

panorama



Official Newsletter of Brighton Art Society Inc.

Issue
343
February

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear BAS members,

The health and safety of our members, tutors and models, is of utmost importance to us. In light of the current concern with **Corona Virus**, it is essential, that if any of us are experiencing cold or flue like symptoms, we refrain from attending classes or sessions and seek medical advice prior to returning to the studio. There is plenty of information in the media about appropriate hygiene practices and steps to minimise the risk of transmission and we encourage you to follow these.



Our online enrolment system for BAS Tutored Classes, has now been in place for the past few terms. This is now also the system for payment of our **Annual Membership**. We understand that changes of this sort take time to adjust to and not having the old paper forms at hand, to remind us to renew our membership, makes it easier to overlook.

If you are attending a **Tutored Class** or **Untutored Group**, it is essential that your membership for 2020 has been paid. Our records show that quite a few of us have overlooked attending to this. All membership enrolment is via the Brighton Art Society website. The process is straightforward, but if you have any difficulty, or are not comfortable with using computers, please do not hesitate to speak to any of the Committee members, or phone the BAS office on 9553 8506 and we will assist you with the process. The financial viability of our group, depends on us all attending to the timely payment of our fees.

LYNTON DAEHLI

PORTRAITURE AND PHOTOGRAPHY

The National Portrait Gallery in Canberra, currently has on display two prizes for portraiture. The Darling Portrait Prize and the National Photographic Portrait Prize.

The Gallery itself is well worth a visit. It has a substantial permanent collection of Australian portraiture, dating from the colonial period through to the present. Mostly of paintings, but including some photographs or pictures in other media. As many of us at BAS are involved in portrait painting ourselves, the pleasures of seeing first hand, a collection of such breadth and high standard, should be taken advantage of.

2020 sees the inaugural staging of the Darling Portrait Prize. L Gordon Darling was a long time director of BHP, a significant Australian philanthropist and the founding patron of the National Portrait Gallery. When he died in 2015, his will specified the establishment of this generous annual prize.

I had been planning to revisit the Gallery for some time, but was prompted to make the trip on this occasion upon hearing that Bettina Fauvel-Ogden, who will be known to many of us through her past association with BAS and her winning of the Packing Room Prize at the 2016 Archibald Portrait Prize, was successful in being selected for inclusion in the current Darling Prize.

It was interesting on this visit, to see pictures assembled for a major prize in photographic portraiture, adjacent to those of a major prize for painting. In combination with visiting the permanent collection, which includes paintings from before the age of the camera, I found myself reflecting on the shifting role of photography in portraiture over time.

Prior to photography becoming more widely available in the later part of the C19th, portrait painting in many cases, occupied a similar documenting role. Preserving the image and likeness of those sufficiently wealthy to commission the capturing of themselves.

This first picture, is from the permanent collection of the NPG and is a modestly scaled painting of Jeremiah Ware esq, painted in 1854 by Robert Hunger Dowling. Ware was a Tasmanian landowner and is captured here in a characteristically formal pose and dress. The detail is fine and we can assume an accurate likeness has been achieved by a skilled realist painter.

From our contemporary vantage point, where photographs of ourselves, of those around us and of course all manner of public figures, are ubiquitous, it is a challenge to remind ourselves of how rare an image of oneself, such as this one, would have been for the person depicted. Of course there were elements of vanity and flattery in such depictions, but the role of documenting appearance, such as is now provided unrelentingly by the camera, gave portrait painting, a fundamentally different function from that which it came to have after the wide availability of cameras.

By the early decades of the C20th, once photography was available for documenting likeness, artists were freed to digress from realistic depiction, toward more imaginative and expressive representations of the sitter. Relatively traditional use of portraiture continued and still does, but the scope for adventure, both in representation and in use of mediums, expanded dramatically after the arrival of the camera.



JEREMIAH WARE by ROBERT HUNGER DOWLING

The collection of the NPG, is displayed essentially in a chronological sequence. If we move from the gallery containing the portraits such as that of Joshua Ware, painted prior to the availability of cameras, we come to the early C20th paintings of artists such as WB McInnes or William Dargie, both of whom were early recipients of the Archibald Prize. Although the work of these painters is unequivocally Realist in approach, there is little connection with photography. The images are distinctly made with paint and the technique of painting. And in most instances were done directly from sittings with the model.



GOUGH WHITLAM by CLIFTON PUGH

As we progress into the 1950s and beyond, further relaxation and imaginative expression opened up. The Whitlam portrait seen here, could not be described as “radical”, if we compare it for example, with some of the portraits painted by Picasso, as far back as the beginning of the C20th. But it is a rendition of its sitter which could only be achieved using the means available in painting. My contention is that it gains much in expressive power as a result of this.

Let’s take a closer look at this portrait of Gough Whitlam. It was painted in 1972 by the artist Clifton Pugh. We know instantly who is represented, but on examination, many liberties have been taken, which remove it far from anything we would associate with a photographic capturing. The space in which the figure sits is compressed and is treated in a playful decorative way. What we assume is a chair, is crudely described and serves more importantly, toward the design and compositional purposes of the artist. The lighter toned wall behind, has a collection of colourful markings, which we struggle to associate with anything identifiable.

Aside from the unmistakable face, detailed information is limited until we come to the sitter’s hands. For me, these are profoundly rich in expressive value and achieve something that no photograph of the same posture could approach.

Opinions of the Whitlam government, it’s achievements and failings, remain divergent, but there is clearly a reading, which says that it was a period of opening up in Australia, both practically and psychologically and in this portrait, Pugh has encapsulated this sentiment.

During this period and until well into the 1980s, photography was of minor relevance to portrait painting. The collection of the National Portrait Gallery attests to this in the Australian context. The release from the functional role of depicting likeness which had prevailed prior to the late C19th was celebrated and expanded upon by many painters.

In the time since the 1980s however, photography has pushed back into portraiture in a new and at times I would contend, disconcerting way. Those of us who are regular attendees of the Archibald Prize, will know that for many years now, it has always included amongst its pictures, several which are meticulously reproduced from photographs. Members of the audience may gasp at the striking detail, where each follicle and blemish on a face is carefully rendered. There is however, a perspective from which such paintings can be seen, as little beyond grandiose party tricks. Trinkets of “cleverness”.

The present double prize on display in Canberra, provides us with an interesting opportunity to take a closer look at the overlap between contemporary portrait painting and portrait photography.

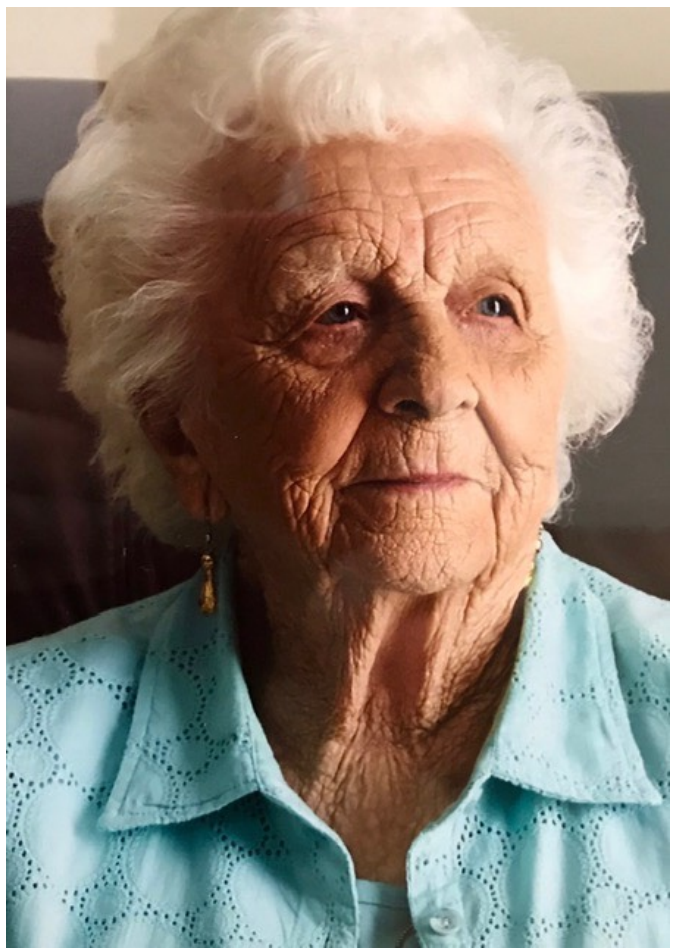
Whilst photography remains concerned with its own technical and expressive opportunities (and limitations), the improvements in cameras and printing technology have obviously made creative expression in this medium more flexible and more widely available. In the domain of painting by contrast, the camera has assertively pushed back into the practice and I would suggest, unsettled and deflected it from many of its greatest strengths.

The first image here, is a detail of a photograph by Chris Budgeon, titled: Phoebe Turned One Hundred. It is included in the current National Photographic Portrait Prize. The second image is a painting by David Darcy, entitled: Wendy Bowman and is included in the Darling Prize (for painting).

Although the Darcy painting was not the most conspicuous example in the current show, of a painting where one may question what is added by the painstaking process of copying a photograph, that may not have been achieved by the original photograph itself, perhaps with a few post production manipulations, for me the question is valid.

A visit to the National Portrait Gallery, Canberra in the next couple of months, will offer each of us the opportunity to engage in our own reflections on these considerations and I would thoroughly encourage it.

LYNTON DAEHLI



*PHOEBE TURNS ONE HUNDRED by
CHRIS BUDGEON*



WENDY BOWMAN by DAVID DARCY

Richard is a longtime BAS member and although he is presently based in Sydney, he is a great asset to us all as he takes responsibility for management and updating of the BAS website.

Richard's own work utilises computer in its production and as most of us now have access to tablets and iPads, it is valuable to look at the opportunities these provide for picture making.



My dog Jazz. A2 in size and produced using Procreate.

Procreate

Procreate is an app for digital painting for iPad and iPhones. Designed in response to the artistic possibilities of the iPad, and catering to artists from beginners to professionals.

I use it to sketch, plan ideas for my paintings and prints and to produce finished artwork.

To use Procreate, you don't necessarily need an Apple Pencil (Stylus), or any external hardware. To begin with, you can just as easily create artwork using touch, though I would highly recommend a stylus for enhanced precision.

Save your digital work on the iPad and back it up to your iCloud.

Your finished artwork can be published on Instagram, printed at home or professionally, used to make online greeting cards and template designs for your lino cut, etchings, photopolymer and other types of prints.

Normally, the full version costs about \$10 to download from the Apple store and it is updated for free.

Platforms: iPad Pro (all versions), iPad Air (all versions), iPad mini (2-5), iPad, iPhone

Version 5.0.2 was released February 14, 2020

Operating system: iOS, iPadOS

Richard Impey

Instagram @richardimpeyartist

REGINA HONA

PASTEL SEASCAPE

DEMONSTRATION

CANCELLED

SUNDAY MARCH 29, 2.00 – 4.00

Brighton Art Society, Wilson St. Brighton

BOOKINGS: ROD 0488344889

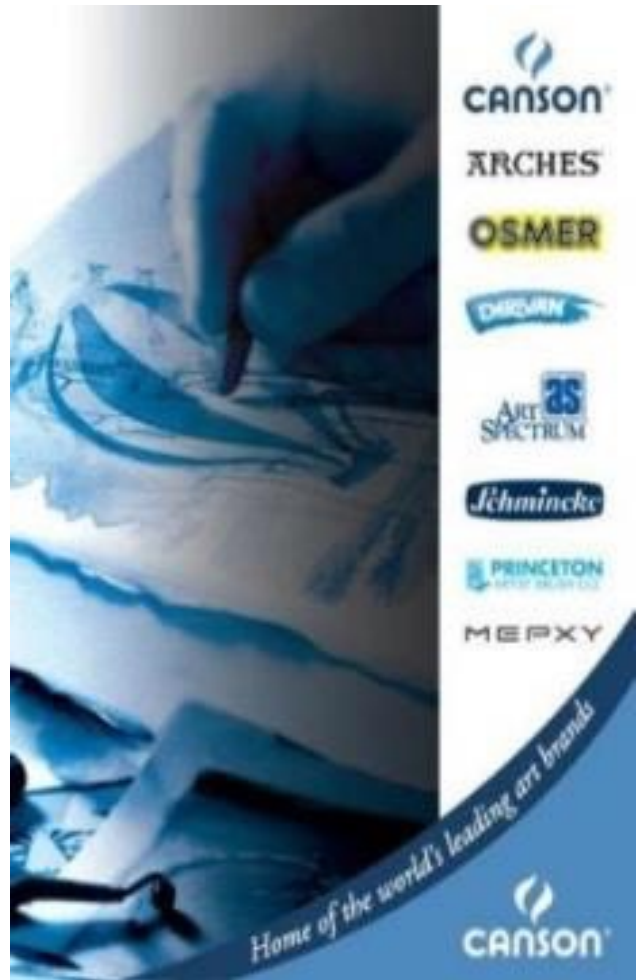


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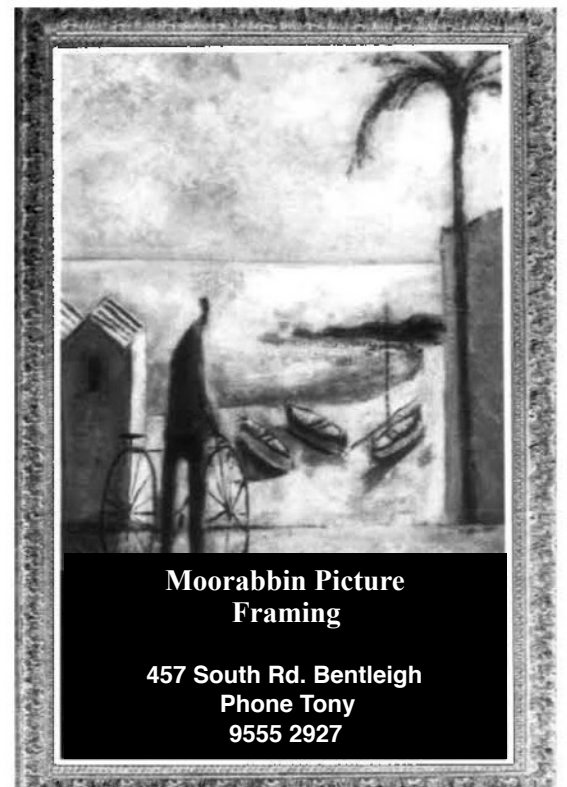
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COMMITTEE	Charly Knezic
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Dates to remember:

April 3

Last day of Term 1

April 20 - June 19

Term 2 BAS Tutored Classes

March 29 - 2pm Sunday

Demonstration by
Regina Hona

Every Saturday Afternoon 2-4pm

Untutored Portrait Group
New members welcome

brightonartsociety@icloud.com