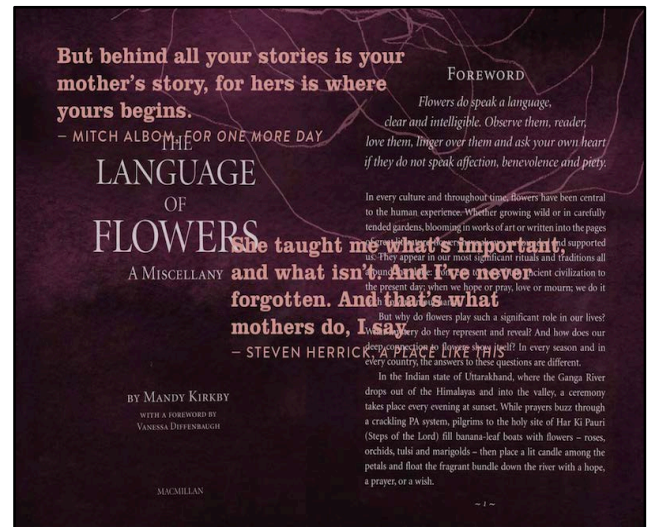


THE WARM PALETTE OF PINKS, WHITE AND BURGUNDY IS INSPIRED BY THE GIVING AND RECEIVING OF CHRYSANTHEMUMS (MUMS), REPRESENTING THE HAPPINESS AND LONGEVITY OF LOVE. IN AUSTRALIA, PINK CHRYSANTHEMUMS REPRESENT GRATITUDE FOR OUR MOTHERS, WHILE WHITE IS FOR REMEMBRANCE WHEN OUR MOTHERS HAVE PASSED ON. Light red mums embody 'admiration' and dark red Mums signify love and affection.

WE INVITE YOU TO DELIGHT IN THIS WHIMSICAL GARDEN OF SUSPENDED

FLOWERS; PAUSE, DELIGHT AND DERIVE YOUR OWN MEANING.

Included also is the wallpaper as part of the installation linking to the language of flowers and mothering literary quotes.



About The Artists

The artists Marina Lommerse and Hayley Curnow love experimenting with ideas that engage people. Working collaboratively, using their diverse expertise, sense of adventure and shared love of colour, spatial design and flowers — they make public spaces blossom.

As a nature-based artist, the context Marina works in informs the idea and medium. Her experience in spatial design and theories about place making, community building and nature influence her paintings, murals and mixed media installations. Her arts practice includes curating, educating and consulting. She has led several national and international exhibitions and is the Australian Fellow for the French arts organisation Domaine de Boisbuchet — which runs art, design and architecture workshops and travelling exhibitions in cooperation with the Pompidou Centre (Paris) and the Vitra Design Museum (Germany). Marina holds a MA Design, a BA Interior Architecture and a certificate of Natural History Illustration

Hayley Curnow is an interior designer at Fiona Lynch, based in Melbourne, and writer for various architecture and design journals, including Artichoke, Houses, Folio and

Blueprint (UK). Hayley was invited to present a paper at the international IDEA Symposium 2014, hosted and convened by RMIT, Melbourne, and has published stories in Thames & Hudson's *The Apartment House* and *The Terrace House*. With a varied background in academia, interiors, exhibition and installation design, Hayley finds delight in the finer details of a project and is particularly interested in the way interior spaces can shape our everyday experience. Hayley holds a BA Interior Architecture (Hons).

Victoria

BASA Melbourne International Flower and Garden Show –March 27-31. See Exhibitions section for details.

Beechworth Botanica 2019. April 11-22. See Exhibitions section for more information.

Exhibitions

Current and Future Exhibitions

Cheryl Hodges *Earthly Treasures of Our Shire*.



Botanical artist Cheryl Hodges won the QPRC Regional Art Awards Exhibition award in 2017

with her chestnut painting (from Hoskinstown's Tweenhill Chestnuts). Since then she has been travelling around our Shire, visiting her regular haunts but always keen to explore new places. She has discovered nature reserves and conservation areas. Passionate locals have welcomed her to their properties, showing her the 'fruits' of their labours – from pepper berries to cider apples to honey, and beautiful local wildflowers. Along the way she has also found fascinating insects, which are often overlooked.

Cheryl is painting many of the natural treasures that she has discovered across the Shire in her signature delicate watercolour style. She hopes the paintings and accompanying stories will ignite curiosity in others.

For example, the beautiful Monga Waratah near the Clyde Mountain is very accessible via the "Waratah Walk". Nearby is a boardwalk at Penance Grove, with its ancient plumwoods and Gondwanian landscape. In and near Queanbeyan are nature reserves with flowers you may have never seen before.

She wants to impart the thoughts she carries with her every day: wherever you are you can find something interesting and unexpected, if you take the time to look.

Beechworth Botanica 2019, April 11-22. Opening night Thursday 11 April.

The Beechworth Botanica exhibition will open at the Beechworth Memorial Hall, Ford Street, Beechworth, Victoria on Thursday 11 April 2019 and continue until close of business Monday 22 April. Local and interstate artists are invited to submit entries of original works for sale. As in 2017 it will be one of the major events to be held during the popular Golden Horseshoes Festival that attracts over 20,000 visitors to the region during the Easter long weekend.

The theme of this year's exhibition is the celebration of Australia's unique and diverse flora. For more information contact Christine Cansfield-Smith, Exhibition Coordinator, Mayday Hills Art Society, Beechworth. Email to: bibart@bigpond.com

BASA Melbourne International Flower and Garden Show –March 27-31.

The Botanical Art Society of Australia Inc. (BASA) 2019 Members Exhibition will be open to the public between 9am and 5pm from Wednesday March 27 to Sunday March 31, and until 9pm on Friday March 29.

It will be held on the balcony level of the Royal Exhibition Building in Carlton Gardens Melbourne.

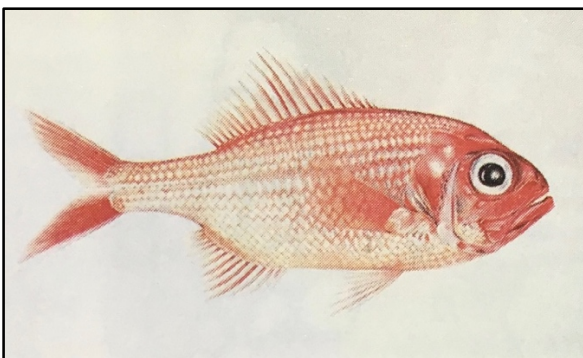
Australian National Botanic Gardens (ANBG) Botanic Art Groups' 12 Annual Exhibition - *More than Just a Pretty Plant*. Open from Saturday March 16 at 9.30am to Sunday April 14 at 4.30pm.

The Friends of the ANBG's Botanic Art Groups will hold their 12th annual exhibition and sale, with the theme 'more than just a pretty plant'. The works on show will feature plants with traditional and modern uses as sources of food, medicine and materials for making practical objects and artworks.

Kangaroo Valley - Sculpture in the Valley, 2019. For those who would like to see something different and enjoy a beautiful natural environment, a visit to this exhibition will be worthwhile. It will be held from May 3-5 at Cedar Grove 189 Jarretts Lane, Kangaroo Valley NSW. For details go to:

sculptureinthevalley@outlook.com

Stella Downer Fine Art. *Fish*, by Deirdre Bean. March 5-30. Open Tuesday to Friday 10am to 5pm. Saturday 11am to 5pm. 1/24 Wellington Street, Waterloo, Sydney.



Art Gallery of NSW. *Heaven and Earth in Chinese Art: Treasures from the National Palace Museum, Taipei.* February 2 – May 5, 2019.

A rare opportunity to see some of the highest artistic achievements across 5000 years of Chinese history. This exhibition presents 87 works including paintings, calligraphy, illustrated books, bronzes, ceramics and jade.

Botanica - The 20th Anniversary Exhibition. March 30 to April 14, 10am to 4pm daily. Lion Gate Lodge, Royal Botanic Garden Sydney.

Margaret Flockton Award 2019.

Royal Botanic Garden Sydney, Maiden Theatre. March 30 to April 14.

Australian Botanic Garden Mount Annan, PlantBank, June 8 to July 28.

Blue Mountains Botanic Garden Mount Tomah, Visitor Centre August 9 to September 15.

Exhibition Review

Art Gallery of NSW. *Brett Whiteley Drawing is Everything. Until March 31*

By Cathryn Coutts

Drawing lay at the heart of everything Whiteley did – from painting to sculpture to prints – and was fundamental to his imaginative and creative process. This is the first major museum exhibition to focus on the central place of drawing in Whiteley's work.

The artist's use of simple drawing media such as charcoal, ink and wash is masterful. He uses these materials with exquisite economy and confidence, expressing the essence of his subject, whether a figure, portrait, animal or landscape.

As botanical artists such as Sarah Simblet have asserted, drawing really is the basis for all our artmaking efforts.

Whiteley demonstrates how, and why, observation through direct engagement with the subject is so important for an artist, regardless of any other media later used.

I encourage you to visit this exhibition and then go and experiment, if you don't already do so, with media such as charcoal, or ink and wash when drawing botanical subjects.

Looking Back and Looking Forward

Hans Heysen Trail

By Leonie Norton

In October 2018, I took an art group to the Flinders Ranges in South Australia, following in the footsteps of the German-born and widely acclaimed Australian artist Hans Heysen. Basically, the nine-day tour took us from Perth, Burra, Wilpena Pound and Blinman, then back through the Barossa Valley and Hahndorf.

The highlight for me was the day spent at The Cedars in Hahndorf which was former home of Hans Heysen and his studio. We were able to spend considerable time in both, with excellent commentary by very knowledgeable locals.



Inside Heysen's studio with unfinished painting

The land at the Cedars had Heysen's magnificent eucalypts growing in abundance, and also on the road leading to the property.

This is where my journey began for my recent contemporary botanical painting. A fabulous few hours was spent sketching the magnificent *Eucalyptus viminalis* which were gloriously shedding their bark, revealing the smooth soft grey trunk with the rust red sap. Who could resist? I absolutely fell in love with these trees and their association to Hans Heysen.

The most important thing for me when painting is the 'passion'. I collected many pieces of bark, took many photos and did a number of sketches, eager to begin my painting journey once at home.



I had to make a statement about the tree and its immensity and impact it had on me. The painting is 100cm and 50cms and painted on 650gsm hot pressed Saunders Waterford paper. I used some very large brushes and the main colour in the trunk was applied with a 5cm paint brush with very soft nylon bristles. It was painted on my dining room table and often put on a vertical surface as it was easier to observe.



The background represents the area around The Cedars, and the distant hills pay homage to the Flinders Ranges, an area that was so dear to the heart of Heysen.

Talking about Botanical Art

Green matters...

By Cathryn Coutts

In this article, I want to talk about the colour *green*, specifically the challenges it presents in botanical painting, how we see green, the importance of observing foliage in nature, some background to green pigments, and ways to make and use interesting greens.

I read recently in the latest issue of *The Gardens*, magazine (Foundation and Friends of the Botanic Gardens Sydney), an article about the 2019 *Botanica* exhibition. This year's curator, Robyn Macintosh describes how works are selected for the exhibition. One criterion is colour, she explains. "Colour is terribly important. Greens are the most difficult of all, and this is quite a telling thing in selection." Good advice worth noting, as many of us who have struggled with green will confirm.

The Challenges of Green

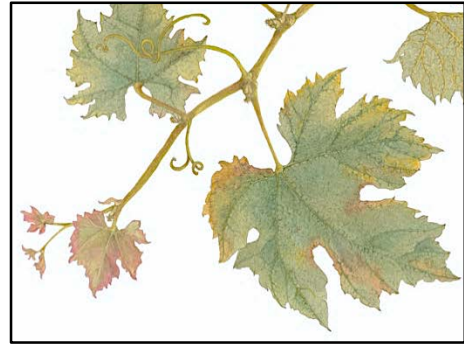
Green presents botanical artists with many challenges, so much so that some keep the amount of green in their work to a minimum. Another option is to 'demote' foliage in the painting to the status of backdrop, preferring to focus attention on the flowers, where we can celebrate and enjoy their delicious colours.

Here are some of the challenges I have encountered when painting foliage. A few years ago, before even thinking about the best colour for leaves, my lack of skill with *paint application* presented problems.

Have you ever looked at a plant you are about to paint, with its expanse of green leaves and thought 'how on earth am I going to manage this?' I wanted to paint grape leaves, which when fresh, are a lovely bright green and very soft. But they lose moisture rapidly, bending, curling and twisting out of shape.

After trying to paint them in a layered technique and ending up with mud, I waited until they started to go brown, yellow and red, in their lovely autumn colours. I then applied several colours at the same time, wet-in-wet onto the

paper, in one coat. A second coat gave some highlights and then a few details added to finish.



Detail from *Vitis vinifera* Cabernet Sauvignon,

Cathryn Coutts, Watercolour

A few years later I encountered another plant that presented even more challenges. The leaves of the *Persoonia glaucescens*, shown below, change colour as they turn in the light, from maroon, to pink, bright green and blue - hence the name *glaucescens*. It is as if no two leaves are the same colour. Once again I used the wet-in-wet colour mixing method, painting each leaf individually. Only two coats in total: first the wet-in-wet multi-coloured coat; and then a touch-up of details for the second coat.

I don't expect this method will suit everybody, but for me, it kept the colours fresh and glowing and allowed with the paper to 'sparkle' beneath the pigment.



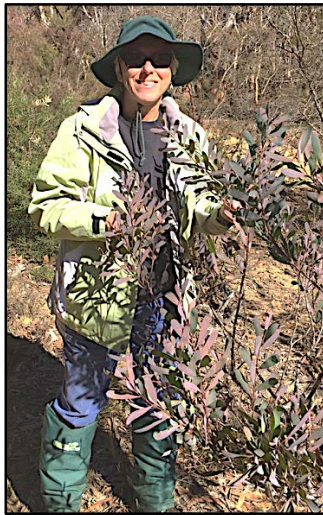
Detail from *Persoonia glaucescens*, Mittagong Geebung

Cathryn Coutts, Watercolour

It may be, that because I paint native plants almost exclusively, especially rainforest trees, I paint foliage a lot, as their flowers are often very small. The distinguishing characteristics of the plant need to be represented through its foliage. In Australia, I am told, we have a huge range of

foliage colours in our native flora, so we are really spoilt for choice.

Painting the *Persoonia glaucescens*, I had to deal with many variables. The leaf colour changed as it turned towards the sun; the front and back of the leaves were different; the adult and juvenile leaves varied in colour as well. Imperfections and insect damage also had an impact on the leaf colour. The last thing on my mind when planning the colour scheme for this painting – was green.



Me in the bush with the *Persoonia glaucescens*

How We See Green

Observing this plant's responses to light, growing in its natural habitat, made me want to better understand some of basic scientific principles underpinning our capacity as *humans* and *artists*, to see colour.

Two sets of factors impact on the way we see colour. First are the factors arising from the physiology of human vision, as well as our skills of observation as artists. Secondly there are factors external to us, to consider when selecting colours for a painting, such as the light conditions, the stages of a plant's life cycle and the pigments and paper used.

The first thing to know about seeing colour is that it happens in your *brain*. The signals that lead to colour vision come from your eyes but it is your *brain* that makes sense of them – allowing you to see a strawberry as red and the sky as blue.

To see colour, you have to have light. A rainbow is testimony to the fact that all the colors of the spectrum are present in white light.

When light shines on an object some colours bounce off the object and others are absorbed by it. Our eyes only see the colours that are bounced off or reflected. Isaac Newton observed that colour is *not inherent* in objects, as we might think. Rather, the surface of an object reflects some colours and absorbs all the others. We perceive only the reflected colours.

Thus when we red in the strawberry, the colour red is not "in" the strawberry at all. Rather it is the surface of the strawberry reflecting the wavelengths we see as red and absorbing all the rest.

I believe it is crucial for botanical artists to understand these principles of colour, in relation to light. Such understanding can potentially have a profound impact on our painting.

But let's get back to green...

We see green in nature because of chlorophyll, which is essential for photosynthesis, the conversion of light energy to chemical energy which allows a plant to survive.

Chlorophyll absorbs the red and blue light energy for photosynthesis, but absorbs very little of the green light spectrum. Unabsorbed green light is reflected away and interpreted by our eyes as colour.

Plants have other molecules besides chlorophylls, such as carotenoids and anthocyanins, which absorb and reflect light at different wavelengths, but mostly the intensity of chlorophyll overpowers the other components and we see predominantly green colours. When the plant is not producing as much chlorophyll, we see the foliage colours change, as in autumn, or on immature leaves, like my grape vines which had pretty little pink juvenile leaves.

The Importance of Observing Nature

Besides the factors associated with how our eyes and brain see, and how light is reflected or absorbed, the other crucial component for an artist in seeing colour, is skillful observation.

I started thinking about this one morning by taking a walk in my own garden (mobile phone in hand of course) just to discover what colours I could see in the foliage. I assumed I would be looking at various greens, but what I found instead were yellows, browns, reds, blues, purples, greys - and some other colours I find hard to describe in words. Here are some of the colours I saw.



Foliage colours seen on my 'garden walk':

top L-R Flannel Flower, Geranium, bottom L-R Golden Marjoram, Lilli Pilli

I can't emphasise enough how useful it is, if you're stuck on the problem of greens, to go outside, take a walk somewhere nice, and *look around*. What you will see is really amazing.

It's important, however to be looking actively, purposefully, at the foliage. Look at the young shoots, new growth, older foliage, foliage in shadow, or turning, twisting, drying out and withering away. There is such a rich array of colours at your disposal when you really look closely.

So where does this leave the artist seeking to paint the colours in leaves? It soon becomes obvious that if you want your foliage to look convincing and naturalistic, *don't* automatically reach for a green straight from the tube.

Background to Green Pigments

If you can get your head around the light reflecting or absorbing idea (it took me a while to get a grip on that), then you can understand that with paint it's no different. When we talk about light 'out there' in nature, or pigment on paper, it's all about the same thing.

The same principles apply as for the strawberry. The paint you use to represent the strawberry is not inherently 'red', or 'green', it's just that those paint particles reflect or absorb different light waves and thus enable us to see the various colours.

But there's a few more things to consider: the surface you paint on, the types and sizes of pigment particles, and whether they are organic or inorganic compounds.

Let me begin discussing green pigments with this beautiful quote from the *Book of Colours*, by Robyn Cadwallader (p.302). The story, about illuminators, or limners, is set in the early 1300's.

Green earth, or terre-verte, is made from mineral deposits found in northern Italy, and though it is dull and inconstant in colour, it will improve in hue the more it is ground and washed in clear water. Verdigris is the most vibrant green and can be made easily by hanging copper plates over vinegar, or by covering the plates in wine marc. In both cases, the blue-green crust that forms can be easily scraped away. Mix it with vinegar and temper with egg yolk, but remember it cannot be used next to orpiment or lead white. Instead, you might use sap green, made from buckthorn juice, or iris green, from the sap of iris flowers. Malachite is a stone very similar to precious azurite and the pigment is obtained similarly, through the long process of separating out dull and coarse stone. It can, at times, be difficult to obtain. Grind with care, for too fine a pigment will become pale.

The Art of Illumination

I doubt that many of us today would be willing or able to prepare our colours with such lengthy and meticulous care. Today's artists are spoilt for choice in the range of pigments available. It's quite easy to end up with a vast collection of colours, many of which you may rarely use.

Green is an interesting colour, because apart from its predominance in nature, it is described as a secondary colour, made from mixing, generally, yellow and blue. However in the

additive colour model of light, it is one of the primary colours, sitting alongside red and blue to create all other colours.

The visual effect of colours is dependent upon the physical characteristics of each pigment, which reflects or absorbs light in a different way.

Apart from the pigment itself, colour is also affected by the luminosity of the ground on which the particles are lying and the paint binder surrounding them.

Pigments we use today can be either organic or inorganic. These colorants are used for a wide variety of applications ranging from cosmetics to dyes and paints for many industrial purposes. Paints for artists play a minor role.

Organic and inorganic pigments are types of pigments based on their method of formulation. Organic pigments are generally derived from plants, bones, shells or insects. Inorganic pigments use chemical formulations to get the desired product properties for various applications. Organic pigments can be brighter and offer smaller particle sizes, although exposure to sunlight can take away their brightness. Inorganic pigments are longer lasting and more fade resistant, cheaper, easier to disperse and come in a much greater variety of colours.

Before modern colours were available, there were few natural green pigments. Some green earths existed but were not readily accessible. The greens derived from plants were not lightfast, so artists resorted to mixing blues and yellows to make foliage colours. For centuries, green pigments came from copper-bearing minerals such as malachite. Verdigris, the blue-green oxide of copper, allowed greater access to the colour, but tended to turn dark so that the colour was short-lived. It was in the 19th century that more stable greens in the form of viridian and cobalt green were finally available.

The first modern synthetic pigment, Prussian Blue was discovered in the early 1700's by accident when a chemist was trying to make red. Since then new chemical processes have continued to produce many more colours and driven prices down. In the 1800's new green

pigments like emerald green were used in wallpapers, but although popular, they were problematic because they contained arsenic.

By the 20th century non-toxic paints were developed and safer alternatives like viridian replaced the arsenic-containing emerald green. Artists were attracted to using the new house paints because of their colour range, fluidity and matte or gloss effects. Water-based acrylic paint was invented in the 1940's and transformed painting because it was cheap, held colour well and dried quickly.

Some artists however, find the synthetic pigments rather sterile. Although most of us would be totally lost without our modern pigments, some of the traditional pigments still have their appeal.

Most modern synthetic pigments are part of the polycyclic colour group that includes phthalocyanines, quinacridones, naphthols, perylenes, anthraquinones, dioxazines and pyrroles. These are now used regularly in painting although many artists may not be aware of this. Their chemical names are often replaced with trade names. In *Chromatopia* (p.147), David Coles explains that "the phthalo pigments have enormous tinting strength, lightfastness and chemical resistance. They quickly dominated the blue and green pigment markets in all applications. They are immensely important for artists due to their intensity and colour purity".

Have you used them, come to rely on them? I certainly have and I never cease to be amazed by the intensity of these pigments.

Ways to Make and Use Greens

This article is not designed to give you a detailed set of instructions for making greens. There are many excellent books, websites and YouTube videos which do that much better. Here, I'm just going to give you a few suggestions.

For most botanical artists, getting the greens right is a huge problem. So, what do the experts recommend, and how can we manage greens better? Is it better to mix your own greens or use them directly from the tube or palette? You'll hear advice recommending one or the other of these approaches, and I suggest that the real

answer lies somewhere in the middle. Ultimately your own experimentation will reveal the best way for you. Here are a few suggestions.

In the *Watercolour Bible*, Joe Garcia gives some advice on making greens and the benefits of tube colours versus mixed colours (pp 168-171):

“Tube colours are often called convenience colours. If you need green, reaching for a tube of paint is certainly easier than trying to mix the colour you need. But if you rely on tube colours too much, you might forget how to mix vibrant colours. Even worse, if you use only tube colours, all the colours in your painting will be the same value and intensity, making your paintings flat and lifeless. Try using mixed greens and tube colours together. They complement each other and give you an endless choice of greens to work with.”

He also has some interesting experiments worth doing to test your pigments for their staining, opacity and transparency capacities (pp84-87).

Similarly, Ian Sidaway, in his *Colour Mixing Bible* (pp 68-69) lists some very exciting colour combinations to create greens. His list includes: viridian, phthalo green, Hookers green, sap green, oxide of chromium, terre verte and olive green. To each of these greens he suggests adding different reds, oranges, yellows and blues, as well as *raw umber*, *Payne's grey* and *ivory black*. The greens created by these last three mixes are quite lovely and unexpected. I think you will find this an interesting exercise to expand your palette of green colours.

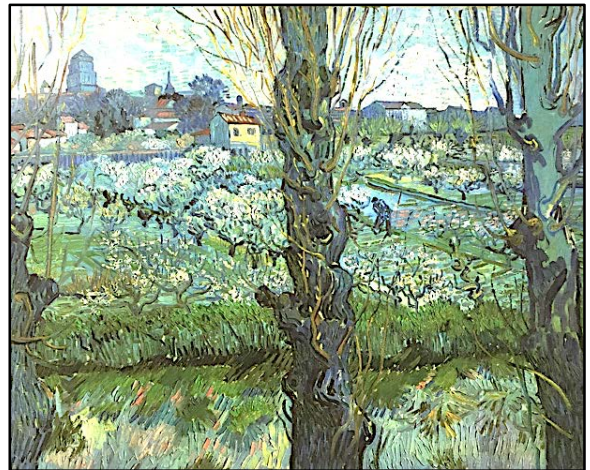
Hazel Harrison in *The Oil Painter's Question and Answer Book* (pp. 41-42), discusses the problem of greens looking dead and dull in a painting.



Summer by the Windrush, by Roy Herrick

She explains that although Roy Herrick's painting is a quintessential green summer landscape, the sunlit areas of 'green' are actually yellow, with traces of pink and blue. A range of *other colours* are used among the green areas to give the painting vibrancy. In other words often the best green to use is not green at all!

The Impressionists laid down colour this way too, and were interested in how adjacent colours related to each other. Our eyes and brains merge them to give an overall colour effect, as this Van Gogh painting demonstrates.



Orchard in Bloom with Poplars, by Vincent Van Gogh, 1889

Conclusions

Apart from the qualities of the pigments themselves, *the way the paint is applied* will determine the colour it becomes. A premixed, or tube green will differ from a green built up in layers, or a green created by several adjacent colours interacting with each other.

There are no *rights* or *wrongs* with any of this, just different results. It's wise, however, to know what your pigments will do and use them to their best advantage

Finally, I'll leave you with this thought. The human eye can perceive more variations in *warmer* colours than *ones. Maybe this explains why we love painting red, pink and yellow flowers and struggle with greens.*

It may also explain why buyers love to purchase paintings with red in them!

(For more details about pigments see the websites listed at the end of this newsletter.)

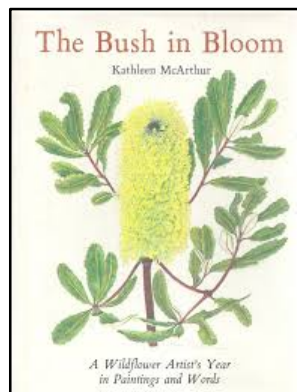
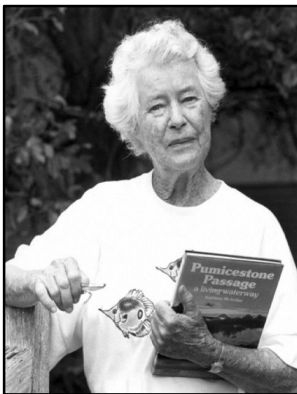
Artist's Profile

Kathleen McArthur 1915-2000

By Cathryn Coutts

Recently, my attention was drawn to the story of the Australian botanical artist and activist, Kathleen McArthur, from an article in *The Conversation* on January 31, 2019, by Susan Davis, entitled *Hidden Women of History: Kathleen McArthur, the wildflower woman who took on Joh Bjelke-Peterson*.

The whole of Susan Davis' article is well worth reading, but here I will just refer to parts of it to give some information about this remarkable woman.



Kathleen McArthur was born in Brisbane, Queensland, in 1915, and died in Caloundra, Queensland, in 2000. She was born into one of Brisbane's leading families. Her parents were Daniel Evans and Kathleen Durack of the Irish pastoralist family made famous in the books of Mary Durack.

Her early life was one of privilege, but she turned away from that at a young age. She married Malcolm McArthur and had three children, living modestly in Caloundra. By the 1950's she was divorced and the single mother of three children. From then on, without any formal training, she supported herself writing about and illustrating Queensland wildflowers. She was motivated to paint them to help identify the wildflowers in her local environment, owing to the limited range of books available at the time. In 1953 she began to record all the native plants of the Sunshine Coast region. She published *'Queensland Wildflowers'* with

Jacaranda Press in 1959, and went on to publish and sell wildflower prints and stationary.

With her friend, Judith Wright she travelled to the peak of Mt Tinbeerwah, which began the idea for a national park at Cooloola.

Kathleen and Judith were among the founders of the Wildlife Preservation Society of Queensland in 1962. In 1969 mining applications were pending for the Cooloola region, and Kathleen was inspired to produce wildflower postcards and prints for sale, to help raise funds for a public campaign opposing mining in the area. Hundreds of letters of support flowed back following the sale of the postcards and prints and she was named the "Mistress of Midyin". The public action continued until the Cooloola National Park was gazetted in 1975.

After 1975, Kathleen McArthur continued to be involved in many more campaigns to save the natural environment, through her art work, writing, giving talks and presentations, and successfully lobbying to have Pumicestone Passage added to the register of the National Estate.

In 2002, she was chosen as the Sunshine Coast Daily's "Sunshine Coast Citizen of the Century", two years after her death. Papers reported that she had not only fought and won many significant battles for waterways, beaches, wildlife and landscapes, but played a pivotal role in educating the public to an awareness of environmental fragility.

A 'Wild/Flower Women' exhibition will be on display at the Fryer Library, University of Queensland throughout 2019, with an online exhibition to be available via their website.

Book Review

By Cathryn Coutts

Margaret Mee's Amazon: Diaries of an Artist Explorer. Antique Collector's Club in association with The Royal Botanic Gardens Kew.

A friend lent me this beautiful book. I am not fortunate enough to own it, so naturally I cherished reading it. I confess it is a large volume and I did spend more time looking at the

paintings, which are marvelous, than the text. But nevertheless, it is a joy to behold.



Margaret Ursula Mee (nee Brown) was born in 1909 in Chesham, Buckinghamshire. Showing early signs of talent, both in botany and drawing, she attended Watford School of Art in her late teens and subsequently taught art in Liverpool.

She first visited Brazil in 1952 and was smitten by the countryside and flora around São Paulo. Her first expedition to the waterways of the Amazon was in 1956 when she was forty-seven. For thirty-two years, she returned many times to the rainforests and over time combined her initial aim of illustrating the flora of the Amazon, with a growing concern for the commercial plunder of the great forests. Her diaries, drawings, sketches, along with her paintings, provide the background material for this beautiful book.

In 1988, she went to England to lecture to the Royal Geographic Society and attend the opening of her exhibition *Margaret Mee's Amazon*. Sadly, she was killed in a car crash in England at the age of seventy-nine.

The work of Margaret Mee is truly inspirational. To dedicate one's life work as an artist to such a project really emphasizes how much botanical artists can achieve, in bringing the public's attention to plants they would never otherwise see, or know existed. For those of you currently engaged in a Florilegium or thinking of contributing to one, look at this woman's work and be convinced of the worthiness of Florilegia projects.

A very beautiful book if you can locate a copy, possibly through second-hand sales.

Traveler's Tales

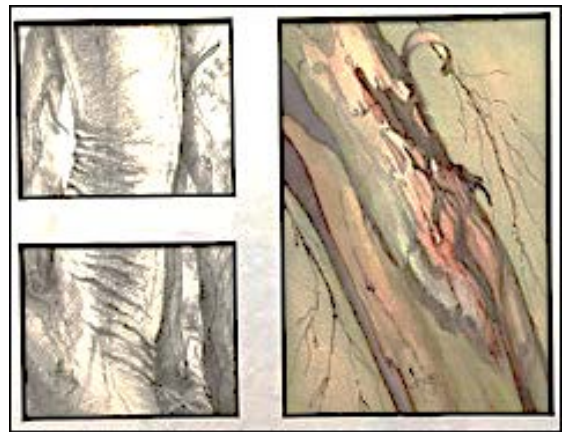
Kalgoorlie Trunks

By Janet Hicks

In the past, I was fortunate enough to be able to spend a great deal of time in the West.

One of our trips took us east from Perth to Kalgoorlie. The road is fairly direct, and one would think there might not be much of interest along the way. However, I was mistaken. Being a passenger, I was able to enjoy observing the trees growing along the historic pipeline. They were so beautiful, we stopped, so I could take photos and 'get up close and personal' with the sensory aspects of these trees.

The colours in the trunks, the silky smoothness of the surfaces to the touch, the texture of the bark, wrinkles and crinkles as the trunks bend with growth and the surrounding countryside all enhanced the desire to make an image of these trees. They rather reminded me of snow gums and I think they would be stunning to see in a shower of rain.



Snail Orchid

Here is another gem from the West. We were guests of a couple, living south of Perth, whom we met in Manning Gorge on the Gib River Road. They also were very interested in bush flora and as I had mentioned not having seen bush orchids, they took us to a reserve in the Jarrahdale area, close to the Serpentine Falls.

After walking through fairly dry bush vegetation, some of these tiny blooms were spotted. What delicate colourful specimens were growing so close to the ground. We were fortunate to see

Blue Sun Orchids and Cowslip Orchids, but unfortunately the Jug or Rabbit Orchids had recently finished.



Sketchbook Stories

By Rachel Robb

(Rachel's research project is: *Engineering the regeneration niche for the restoration of native grasslands in Mulligan's Flat Woodland Sanctuary*. Christine Fifield Scholarship/ANU Fenner School.)

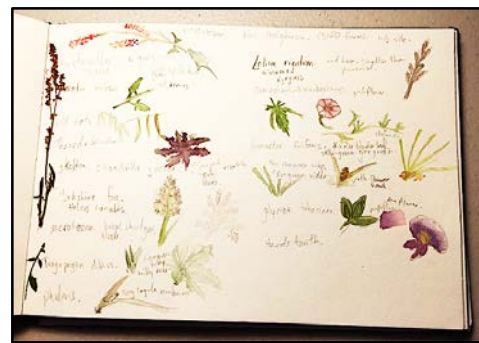
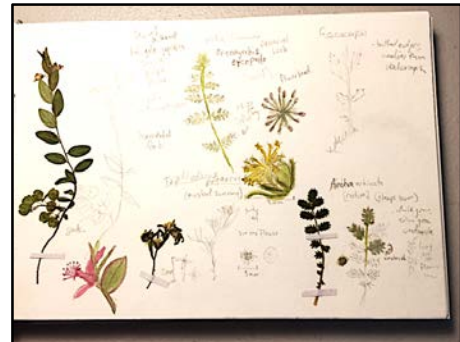
Triptilodiscus pygmaeus. How would you remember this plant's name? What are the defining characteristics? I found that in the scientific endeavor to improve my plant identification skills, my answer was through art.

Therefore, I combined my love for art and ecology to keep a nature sketchbook. I found the plants of interest to my area of study in native grassland forbs, taking samples where appropriate. I identified them with the help of experts or a plant guide, and then I sketched the main features and included colour notes with watercolour. Some, I worked up into more polished pieces but most were simple and used as reference guide.

I found sketching the plant specimens helped to remember them, and the medium helps to emphasise features which a photograph cannot. It also allows for quick and easy annotation in the field. Often, I combined the sketched details with later research of the plants, reinforcing the initial contact.

It was an effective way of learning identifying features and names of the common forbs of my study area, and my sketchbook now forms a valuable record of plants. I have added to it each

time I volunteered with other field experiments, learning more from scientific and volunteers in the field, and will continue to expand the sketchbook as my experience continues to grow.



Two Sketchbook pages by Rachel Robb

Workshops and Events

Helen Fitzgerald

Botanical Illustration 5 Day Workshop

Next course: 15-19 April 2019 Fee: \$545

Location: Bungendore School of Arts

For workshop outline and to download enrolment form go to Helen's website:

<http://helenfitzgerald.com>

Tel.: 02 62972697

PO Box 125 Queanbeyan, NSW 2620 Australia

NatureArt Lab, Canberra

Intermediate Botanical Watercolour, with Cheryl Hodges

March 20 – April 10. Wednesday mornings from 9.30am to 12.30pm. A short course focusing on botanical art projects with mentored support from professional artist Cheryl Hodges.

Introduction to Botanical Art, Term Two, with Cheryl Hodges.

May 1 to June 5 2019. Learn the principles and techniques of botanical art to create realistic botanical watercolours.

NatureArt in Borneo: Artists and Naturalists. April 9-20 (closes soon). This unique program provides a wildlife and art experience like no other.

Threatened Species: Marsupials of Tidbinbilla, with Emily Birks, 22 March – 12 April (4 sessions).

This special workshop, led by local wildlife artist Emily Birks will explore the use of acrylic ink to illustrate Tidbinbilla marsupials.

For more details about all NatureArt Lab courses go to the website:
<https://natureartlab.com.au>

Two-day Botanical Drawing and Painting Workshop, with Peter Wale.

August 10-11. At the Maritime Museum and Gallery, Huskisson, Jervis Bay.

For further details please call Merilynne Weiss on 0413341786

Earthly Incarnations: An Introduction to the Fungi of Retford Park, Bowral NSW.

Thursday May 9, 10am to 4pm. Facilitated by Alison Pouliot.

Cost \$110, National Trust Members: \$95

This highly interactive workshop introduces participants to the diversity, ecology and curiosities of the Kingdom Fungi, specific to fungi found at Retford Park and in the surrounding region but also within a wider Australian (and international) context.

For more details contact: ph. 02 48611933 or: retfordpark@nationaltrust.com.au

The Botanical Artists' Society of Queensland. Specimen Selection, Preparation and Botanical Illustration.

Sunday March 24, 9.30am to 4pm.

Presenter Dr Nita C Lester.

Location: Wynnum Manly Arts, Florence Street, Wynnum Central.

Cost: \$90 (member) \$110 (non-member)

Register:

<http://www.botanicalartqld.com.au/node/203>

Contact: admin@botanicalartqld.com.au

For the complete Workshops and Events Program for BASQ February to December 2019, contact: admin@botanicalartqld.com.au

Art Classes in the Royal Botanic Garden, Sydney.

A complete list of classes for 2019 is available from the: foundation.friends@rbgsyd.nsw.gov.au

Botanical art tutors will include Lesley Elkan, Catherine Waudrop, Charlotte Thodey, Angela Lober, Beverly Allen, Annie Hughes.

Websites

If you would like to do further reading on pigments, try searching on 'how do we see colours' and/or some of these websites.

<https://www.britannica.com/technology/pigment>

<https://www.koelcolours.com/blog/pigments>

<https://www.janeblundellart.com/greens>

<http://www.webexhibits.org/pigments/intro/greens.html>

BBC – iWonder – Life in colour: The surprising story of paint:

<https://www.bbc.com/timelines/zqytpv4>

These are just a few. There are many more interesting sites available about colour.