

panorama



Official Newsletter of Brighton Art Society Inc.

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April

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear BAS members,

Tutored classes for Term two will start again on Monday April 26th. Descriptions of the classes available can be found on the BAS website where enrolments can also be made using the TryBooking Link. Most of us are now familiar with using this system, but if you need help, please feel free to ring the office on 9553 8506, leave your contact information and we will be happy to get back to you and help out.

Since the new BAS website was introduced last year, we have continued to make adjustments to make it more effective and suited to our needs. We have now installed access to back-copies of Panorama newsletter and intend to make all editions published in the past twelve months accessible. If there is a copy you didn't receive, or there is something from a past edition you want to revisit, go to ABOUT on the Homepage and then select Panorama from the dropdown menu.

Once again our thanks go to our Committee member Charmaine for the substantial and ongoing time and effort she contributes to provide this for us, in addition to setting up and managing class enrolments. We all owe her our appreciation.

Happy art making!!

LYNTON DAEHLI

brightonartsociety.com.au



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AN ART EXPERIENCE IN MANY SHAPES AND SIZES

Quite a few of us will have visited the current NGV Triennial exhibition which is now approaching its close, after dominating the International Collection in St Kilda Road for several months. For others amongst us, it is perhaps not the type of art experience we would usually consider exposing ourselves to.

The display is vast, various and woven in and out of the permanent collection, so it can be a challenge to get around to all the exhibits and at times we might be unsure what is included or what is just part of the permanent display. The variety of media and the approach to artistic expression, inevitably means there will be things to which we respond and others to which we remain indifferent.

I went initially with few expectations and remained selective in what I engaged with. In truth, my appetite for video art is limited and there were certainly several examples of that medium, so I lingered at them but briefly. However, after some time moving about in an irregular pattern through the many gallery spaces, I found myself richly absorbed and was sufficiently engaged to return for a second visit.

Representational art, with which most of us at BAS are focused, draws much of its power, from the play in our mind and eye, between the subject being represented and the choices an artist makes in how we capture that chosen subject. If we are painting a landscape for example, of necessity, we select just a portion of what we can see before us. This is a skill of composition. We may simplify and edit the view, apply the paint with gusto or restraint, try carefully to document the tones and colours before us, or with abandon, just follow our own expressive ends, happily waving goodbye to the scene we started with.

The point is however, that for us as artists as well as ourselves and others as viewers, there is always a play between the subject matter being captured and the qualities of the particular art work, which must sink or swim on how it engages with the subject laying behind it. An abstract or non-representational work of art by contrast, will stand or fall solely on its own merits. The artist is seeking after an internal vision or idea and the viewer of the work, will draw his or her rewards and conclusions, solely on the basis of the work itself.

To return to the representational approach, it is I believe, this bouncing back and forth between the subject we have chosen to turn our attention to and the way our art work moves toward or away from this subject, that lies at the heart of an artistic experience.

I will select just a limited few of the works on display at the Triennial for closer examination. I believe they exhibit this play between the starting subject and final artist's expression of which I have been speaking, but in a very different setting from what we might normally expect.

The NGV curators, commissioned a number of artists to make works to be located in the galleries housing the Permanent Collection and the commissioned works deliberately engage with these already present works of art.

One of my favourite spaces at the NGV is the C17th -18th European collection. Hanging here is the exquisite "Cleopatra's Banquet", painted by the Italian artist Giovanni Batista Tiepolo in 1744. Also in the room is a large painting by Nicholas Regnier entitled "Hero and Leander from 1625.



The American artist, Daniel Arsham, was commissioned to make works in this space, which engage with these two paintings. He has created several life-sized sculptured figures, holding the same poses as the figures in the paintings, but appearing to be covered in draped white fabric. The figures which derive from the Tiepolo painting, stand on the floor before the painting, mimicking the posture of Cleopatra herself on the picture's left and that of a servant we can locate on the picture's right. The white fabric covering them appears to stream away as though they are caught in a wind tunnel.



We look to the white figures and then back to the painting to see which of the many participants in Tiepolo's work are being captured. Similarities and differences can then be reflected on. Our engagement with the painting is extended. I enjoyed moving around behind each of the white plaster figures, to realise that they were in fact hollow. In ways ghost-like. This further jogs our reflections on what is being conjured and on their relationship to the figures in the painting.



On the opposite wall of the gallery, hangs Regnier's sumptuous painting "Leander and Hero", capturing I assume, some ecstatic religious, or tragic experience of Leander, aghast at the figure of Hero lying prone, or dead before her. To the left of the painting, the contemporary artist, has placed another of his draped white plaster sculptures upon the surface of the wall. His sculpture emerges seamlessly from the surface of the wall, as though it is the wall itself which is rising up in horror at the events in the painting.



LEANDER AND HERO with Daniel Arsham sculpture to the left

The sculpture captures the scene from above, rather than frontally as the painting does, but the likeness is disturbingly accurate. It pushes us, to again return to the painting and observe afresh the drama being captured there. Our mind bounces from subject to the artists' capturing of it, but very differently between the C17th and the C21st case. A rich artistic experience however, is offered us in the process.

At the other end of the NGV is the area housing C19th European paintings, where again, the Triennial has commissioned contemporary works, which interact with the historical paintings from the permanent collection. I particularly liked the space which houses the Turner and Constable paintings in the collection.

In this space, the Danish artist Cecilie Bendixen, has created a work entitled "Cloud Formations".

Four large formations made from elaborately folded and subtly lit white fabric are suspended from the ceiling. Many of the paintings hanging in this space, feature renditions of turbulent skies. Both Constable and Turner were known for their fascination with atmosphere and the endlessly fluctuating forms of clouds.

CECELIE BENDIXON - CLOUD FORMATIONS
with Clarkson Stanfield beyond.



The painting on the left here, beneath Bendixen's suspended cloud, depicts Mount Saint Michael in Cornwall. It was painted in 1830 by Clarkson Stanfield. and shows a ship wreck in turbulent seas, before the Mount with its crowning monastery. The churning sky, shifts from an inky darkness at the picture's edge, to a brilliant white at its centre where it silhouettes the teetering monastery.

We have no choice but to acknowledge the luminous crumpled fabric suspended before it, which although stylised and abstracted, is in itself a thing of beauty. And is in its way, a valid representation of clouds, in a room filled with other representations of clouds.

CLOUD FORMATIONS with JWM Turner to the right



There are in fact four such fabric cloud-forms of varying size and form suspended in the room. They prompt us to think afresh about the scale and shape of the room we are in and to look afresh at the paintings surrounding us. The experience is rewarding.

The Triennial will close on Sunday April 18th, with extended hours over the final weekend, so if you have not yet seen it and reading this has kindled your curiosity, act quickly. There are pleasures to be had.

LYNTON DAEHLI

SBS PORTRAIT PRIZE 2021



**ROD EDELSTEN
STEVE HAAS
MICHELLE ZUCCOLO**

3 members of the BAS team have been selected as finalists in the 2021 SBS PORTRAIT PRIZE.

The SOUTHERN BUOY STUDIOS is located at 1/19 Carbine Way Mornington VIC and will run from April 17th - June 5th
2021 Mon-Fri 9-5 Sat 10-4
southernbuoystudios.com.au

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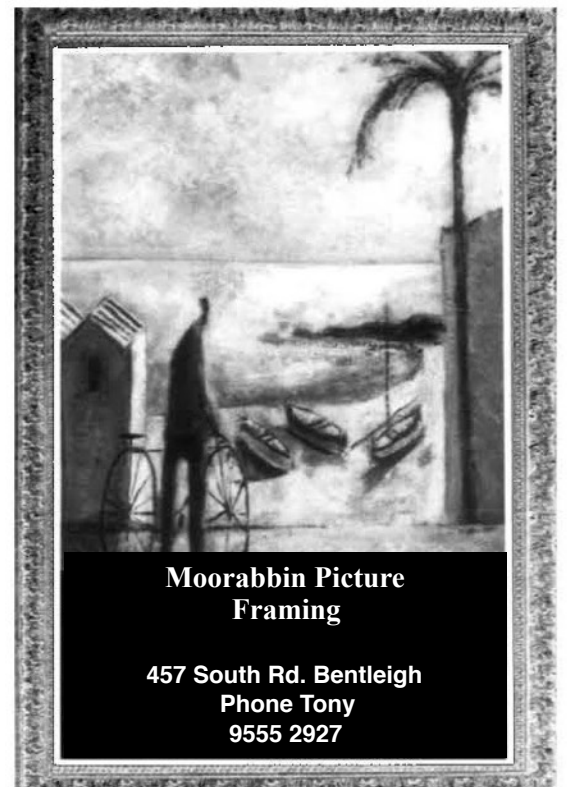
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BAS OFFICE 9553 8506

Dates to remember:

TERM TWO - Monday April 26th - Friday June 25th

SATURDAY PORTRAIT GROUP - every Saturday from 2-4pm.

THURSDAY PORTRAIT GROUP - every Thursday from 4-7pm

Both groups are untutored and hold a single pose for three weeks. Attendance is on a casual basis and the atmosphere is always relaxed and friendly.

brightonartsociety@icloud.co