

Tendrils

Australian Botanical Artists Regional Network (ABARN)



Colour Display in Robertson Garden – A Welcome Sight For Both Birds and People!

News from Regional Groups

NSW

BDAS Botanic Artists Bowral

By Cathryn Coutts

The date for our biennial event, *For The Love of Plants* exhibition and workshops, at Bowral Art Gallery, is fast approaching. There are still some places available in the workshops, held over two weekends, 20-21 October and 27-28 October. Artists interested should apply directly to the workshop tutors. All details are on the application forms attached with this newsletter.

Similarly, artists are invited to exhibit work in the exhibition, to be held from October 19-30, with the official opening on Saturday October 20, at 4.30pm. Those application forms and details are also attached.

You can also access the entry forms from my website: www.cathryncouttsart

Click on the heading 'Exhibitions', then 'For the Love of Plants 2018' and you will see the entry forms there.

Threatened Species in Southern Highlands

The Bowral Group's Florilegium of Threatened Species of the NSW Southern Highlands, will be featured in *For The Love of Plants* exhibition.

As part of our research for this project we were taken on a guided walk in the Penrose State Forest on September 10. Our two wonderful guides were Sylvia David from the Bundanoon Field Naturalists and Katherine Thompson, Convenor for the Penrose Swamps Conservation group. We greatly appreciate the time Sylvia and Katherine have given to us for our project.

In a small area of bush they were able to show us a number of threatened plants, not the least of which was the *Acacia bynoeana*, which I have discussed more in the *Looking Back and Looking Forward* section of this newsletter. It is such a tiny, unassuming, but very endangered plant – easy to step on if you're not careful. A specimen

is visible on the ground just near my left foot (that's me in the black top), on the very edge of the photo.



Penrose State Forest Walk (L to R) Joanna Thomas, Janet Hicks, Dennice Fletcher, Steve Douglas, Katherine Thompson, Sylvia David, Jane Pye and Cathryn Coutts

Queensland

By Pamela Finger

Mackay Botanical Art Interest Group

Please find more information in the 'Exhibitions' section of this newsletter about our exhibition *Botanica 2018 - Water's Edge* from 19 September to 28 October at the Lagoons Gallery within the Mackay Regional Botanic Gardens Café. We would love to have others join us for the opening.

The Mackay Botanical Art Interest Group is a small group of active members (22) that meet twice monthly at the Mackay Regional Botanic Gardens. An annual exhibition is held in September following a theme. This year's theme is the 'Water's Edge' which provides a wide scope of plants in an environment so rich in saltwater, freshwater and intertidal zones. The plants featured range from trees to aquatic plants.

For next year's (2019) theme, we have taken from your newsletter and it will be called *Tendrils*, focusing on the range of plants we have in the area which climb, creep and trail.

Other activities during the year included a weekend workshop on the Clarke Range behind Mackay, specifically Eungella (the place to see Platypus in the wild.) The first day of the workshop was run by Sue Gee and focused on

backgrounds and loosening us up. The second day was run by BAIG members Maya and Kate and focused on drawing accurately. This also included a walk around the accommodation to look at different leaf types and detail what needed to be shown in a botanical drawing.

If you are near Mackay give us a call. We would love to show you around.

Pamela Finger: 0408620548

Pamela.finger@bigpond.com

Botanical Art Society of Queensland

Details of the annual BASQ exhibition, *Floressence* can be seen in the 'Exhibitions' section of this newsletter. For more information go to: www.botanicalartqld.com.au

South Australia & Victoria

By Jenni Elmes.

My interest in botanical art, including natural history is as strong as ever. Once a month I go to Hamilton Gardens, Victoria to join a botanical group and visit the art gallery. I have also been to Adelaide to the botanical group at the gardens this year.

Shown below are details about both these groups for the information of other artists:

Botanical Art Group, Hamilton Victoria.

Meets at Hamilton Botanic Gardens, Victoria in Garden's Cottage, 3rd Tuesday of each month.

Contact Debbie Millard:

botanicalinspirations@gmail.com

Or Helen Christie – 0488049837

Botanic Art Group, Botanic Gardens of Adelaide. Meets in the Goodman Building, Saturdays 12pm-4pm

Contact: Cathy Veide. Ph 08 83826421

Tasmania

By Jean Henley

Botaniko Recognises The Royal Tasmanian Botanical Gardens Bicentenary

Botaniko's twelve-month project to illustrate the plants of significance growing in the Royal Tasmanian Botanical Gardens (RTBG) from

1818 to present day has concluded with an exhibition at the Botanical Gardens from 25 August to 23 September. The exhibition, *Celebrating 200 Years through Botanical Illustration*, was opened by Ms Beth Mathison, Chair of the RTBG Board on 25 August.

The plants of significance over the course of the 200 years were selected by the RTBG staff and it was from this list that Botaniko members chose their subjects. The list provides a timeline of plants with interesting stories.

The exhibition, on display at the Gardens, starts with the Tasmanian blue gum (*Eucalyptus globulus*) which grew naturally through parts of the Gardens before 1818. One of the last natural specimens was removed in 2012 due to poor health. Many of the plants from the development of the Gardens are still flourishing in the Gardens: the Norfolk Island Pine (*Araucaria heterophylla*) was planted in the 1820s; a specimen of Cork Oak (*Quercus suber*) is known to have been growing in the Gardens in 1829; and the water lily (*Nymphaea* species) grew with abundance in the Garden's pond in the 1850s.

The plants of significance planted in the 1900s includes the Dawn Redwood (*Metasequoia glyptostroboides*) planted in 1956. The Gardens specimen was one of the earliest planted outside of China, where it was classified around 1941. Unfortunately, the main RTBG specimen was lost during a storm in June 2018.

Another plant forming part of this exhibition and still within the 1900s is King's Lomatia (*Lomatia tasmanica*) discovered by Charles Denison "Deny" King in 1934 and first described by well-respected botanist Winifred Curtis in 1967, who worked at the Garden's Herbarium at the time. The plant is restricted to a single population in the southwest of Tasmania. Fossil leaves of this *Lomatia* found in this location were dated at 43,600 years old making it one of the oldest living plant clones in the world.

Two of the newer additions to the Gardens are the Amur maple (*Acer japonicum*) and Japanese Maple (*Acer palmatum*) which were early plantings to the Japanese garden as part of its development in 1986.

Two of the significant plants from the 2000s that complete the bicentenary exhibition are the Wollemi Pine (*Wollemia nobilis*), one of the world's most unique plant discoveries of the contemporary age which was planted in 2002. In the same year, *Fagus* (*Nothofagus gunnii*), a Tasmanian endemic plant and Australia's only true winter deciduous plant, was established in the Gardens. The *Fagus* leaf is the symbol of the Royal Tasmanian Botanical Gardens.

With this project complete, Botaniko members have started on their next project – *Frederick Mackie – Quaker Plantsman* – an exhibition of plants recorded in Frederick Mackie's journal written during his visits to Hobart (1852-1854). Another exciting collection of botanical illustrations of early Tasmanian flora will be for exhibition at the Narryna Heritage Museum, Hobart, from September 2019 to February 2020.



1860s Water Lily (*Nymphaea* species) Debbie Collins (left)

1865-1880s Chinese Wisteria (*Wisteria sinensis*) Susan Graham (right)



1829 Tasmanian or Mountain Waratah (*Telopea truncata*)

Janet Thompson (top), Annick Anselin (bottom)

Western Australia

By Marina Lommerse

I'm preparing a huge paper flower installation (with 1600 handmade paper flowers) going into the Crown Hotels for the Spring Racing Carnival. The title of the installation is 'The Language of Flowers: Spring Flower Gallop'.

The installation is the fourth in a series 'Language of Flowers' installations I have done. It's up for six weeks and one of the six installations features WA wildflowers. The installation runs from October 4 to November 7, in Crown Metropol Hotel and Crown Towers Hotel, Perth.



Images from the *Language of Flowers* Installation

Australian Native Plant Society (Australia) National Conference and Biennial General Meeting - September 29 to October 3, 2019.

This is an event that many of our readers will be interested in knowing about.

More details will follow in later issues of *Tendrils*, but you may wish to make a note of the dates in your diaries. The event webpage currently has the following information:

The Wildflower Society of WA is a member of the Australian Native Plant Society (Australia), which has a branch in most states and territories. Every two years, a national conference is held at a different location around Australia, affording members the opportunity to meet members from other states, and learn about the flora of different regions of Australia.

In 2019 the National Conference will be held in Western Australia, in September/October 2019, featuring 'Blooming Biodiversity' and centered in Albany.

The National Conference in Western Australia is still in the planning stages, but will include a series of tours to and from Albany, the host town, and a variety of day excursions during the conference, taking in native flora in bushland settings as well as gardens and landscaped areas. Since the south-west of Western Australia is known for its pristine bushland, there will be an emphasis of native flora in its natural setting.

For further information, please contact Perth Office at enquiry@wildflowersocietywa.org.au or check our Blooming Biodiversity pages

Exhibitions

Current and Future Exhibitions

Botanica 2018 - Water's Edge, Lagoons Gallery within the Mackay Regional Botanic Gardens Café, from Wednesday 19 September to Sunday 28 October 2018. Opening hours are Wednesday to Friday 9am – 3pm and Weekends 8am – 4pm.

This exhibition showcases work by the Mackay Botanical Art Interest Group (BAIG).



Leichhardt Tree *Nauclea orientalis*
Watercolour and Graphite by Kate Brunner



Paperbark *Melaleuca leucadendra*
Pastel Pencils by Pamela Finger

Colourful, curious and captivating flora is showcased in this botanical art exhibition where the artists use a range of techniques to portray their chosen subject.

Each ‘artwork specimen’ has been chosen because it is usually found growing beside a ‘Water’s Edge’, be that by a creek or river, lagoon, in wetlands or beside the sea. Some of the plants considered actually grow in the water.

Botanical art combines detail, accuracy and artistry, with many hours needed for each graphite drawing, pastel drawing and watercolour or acrylic painting. A glimpse into the inner workings of the botanical artists is provided by displays of their sketch books,

photos and materials showing how the artists take a live specimen and create a ‘living’ piece of botanical art.

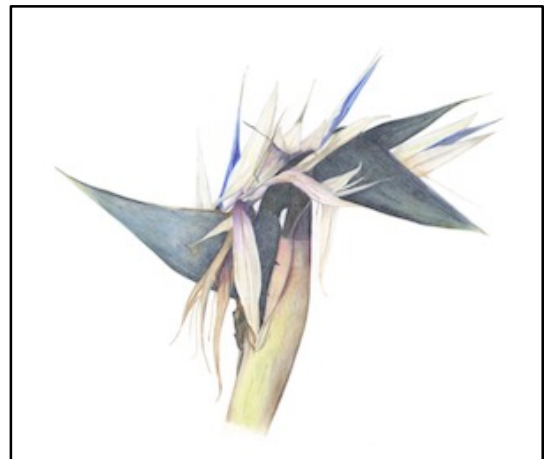
The Botanica 2018 exhibition will be available for viewing from Wednesday 19 September to Sunday 28 October at the Lagoons Gallery within the Botanic Gardens Café.

Paperbark – *Melaleuca leucadendra* – Pastel pencils by Pamela Finger

For more information, phone or text Maya on 0436 331 009 or email to:

maya.in.nature@gmail.com

Floressence 2018. Annual exhibition of Botanical Art Queensland. Friday 16 to Tuesday 20 November, 9am to 4.30pm (closing at 12.00 Tuesday). Entry fee \$3 adults, \$2 concession, children free. Morning and afternoon tea available. Held in the auditorium of the Brisbane Botanic Gardens, Mt Coot-tha. Art work and merchandise for sale.



Strelitzia reginae, Clare Lovebrand

Blue Mountains Botanica. Blue Mountains Cultural Centre, 30 Parke Street, Katoomba. On until Sunday October 14. For details go to:

www.bluemountainiansculturalcentre.com.au

This exhibition delves into the history of botanical exploration of the Blue Mountains and features historical botanical illustrations, plant specimen and archival material drawn from the National Herbarium of NSW, the Daniel Solander Library and the Blue Mountains Botanic Garden Mt Tomah. The exhibition will also feature a selection of works by

contemporary Sydney and Blue Mountains artists who incorporate botanical elements in their works through a range of media such as drawing, photography and installations. Exhibiting artists are James Blackwell, Tania Bowers, Ona Janzen, Jennifer Leahy and Edith Pass, Angela Lober, Julie Nettleton, Edith Rewa and Jacqueline Spedding. Developed in Partnership with the Royal Botanic Gardens and Domain Trust.

Mangroves of Moreton Bay by Clare Loveband. Redland Museum, 60 Smith Street Cleveland, Queensland. Exhibition is open 10am to 3.30pm each day. On until October 16.

Web: www.redlandmuseum.org.au



By Clare Lovebrand

Exhibits include Clare's paintings of 10 different species of mangroves and retrospective works. These paintings have been inspired by walks around Eprapah, Oyster Point and Amity.

The Art of Botanical Illustration 2018. Biennial Exhibition presented by the Friends of the Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne. 13-28 October, 10am to 4pm. Domain House Gallery Dallas brooks Drive Melbourne. For more information contact Friends of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Melbourne, ph (03) 96506398.

Inhabiting The Woodlands, by Carolyn Young. On until 13 October, at Goulburn Regional Art Gallery, Cnr Church and Bourke Sts. Goulburn NSW.

This exhibition re-imagines 19th century human experience in light of Australian mammals that

have become vulnerable or extinct. Young explores the question of who inhabits the woodlands across time through still life photographs of mammals, plants, insects and artefacts. Inspired by the work of ecologists, Young set out to find intact grassy woodlands, the wildflowers within, and evidence of animal inhabitation. Her findings are shown in large still-life colour photographs and a series of cyanotypes.

For the Love of Plants. Bowral Art Gallery, 1 Short Street Bowral NSW. October 19 to 30. Official Opening on Saturday October 20 at 4.30pm, by Lauren Hook, NSW Office of Environment and Heritage.

Exhibition features a selection of paintings of rare, vulnerable and threatened plants growing in the NSW Southern Highlands, and a general selection of botanical paintings, drawings and printmaking. For more details contact Rosie Wade at: bdasbotanicartists17@gmail.com or

Bowral Art Gallery: www.bdasgallery.com

Exhibition Reviews

John Russell Australia's First Impressionist. Art Gallery of NSW. On until 11 November.

By Cathryn Coutts

This exhibition brings together 120 paintings, drawings and watercolours and offers some fresh perspectives on French Impressionism. The exhibition presents the breadth of Russell's art from his studies in London and Paris through impressionism and experimentation with pure colour.

Although largely forgotten in Australia, this artist lived and worked through an era of great change and innovation in painting. His use of pigments, at a time when exciting new paints were becoming available, can teach us a lot about ways with colour in both oils and watercolours. I have always believed that as botanical artists we can learn a lot from painters who work in other genres. I was especially charmed by his later watercolours, which look so fresh and vibrant today. Try to see this exhibition if you can.

Looking Back and Looking Forward

The Story of Bynoe's Wattle (*Acacia bynoeana*)

By Cathryn Coutts

I was introduced to this little acacia recently on a guided walk in the Penrose State Forest, in the NSW Southern Highlands.



Acacia bynoeana Bynoe's Wattle
(Picture Source - Fairley, A. *Seldom Seen*. 2004)

Since starting the Florilegium project to paint threatened species in the Southern Highlands, our Bowral group members have become enthusiastic plant hunters, deriving much delight and satisfaction in finding and studying endangered plants. As mentioned earlier in this newsletter, we have had considerable help in our research, from very knowledgeable people. The little *Acacia bynoeana* is one such treasured find.

I was intrigued by its name and decided to do a bit of research to find out who Bynoe was, and why this plant was named after him.

This task led me back in time to plant hunters from another era, albeit a very important one when so many of our Australian native plants and animals were first being studied.

I discovered that Benjamin Bynoe (1803-1865) is credited as the person who collected the original specimen of this plant at the Port Jackson area in 1838. It was later named after him by George Bentham, from Kew Gardens in 1853. Bynoe's plant collections are part of the Hooker collection in the Kew Herbarium, where

Hooker was one of Bentham's colleagues, and Charles Darwin was one of his closest friends.

Bynoe was a naval surgeon on the *Beagle's* voyages with Charles Darwin. The voyage during which he visited Sydney and collected the *Acacia bynoeana*, was from 1837 to 1843.

As well as being the ship's surgeon, Bynoe's scientific interests spread over several fields. He was a dedicated naturalist, geologist and plant collector. John Gould, the bird naturalist, wrote of Bynoe in 1839: "By the exertions of Mr Bynoe, surgeon of the *Beagle*, science has been enriched not only by the discovery of these new species of birds but of several others...the whole of which have been placed in my hands for the purpose of describing...".

The *Beagle's* voyage of 1837-1843, took it to Western Australia, then to Tasmania, Sydney, the Great Barrier Reef, the Gulf of Carpentaria and eventually back the England via Mauritius and Cape Verde. During this voyage Bynoe collected numerous specimens and wrote several papers including ones on marsupial gestation and geological formations in Queensland.

Sadly, Bynoe's contributions to science have been largely forgotten, with little if any credit given to him, despite his assistance to Darwin in his ground-breaking work, and his collecting of a large number of specimens in his own right. Only one plant, *Acacia bynoeana*, has been named after him, and Bynoe Harbour, west of Darwin in the Northern Territory.

I wondered what Bynoe would have thought about the fate of his little acacia today. In my mind, there is a thread that connects our work today in protecting it, to the dedicated collectors of the past, who had the foresight to believe such plants were worthy of attention.

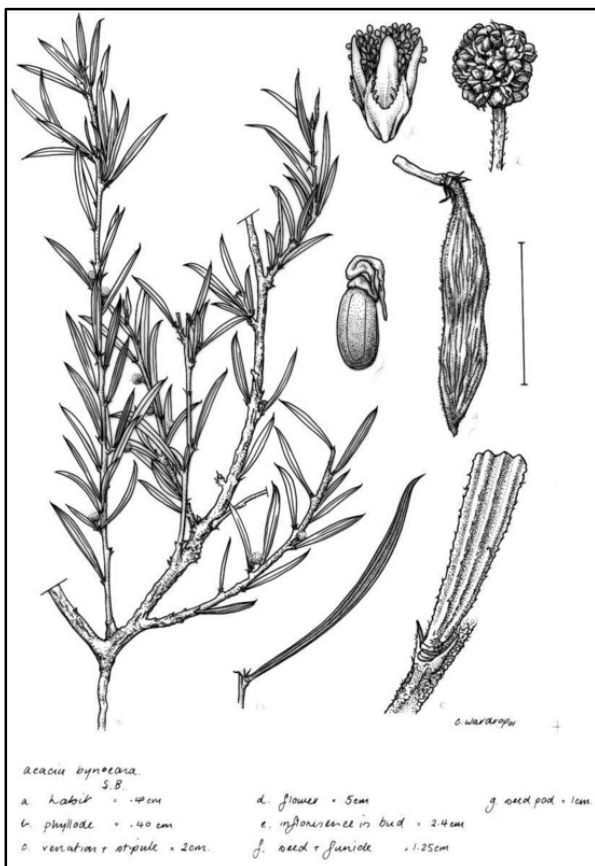
What is the status of the *Acacia bynoeana* today and what are the threats to its survival? Its habitat is mainly in heath and dry sclerophyll forest in sandy soils. It is a decumbent shrub growing to 0.5 m. high, flowering mainly in summer. It is likely pollinated by native bees and wasps.

A Sydney endemic, it is distributed in sites between Morriset and Hilltop, south to near Wollongong and west to Wentworth Falls.

It has been found in open and sometimes slightly disturbed sites, such as the roadside edges and grading spoil mounds, like the position where we saw it at Penrose (see photo on page 2 of this newsletter). Many threats come from its preferred location on flat/low topography where there is disturbance from road, trail and powerline maintenance, recreational vehicle use, clearing, weed invasion, browsing by herbivores and frequent fire. The populations are small and close to urban development, making it susceptible to catastrophic events.

What a list! How can the little acacia survive? I wonder what the bushland was like when Bynoe first found it?

Such an unassuming little plant does not easily grab the attention of botanical artists, but I was delighted to locate a beautiful drawing of it on NSW Flora Online website, by Sydney-based artist Catherine Waudrop.



Acacia bynoeana Bynoe's Wattle by Catherine Waudrop

I have twice attended her excellent scientific illustration course, with her colleague Lesley Elkan, at the Sydney Royal Botanic Gardens. Catherine's drawing has made something beautiful and special out of this little plant. I'm sure Bynoe would be very impressed.

I urge all of you, as botanical artists, to keep alive the work of those dedicated early plant collectors who first found these specimens and recorded them. Today our job is to continue their work through conservation and protection, by drawing and painting the plants, so that the wider community can value their beauty and appreciate their importance in the natural environment.

Talking about Botanical Art

'Would You Like Black With That?'

By Cathryn Coutts

The purpose of this section is to encourage readers to think and ask questions about their art form. It is not intended to provide answers or suggest techniques, because other publications do that much better. It is designed to stimulate new ideas and push the boundaries, while also recognizing that botanical art has a long tradition which must be respected and preserved.

Now to the matter of black...

I recently attended a very interesting and enjoyable four-day workshop, conducted by Beverly Allen at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Sydney.

During the workshop, we talked about many aspects of botanical painting, one of which was colour. Not surprising really, because we were painting anemones in vivid pinks, reds and purples, and the use of various pigments to achieve suitable colours was very important.

In a conversation about making colours, Beverly talked of making 'blacks', which were required for the centres of some of our flowers. "There are many different ways you can make black" she told us.

Very true, and I was reminded of something that has been in my mind for some time, i.e. the use of black in botanical art.

As artists we are regularly told by our teachers not to use black in a painting and not to mix black with other colours. Is this correct and if so, what are the reasons for this advice being given so regularly to aspiring artists, including botanical artists? Are there some hard and fast 'rules' about colour that we should all learn and adhere to, or are there occasions when those rules don't apply or can be broken?

What effect does black have in a painting? I believe there is a purity about black and white, which focuses our attention on the subject in a way that colour doesn't.

The beautiful work by Susannah Blaxill, shown below, was included in the *Flora of Australia*, Botanical Art Worldwide Exhibition, held in May this year in Canberra. Such is the potency of black and white, when used as masterfully as Susannah has done, that adding colour would only be a distraction.



Hakea Seed Pod Number 2 Susannah Blaxill

She explains how it was done:

"This drawing was executed using Generals Charcoal pencils, grades HB through to 4B. The dust was made from the pencils by grinding them on sandpaper and the charcoal is a warm black."

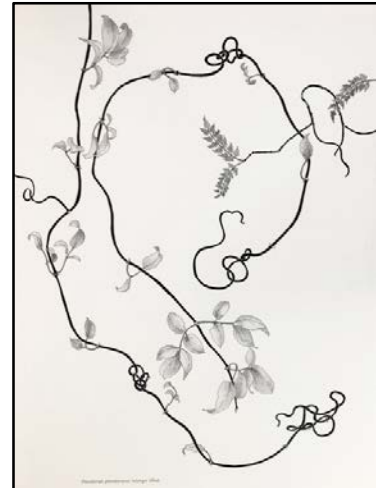
The artist has another drawing of a Hakea Seed Pod that is a little different and can be viewed by going to her website:

http://www.blaxill.com/gallery_ch21.php

The simplicity of black and white enables the artist to accentuate positive and negative shapes

in a work. Black and white can tease our perceptions regarding figure versus field.

In my recent exhibition of rainforest plants, held in April this year, I had several black and white drawings of vines, twisting and curving in a large white space. To set up the composition for the drawing below, I pinned the vine specimen to a board and just let it hang in space as it would in the forest. The plant arranged itself. It was done with gouache, pen and ink.



Pandorea pandorana Wonga Vine Cathryn Coultts

Exhibition visitors said they liked the play of positive and negative shapes evident in the drawing. Readers here can judge for themselves.

Traditionally, before the invention of photography, botanical illustrations were printed in black line and hand-coloured for reproduction.



Two Lilies from *Histoire des Insectes de l'Europe*, 1730 by Maria Sibylla Merian (Source *A New Flowering: 1000 years of Botanical Art* S. Sherwood)

These early engravings and woodcuts were often designed for reprographic processes. The graphic tradition in botanical images has a long history. Merian's work, a hand-coloured engraving, is typical of this type of illustration.

In the following little painting, I chose to use black and white with gold accents, but then, I am a printmaker, and a lot of my work has a strong graphic quality. Is it a botanical work or a design? You decide.



Eucryphia moorei Gouache & Acrylic Cathryn Coutts

It's important to understand how and when the advice to avoid using black with other colours came about.

On his website (<https://garybolyer.com>) Gary Bolyer asks "should you use black?"

Many artists, he says, shy away from black because it tends to 'dirty' their colours in mixing, and they prefer to mix only complementary colours to get blacks. He acknowledges that the use of black is a hotly debated issue and there are no right answers.

My view is that as artists today we should inform ourselves about when and how to use *all* pigments, including black.

What is important, according to Bolyer, is to pay attention to the qualities in different blacks and how to use them. Referring to oil colours he describes three black pigments: *Ivory Black* – a deep velvety black that is cooler in mass tone, but warm in tint (a slight brownish undertone); *Lamp Black*, a very old pigment dating back to prehistoric times, also a very deep velvety black

but with a bluish undertone; and *Mars Black*, the strongest black, which is warm in both mass tone and tint.

A lot of our reluctance to use black arose out of Impressionism in the 19th century, an era when considerable changes occurred in the pigments available to artists. The Impressionists asserted that pure black almost never exists in nature.

They also chose not to use black pigments because the effects caused by changes in hue are so much richer than those caused by changes in shade. They were interested in the effects of placing hues side by side in a painting.

For many botanical artists painting today, the same principles apply as those used by the Impressionists. Regardless of which colours you use, the main thing to understand is that colours *interact* with each other.

As far as watercolours go, some interesting suggestions are given by Ian Sidaway, in his *Colour Mixing Bible*, 2015 (pp 62-75). His book consists of very helpful colour charts in different pigment combinations. As a general aid to pigment mixing it's a valuable resource.

In each colour group, e.g. reds, oranges, yellows, greens, blues, violets and browns, he suggests unusual and rather interesting colours, that can be made by adding ivory black.

Here are some of his suggestions: "adding black deadens all of the reds, pushing them towards a deep brown; black added to translucent orange creates a deep brown similar to burnt umber; ivory black added to chrome yellow makes wonderful dull natural greens."

He also shows many colours that can be made by adding Payne's grey, another colour that we are often advised to avoid.

Sidaway's book gives a quick and easy colour mixing reference for oils, acrylics, watercolours, gouache, soft pastels, coloured pencils and ink.

From pages 126-133 he also gives some lovely examples of mixing whites in each of the media discussed in his book.

It is important to appreciate how black can flatten forms, but emphasize shape and line

instead. If shape and line are more important in your work, then black has a lot to offer.

Black can affect mood and suggest drama. It can add a velvety richness. It's also decorative and pattern-like when used with white and possibly one or two other colours.



Designing Vines Gouache and Coloured Pencil, Cathryn Coutts

In my vine painting illustrated, I chose to deliberately flatten the leaves and grapes to given a more graphic effect. The border is gold. It was fun adding in the colours, to give what I hope is a rich effect not possible without the black background.

The strongly graphic quality of black has its own charm, evident in the increasing popularity of black backgrounds in botanical paintings. Artists are attending workshops just to learn how to do black backgrounds. Ask yourself: why is it so popular now? What does the black background do for the painting that a white background doesn't?

In Maud Purdy's gorgeous work which follows, we can see the richness of colour that a black background offers. She has kept the graphic effect, through the opaque quality of the gouache. Yet the painting glows, with a shimmering radiance as if lit from within. Very beautiful.

What happens if we do add black to other colours? Is the picture totally deadened and lifeless? Not necessarily. Japanese artists can do this superbly and teach us a great deal about the use of colour and ways to combine different pigments.



Liquidambar styraciflua Maud Purdy 1944

Gouache on black board



From a Woodblock Print, design by Furuya Korin, 1875-1910

(Source: *Le Japon Artistique: Japanese Floral Patter design in the Art Nouveau Era*. From the Collection of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston).

In the picture shown above, a printed woodcut, the colours have been 'deadened' with black and probably some white as well. Rather than giving the image a 'dead' effect, it is sumptuous, and the colour does not detract from the dynamism of the design.

Japanese artists used colour combinations that we seldom see in Western art, but which were popular for example, during the Art Nouveau era in the early 20th century. The two illustrations which follow both show colours made by mixing black with other pigments. They are some

popular Art Nouveau designs, and a motif design for Indian textiles.



Motifs for Decorative Arts Publ. 1890s
by Eugene Grasset



(Source Textile Motifs of India, Pepin van Rooijen 2008)

So use black if it suits your purpose, but do so with an understanding of how it works. Use it with other pigments or on its own. Have some fun, try some experiments. And please, if you have anything to add to this discussion send in your thoughts so we can share them.

Artist's Profile

Leonie Norton – Botanical Artist, Educator and Author



Leonie is a practicing professional botanical artist, one of Australia's most prominent and highly qualified botanical educators and leading artist in her field. She is an international tutor of high regard and demand.

She has won the Maitland Art Gallery Prize for Plant and Wildlife Illustration as well as many other art awards at various exhibitions. Her botanical paintings can be found in private and public collections, both in Australia and overseas. The Hunt Institute of Botanical Documentation in the USA has purchased several of Leonie's Australian native plant paintings for their prestigious Collection and travelling botanical art exhibition.

Her qualifications include BA/Visual Arts degree, B.Fine Arts (BFA Honours) in Plant and Wildlife Illustration and a post graduate degree (Grad Dip) in Adult Education (Vocational Education and Training).

She teaches regular courses and workshops in Sydney and throughout Australia. Her Summer and Winter School tuition includes regional NSW and Victoria, WA, New Zealand, Fiji, Canada, Indonesia and the renowned Marlborough College in England. She has also taught botanical art field techniques at Macquarie University in the Department of Environment and Geography.

She successfully exhibits annually with the Botanical Art Society of Australia, Canberra Botanica and the Sydney Royal Botanic Gardens. Leonie has had a solo exhibition at the Oriel Gallery in Ascot, Brisbane, New Zealand, Canada and England. She was Featured Guest Artist for the Canberra 2005 Botanical Exhibition and the 2010 Botanical Art Society of Australia Exhibition. In addition, she is an International External Examiner for Botanical Art Certificate courses in the USA and is also involved in selection and judging for Australian botanical art exhibitions. She judges various botanical art exhibitions in Australia and was recently the judge for the Sydney Botanical Art Worldwide exhibition.

Leonie is past President of the Botanical Art Society of Australia, a member of the Sydney Florilegium Society, the American Botanical Art Society and Friends of the Royal Botanic Gardens Sydney. Magazine publications include regular articles in Artists Palette since 2001, Back to Basics Magazine (each quarterly issue), Artists Drawing and Inspiration, Australian Artist, *The Gardens* RBGS magazine 2008-2010, Our Gardens Magazine, Queensland Homes and various local newspaper publications. Leonie has illustrated botanical herbs in each issue of *Nature & Health Magazine* from 2005-2011.

Her book *Women of Flowers: Botanical Art in Australia from the 1830s – 1960s* is available from the National Gallery of Australia book shop and leading book stores.



Banksia Formosa Leonie Norton



Banksia menziesii & Banksia prionotes Leonie Norton

As a balance in her life, Leonie also teaches Travel Sketching, and takes art groups to places such as Fiji, Cambodia, Vietnam, South India, Bali, New Zealand and Hobart Tasmania.

www.botanicalart.com.au

www.naturalhistory.com.au

www.holidaysketching.com.au

<http://leonienorton.blogspot.com.au>

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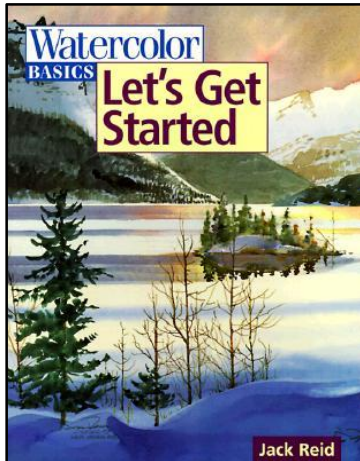
Book Review

By Helen Thomas

Let's Get Started. Jack Reid

This isn't about botanical painting but if you know someone who wants to try watercolour painting and is looking for a good introductory book this is an excellent choice. I bought it after I had been painting for a while and still found the exercises very worthwhile. One of the things I liked most was that nearly all of the exercises only use two or three colours – particularly Ultramarine Blue, Burnt Sienna and Raw Sienna

– so there is no need for the beginner to rush out and invest in lots of tubes. It's eye-opening and inspiring to see what can be painted with just Ultramarine and Burnt Sienna.



The book starts as usual with equipment and materials, then moves on to how to use your brushes. These are exercises that many books don't include. The idea of practising making marks on newspaper is especially sensible when new students are wary of wasting good paper. Even for experienced painters it's good to be reminded not to get stuck in a rut with the way we use our tools. There is good advice about how to make the most of a full sheet of watercolour paper.

Later chapters move on to exercises that cover washes, building up layers of colour and values and some composition. The exercises have simple looking subjects such as farm houses and landscapes, shapes that shouldn't be too daunting for a beginner but incorporate interesting techniques, and end up with finished examples that any new painter should be proud to show off.

Northlight Books 1998 in the Watercolor Basics Series.

Traveller's Tales

By Jacqueline Donovan

Christmas in Singapore & Langkawi 2017-18

Spending Christmas in Singapore and Langkawi during December and January was truly wonderful.



Just about everything was in bloom. At temperatures steady at 34C and humidity between 80% and 100%, everything grows at a remarkable rate and the smell of fruit lingers on the air - especially the Durian fruit! There were signs everywhere on public transport saying "No Durians"; apparently they smell extremely bad but taste really nice. I did later brave the smell and tried it but can't say I was very excited about it at all.

Taking the grandchildren to the **butterfly farm** was our next port of call, so wonderful our youngest was very excited and also very brave allowing the butterflies to rest on her hand, arms and head at any one time

She was fascinated by them and whilst her older brother was a little reluctant at first, he soon got the hang of it...They really liked Grandad's head too, we all thought that they must like the smooth landing pad that he provided.

Langkawi

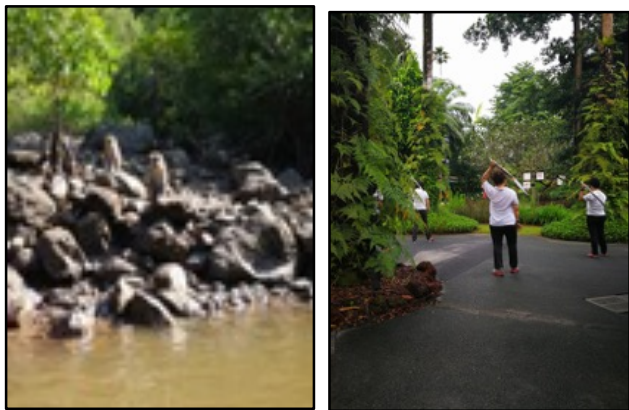
A week in Langkawi was truly beautiful ... so full of creatures wandering about. The monkeys moved around in family groups - going out in the boat towards the mangroves on the first morning, we were greeted by large numbers that actually swam out to the boat for food, which we were allowed to give them...I never knew that monkeys swam. You learn something new every day ...



The Gardens by the Bay

Built on reclaimed land at Marina Bay, these are so spectacular. I spent most of the time trying to take close up shots of the enormous hanging gardens which are separated into two different sections ... but I did prefer the tropical one - the plants just seemed so much happier and more vibrant. You can't really imagine how they got them to grow on these iron structures.

These so-called "Supertrees" are of course man-made.



Singapore Botanical Gardens

Back in Singapore we visited the extensive botanical gardens which were inspired by Sir Stamford Raffles and first laid out at their current location in the 1860s.

There seemed to be a lot of disparate groups doing strange things within the gardens, including these ladies who were waving enormous swords around.

The gardens are immaculate and very structured; as you can see from one of the photos below that even a lizard felt the need to get in on the action. They maintain a strong connection with London's Kew Gardens and were inscribed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2015.





Then after a long day wandering around the gardens, we were treated to the lights festival in the gardens on the bay - truly awesome as the kids would say... everyone sitting on blankets and as the day drew to a close the trees looked so magical and amazing.

Raffles in the afternoon...

Time for a Singapore Sling now and a wonderful tasty meal at world-famous Raffles Hotel.

Also if you have time afternoon tea at Raffles is so so yummy and a real experience you just have to do it...when you're there...



Taken at the 3D museum Langkawi.... time to sleep....

Sketchbook Stories

By Jane Pye

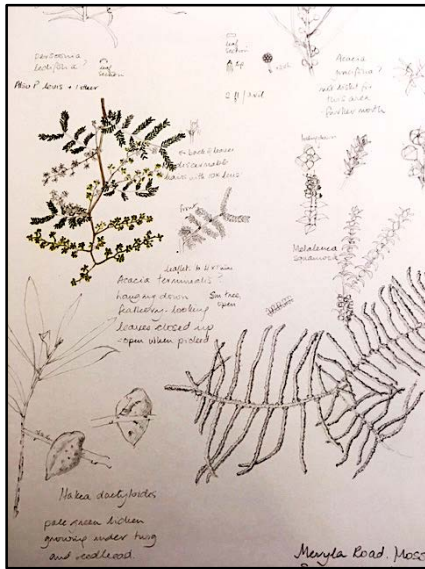
I've been learning and practicing botanical art for about 14 years, with varying degrees of seriousness and dedication. In that time, I've filled many sketchbooks with pencil, pen and watercolour pieces. Not all of course are worth talking about, but served a purpose in exploring the characteristics of the plant; for example, several pages were taken up with the structure of pine cones.

I've established a set of personal preferences which mean the sketchbooks are a result in themselves instead of merely practice pieces. I go to trouble to buy heavy paper, spiral bound, which keeps everything in place and doesn't buckle when paint is applied. I identify the specimens with full name, place collected, date and any description that may be helpful later. Some pages are quite fine drawings, or are developed into works in pen. Some are partly painted, or only have small sections painted to indicate leaf colour etc.

My sketchbooks have turned into a sort of diary that reflects the current interest. I collect specimens at different times of the year to show juvenile or springtime leaves, buds, fruit, and gives me a chance to revisit a page to add new information. I enjoy the spontaneity and freedom this way of working allows, and get pleasure too in looking through them later.



Eucalyptus macarthuri Sketch by Jane Pye



Sketchbook Page by Jane Pye

Workshops and Events

For the Love of Plants. Workshops 20-21 October and 27-28 October. Bowral Art Gallery.

Leading tutors include Susannah Blaxill, Helen Fitzgerald, Rita Parkinson, Tracey Miller, Jacqueline Donovan and Peter Wale.

Classes include Birds in Botanicals, Creating Botanical Sketchbooks, Painting Macro Floral Works, Drawing and Weaving and Using Coloured Pencils.



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Websites

By Cathryn Coutts

My attention was recently drawn to an article about pigments by Simon Schama, in the New Yorker Magazine - *Treasures from the Color Archive*. It referred to the Forbes Collection of pigments in the Straus Centre for Conservation and Technical Studies at Harvard University. It contains 2500 specimens that document the history of colour.

The article explains that The Department of Conservation and Technical Research was founded in 1928 by Edward Waldo Forbes, the director of Harvard's Fogg Museum from 1909 to 1944. Today Forbes's vast library of colour and its technical laboratories are housed in the museum's building designed by Renzo Piano.

Schama states that for Forbes, pigment hunting and gathering was not just a matter of creating an archive of lost and languishing colour. It was about the union of art and science.

This article is fascinating for those who take an interest in the history, origins and chemical composition of pigments. The stories and legends that surround most of the pigments we are familiar with today are endless. Go to the website and have a look at the complete article (take care to spell colour as 'color'):

<https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2018/09/03/treasures-from-the-color-archive>

Publication Deadlines & Contact Details

This newsletter was prepared by Cathryn Coutts. Next issue to be published in November 2018.

Contributions are most welcome. They should be received by November 23, 2018.

Please send text unformatted. An email is fine. Images need to be jpegs that are easily emailed.

There is no charge for advertising in this newsletter.

Enquiries and contributions to:

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