

panorama



Official Newsletter of Brighton Art Society Inc.

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May

FROM THE PRESIDENT

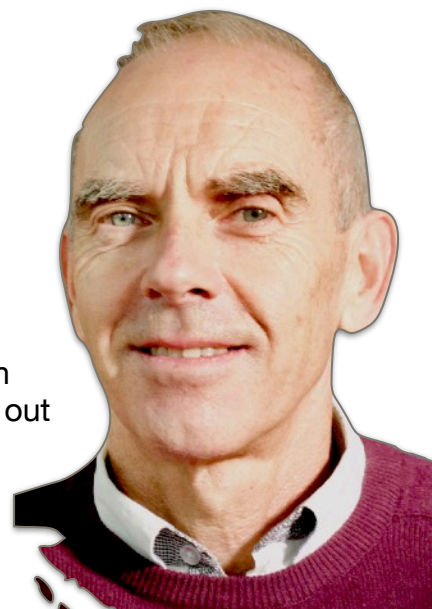
Dear BAS members,

Although the “flattening of the curve” has occurred more rapidly in Australia than was at first anticipated, it is coming to feel a drawn out interruption to normal life. I for one, certainly feel the absence of the painting sessions I would otherwise be participating in at BAS.

Some positive signs of a gradual return to normalcy are emerging with the release this past week, of the government outline for a staged relaxation of lockdown conditions. We will follow the unfolding of those directives and look forward to a time at which we will be able to resume our BAS activities.

Our dedicated long term member Rod Edelsten, has for several years now, run a series of untutored sessions, during the summer break in January, offering figure and/or portrait sittings for those keen to get their paints and brushes out during the recess. In recent years, all available places have been snapped up soon after the dates were announced and with a wry smile, Rod has commented on what this shows of how bereft our artists feel when activities at the studio are suspended. The current situation is of another degree altogether, so it is certain that many of us feel deprived indeed.

In the interim, I hope that we can all find alternative avenues to keep our art practice and engagement alive. Stay well!



LYNTON DAEHLI

BAYING AT THE MOON

David Davies was born in Ballarat in 1864. He studied painting, initially at the Ballarat School of Mines and later at the National Gallery School Melbourne under Fredrick Mc Cubbin. In the late 1880s, he painted en plein aire, with Arthur Streeton, Charles Condor and Walter Withers in the area around Eaglemont, contributing to what later became known as the Heidelberg School of Australian impressionist painting .

In 1893, after returning from a period of study in Europe, he settled in Templestowe, where he lived for the following three years. During this period, many beautiful paintings emerged from his engagement with the local landscape, which at that time was totally rural in character.



David Davies - Moonrise 1894

Davies developed a distinct affection for the softened light of late afternoon and early evening and amongst his pictures capturing this twilight landscape is “Moonrise”, painted at Templestowe in 1894. The work was purchased by the NGV the following year, where it remains on display at Federation Square.

Graceful restraint is displayed in this picture’s composition and deserves our consideration. The elevated horizon, above which the full moon has only recently risen, is not disturbed at all, until we arrive at its right hand extremity. Here the delicate silhouette of a few distant trees rests. Beneath these, sits a darker-toned valley, contained by an elegant arabesque contour which falls away from the horizontal, just below where the moon hovers.

Many of us will at some stage, have encountered the “Rule of Thirds” as it applies to composition in painting. This convention suggests that balance is achieved when the horizon line in a landscape is placed at a third from either the top or bottom of the picture. In this case, Davies has placed the horizon at closer to a quarter from the top of the format. What he achieves by this, is to give the land mass greater visual weight and presence and to place us as the viewer, further down the hillside. Leaving it still to be conquered in our evening stroll.

The remaining elements of subject matter in the picture are few. The suggestion of a roughly formed sandy path emerges from the picture’s lower centre, its lighter tone/colour balanced by a few clumps of darker gorse to the left of the path. The restraint in subject matter, affirms the restraint in the picture’s tonal range.

In some ways this is the inevitable result of capturing the landscape at this time of day. Less light falls on it and we must pay much closer attention to the painting in order to discern the subject being offered to us. It does however, have powerful poetic charm.



JMW Turner - Moonlight, a Study at Millbank 1797

JMW Turner's career as a painter, transpired almost a century prior to that of David Davies and his work drew on very different landscape sources for its inspiration. Turner became perhaps the preeminent British painter of his generation. His output was vast, as was the breadth of his approaches. He did however, always display a profound fascination with light and atmosphere in his paintings and his later works are often sighted as precursors, to aspects of the European Impressionism to come.

"Moonlight, a Study at Millbank", was painted relatively early in Turner's career in 1797, when he was a youthful twenty-two years old. There are many avenues from which we could approach our consideration of this painting, but on this occasion, the centrality of moonlight and the seductions this restrained light can offer a painter, should be our concern,

Millbank is an area located on the Thames River in central London. It would of course have had a different appearance at the close of the C18th when Turner captured it, from that which we see today. The ingredients of boats, water and reflections, can of course still be found, but the illumination of the modern city, would never allow us the sonorous darkness that Turner offers.

By his mid teens, Turner was an accomplished watercolorist and the influence of this can be seen once he moves to oil painting. He develops his paintings by building up thin transparent layers of colour. In oil painting technique, this is called "glazing" and he was a master of the technique. It gives the finished surface a lustre and complexity that cannot be achieved by the direct application of an equivalent tone/colour.

Although the experience is never fully comparable to seeing the original work, the subtleties of this layering, can be observed, even in a decent quality reproduction. If you are reading this article online, you will be able to zoom in on an area, for example, that of the moon and its surrounds and see how the aura of golden wash that encircles it, sits thinly on the general dark mauve wash that characterises this lower part of the sky.

The intensity achieved in the white disc of the moon is remarkable and it is so because there is almost nothing else in the entire picture surface which competes with its high-key tone. The water with its few reflected ripples in the centre of the picture and the lower reaches of the sky, struggle hesitantly to emerge from a treacherous gloom, but the schematic drama of the picture, is of this single pinpoint of the moon's light, surrounded by darkness.

At a leisurely pace, we can proceed to explore the many details that loom within this quiet darkness. The pitch black of the boat and its mast to the right, or the trees and small promontories of land and their fisherfolk(?) to the left. Moving deeper into the picture-space toward the horizon and the suggestions of cityscape evoked there, we can again see the use of transparent glazes. A deep carmine is flushed over a greyish blue. The detail of buildings is generalised, but we understand perfectly what is being suggested.



Rick
Amor -
River
and Sea
2006

The contemporary Melbourne based painter, Rick Amor, is another master in utilising the expressive power of dark tonality in painting. There are various of his paintings which include a depiction of the moon. However, on this occasion I will take the liberty of reflecting on a painting in which, whilst we might easily imagine the moon illuminating or looming behind the brightened high passage of cloud, we do not actually catch sight of it. A powerful expression, is nonetheless achieved by the artist in this sombre image.

Although he would be described as a representational painter, most of Rick Amor's major paintings are constructed from re-assembled elements which often have their origins in his imagination and memory, rather than from direct observation. He grew up in the 1950s near Long Island, Frankston, not far from Port Phillip Bay and has commented on how influenced he was by the stormy skies which could spring up at short notice over the bay. The presence of these is common in his many more recognisable paintings of Frankston and its surrounds.

There is much to be learnt from the restraint and compositional simplicity of this picture. Most of the canvas surface, is given over to depicting the sky. The mood is brooding, perhaps apocalyptic, although the tiny yacht depicted on *calm* water in the lower left might contradict this. The role of the yacht is perhaps more important for the sense of scale it provides, giving the sky far greater majesty when seen in relation to it.

In two-thirds of the picture's surface: the dark acidic blue areas of sky, very little happens. If we look carefully, we can observe some articulation of the black cloud's churning. However, this extensive expanse of relatively still darkness, serves mainly to increase by contrast, the intensity of the picture's active areas: the landscape at its base and the lightened passage of cloud toward the top. All of this richness, is achieved within a strictly limited tonal range and of a much darker key than most of us would be game to take on.

There are many images of Rick Amor's work which can be seen online and he continues to exhibit regularly at Niagara Galleries in Punt Rd. as he has for several decades. Among contemporary painters, he stands out as a highly polished craftsman. His images are rich and thought provoking and I would recommend seeking them out.

LYNTON DAEHLI

R.I.P. - BRIAN CAPON

Those who were involved with Brighton Art Society in the early days will remember Brian, who painted with us in his preferred mediums of watercolour and oils.

Brian was a talented artist and an active member of our Society, exhibiting regularly in the 1990s

We are sad to report his passing and extend our condolences to his family.



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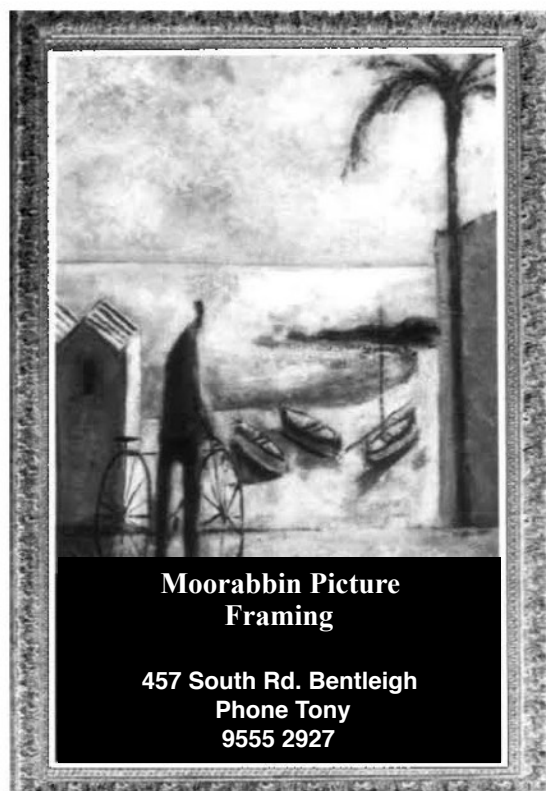
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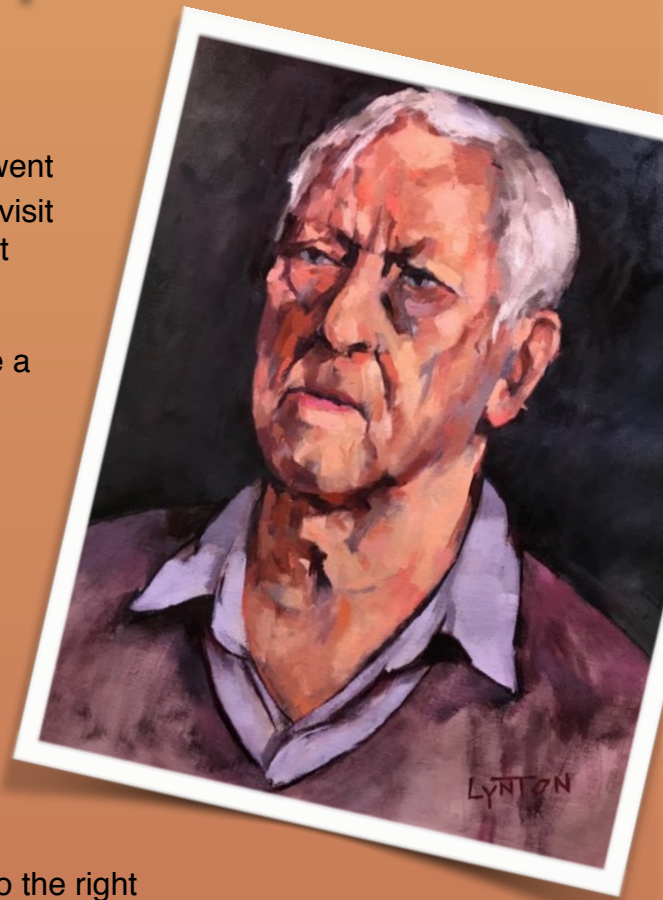
DOCUMENTING OUR TRAVELS IN WORDS AND PICTURES - Ep.2

Despite the rumblings of disquiet my planned visit to Paris went ahead in the middle of March. It gave me an opportunity to revisit places of interest and include my impressions in this my latest travelogue.

So, just how do you put words and pictures together to create a lasting impression. Let me explain by describing my thought process as I developed these latest pages of "Log 14".

Armed with my sketching kit, I descended on the Centre Pompidou. As you probably all know, it houses an amazing collection of modern art. Apart from the sheer pleasure of browsing the works, I found my way to the restaurants on the top floor. From here there are wonderful panoramic views of the city skyline, so bolstered by a glass of vino, I captured the magnificent Sacre-Coeur to the North. I later moved to the coffee house just around the corner to view in the West, the rather grand Tour Eiffel.

Bolstered by another glass of the red, I added the new vista to the right hand page and the two impressions appeared to be connected as one. I made no attempt to separate the two, leaving it to a later time when a most enlightened viewer might feel obliged to question the panorama

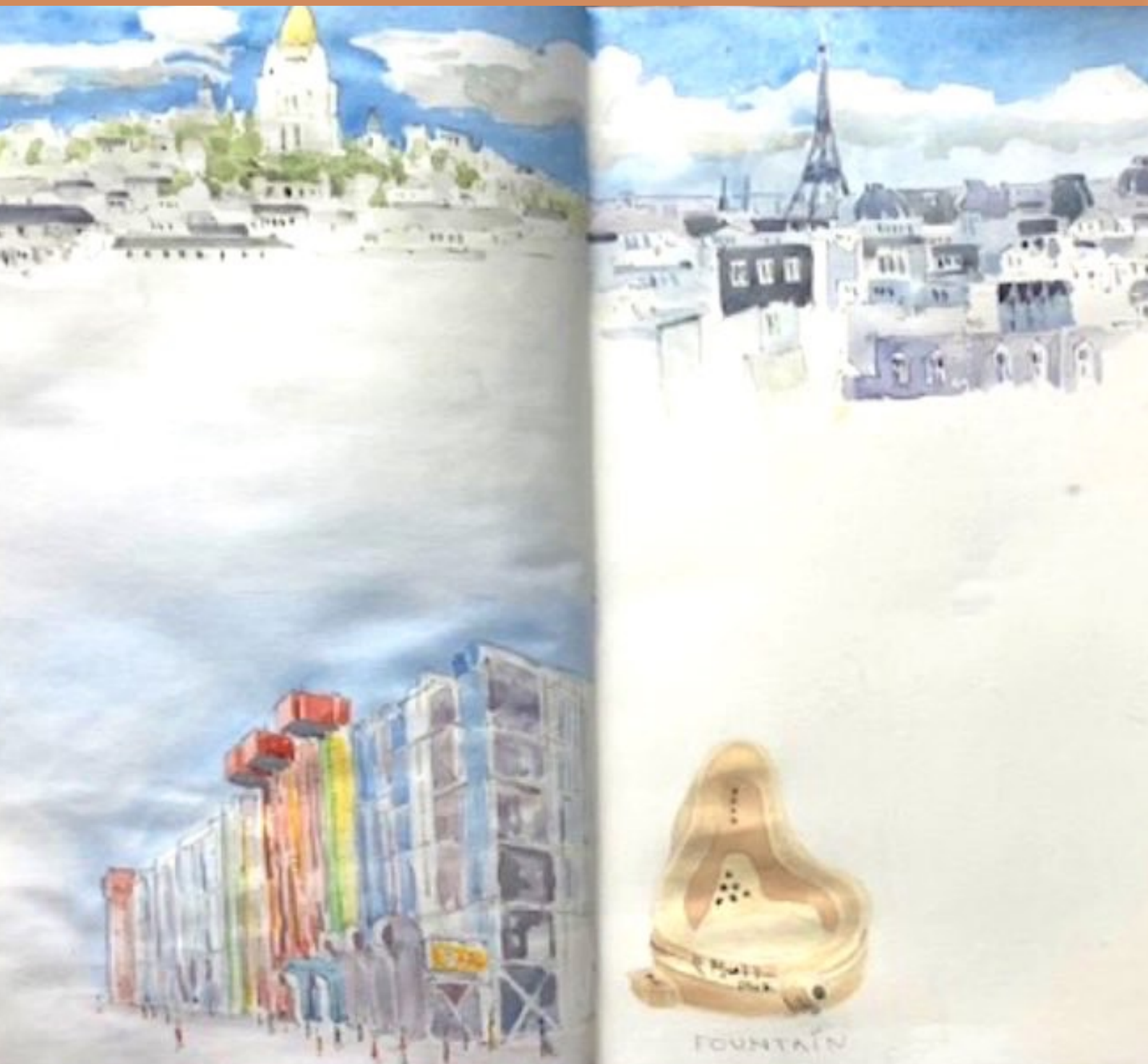


Volumes have been written about the controversial design and construction of the Pompidou Centre. It's an inside-out building with its structural system, mechanical systems and circulation exposed on the exterior of the building. Initially all of the functional structural elements of the building were colour coded: green pipes for plumbing, blue ducts are for climate control, electrical wires are encased in yellow and devices for safety are red.

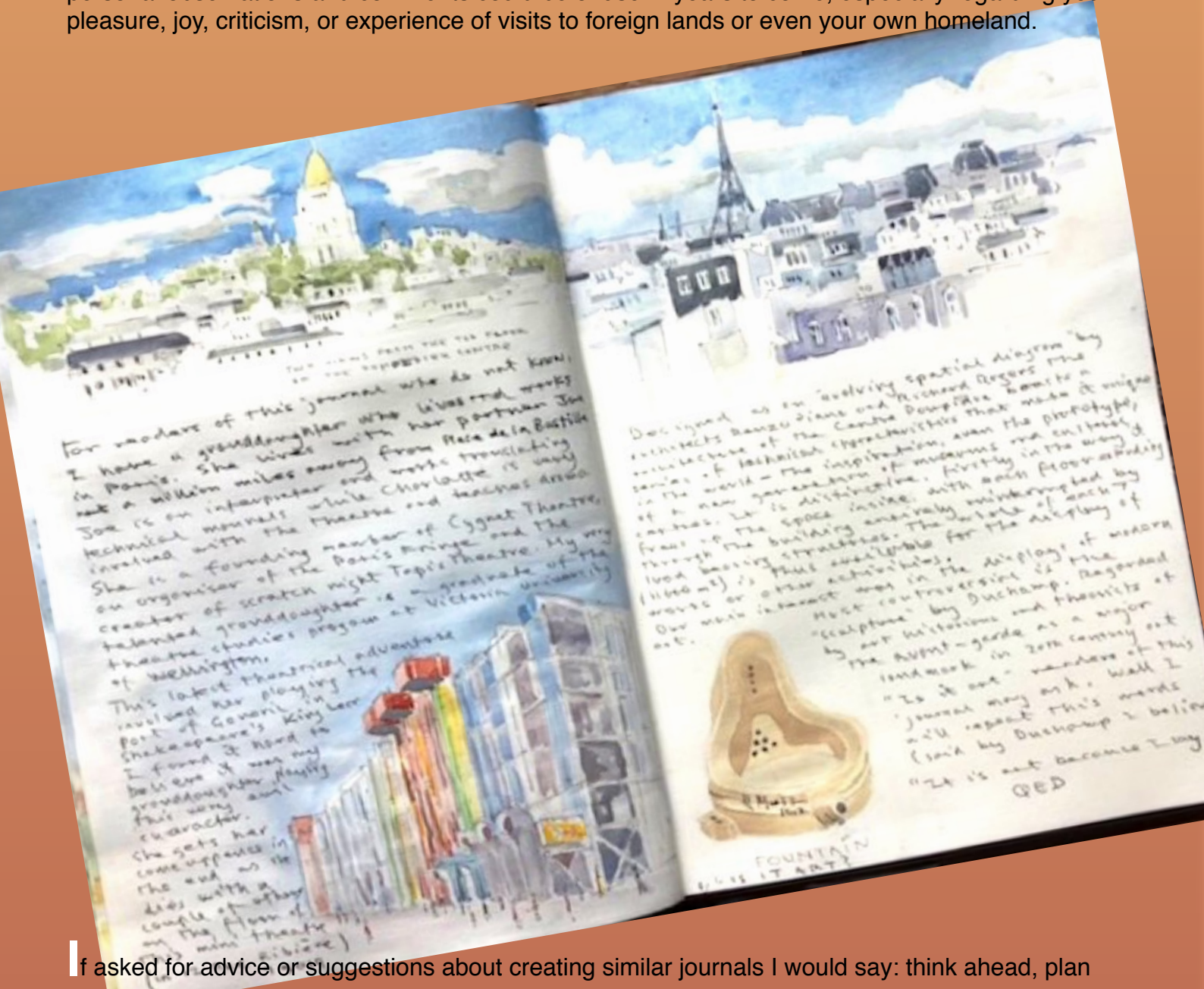
I wanted to illustrate the overall impression as carefully as possible and I knew a freehand drawing executed while standing, (a result of the full car park) was fraught with danger. A bad drawing would ruin the page so I captured the impression with my iPad. This image was transferred to my book later in the day at my hotel, while the buzz was still with me.



So far so good but the pages looked somewhat lopsided (and I like balance). The museum contains many items that were very controversial in their time. Some still are and I wanted to reflect that. So, I retrieved a picture postcard of Marcel Duchamp's Urinal and used that as a reference to add an illustration to the second page. It achieved the desired objective of creating compositional balance. As a final touch, the entry ticket to the museum was taped to cover the signed piece of porcelain, but able to be swung open to reveal the "sculpture".



The commentary forms part of the overall impression of the finished entry. It can add or detract from the readers interest or enjoyment. I use words to convey pleasure, interest, criticism and information. Bearing in mind that possibly your volumes will be read by future generations, making personal observations and comments could be of use in years to come, especially regarding your pleasure, joy, criticism, or experience of visits to foreign lands or even your own homeland.



If asked for advice or suggestions about creating similar journals I would say: think ahead, plan carefully and vary your approach to ensure the entries are fresh, informative and interesting as each page is turned. You need the images to appear crisp and clean so watercolour is the medium to use. Remember to acknowledge any quotes used and state the sources of information. My journals have been bequeathed to my grandchildren, I would like to think that yours may follow a similar future.

If there is sufficient interest, I would be pleased to make myself available for a day in our studios to discuss more about my particular passion for travel books. I could make available my volumes and could invite members to present their own versions of the genre. Presently I am marooned back in the old country (due to circumstances beyond my control) but do intend getting back home before the end of the year.

Spring has sprung in England and Autumn is due Down Under. There is no time like the present to get started on your own versions of travel logs. I would love to learn about your progress and if required give suggestions, advice and guidance.

KNOW YOUR ART

The Renaissance

The Renaissance: philosophy, painting, worldview

The Renaissance is the period that began around the 14th century and ended at the late 16th century, traditionally associated primarily with the Italian region. The ideas and images of the Renaissance largely determined the aesthetic ideals of modern man, his sense of harmony, measure and beauty.



The term *rinascita* (it. revival) was introduced by Giorgio Vasari, who contrasted the new art that revived the ancient culture, and the "dark Middle Ages". By the way, Renaissance figures also called the Middle Ages "dark", thus have they permanently eternized their negative attitude to the Middle Ages. If they only knew that today the search query "the art of the Middle Ages" in search engines returns Renaissance paintings in about 70% of links, then they would certainly get outraged.

The Renaissance era is historically most often attributed to the late Middle Ages, considering this period a "bridge" to the New Age. Nevertheless, the Renaissance worldview is much closer to the New Age and it is the quattrocento that forms the aesthetic canons of modern man, which are firmly entrenched in our minds. To be honest, the aesthetic revolutions of the 20th century never overshadowed or supplanted the Renaissance revolution.



The head of the angel
Raphael Sanzio

Renaissance Chronology:

the Proto-Renaissance (2nd half of the 13th — 14th century)
the Early Renaissance (early 14th — 1st of the 15th century)
the High Renaissance (15th — the first third of the 16th century)
the Late Renaissance (mid-16th century — the 1590s)

The main features of the era:

— addressing to the ancient heritage: the art and philosophy of ancient Greece and Rome. In the Middle Ages, the scholasticism addressed to the works of Aristotle, whereas the Renaissance praises Plato and Neoplatonism;

— the Renaissance is the time of transition from an artist-craftsman to an artist-creator, from an unnamed artist to an author. Man becomes like a god, he is the creator on earth, he is the highest being created by the Almighty. The uniqueness of the human person is appreciated. This feature is called anthropocentrism (gr. ἄνθρωπος "man");

— the Renaissance focuses not on theology, but on art and philosophy. The predominance of secular over religious. The Renaissance man is a universally educated person, hence the Renaissance humanism. It's not your origin that is important now, but how talented you are. Therefore, many Renaissance figures were far from noble families.

More about renaissance visit Arthive:

https://arthive.com/encyclopedia/4241~The_Renaissance

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