

panorama



Official Newsletter of Brighton Art Society Inc.

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FROM THE PRESIDENT



Dear BAS Members,

The construction of our new office space within the studio, has commenced after a long process of negotiation, which followed the loss of our previous office space during the Lease renewal. Although it is not ideal to sacrifice the floor space, it shouldn't disrupt our use of the studio in any significant way, particularly now that the Annual Exhibition will be held downstairs in the Town Hall.

The Committee has continued to work solidly, during the present suspension of classes, on the various tasks before it. We are edging closer to having our new website up and running, with many thanks due to the efforts of member Charmaine Cachia. There have been hurdles, but they are progressively being overcome and we hope to have it active soon.

The preparations for the Annual Exhibition, which stretch across the year are proceeding and we certainly hope that the present COVID regulations and health concerns, won't remain a restraint come November.

We are exploring the options for a resumption of classes and activities at the studio. It is however, a complex and challenging situation and we need to be able to take proper account of the health and wellbeing of all involved. Tutors, members and models alike. We are canvassing a resumption in Term three, but this may be partial or not yet possible. We will however, keep you informed as the situation becomes clearer.

I hope you are all keeping well and have been able to pursue some enjoyable art activities despite the absence of the regular classes or sessions at BAS you might normally participate in.

LYNTON DAEHLI

Richard Impey's first item on the digital app: Procreate, was included in the March edition of Panorama.

Richard follows up here by drawing our attention to the potential offered by the use of Layers in this application. These allow us to separate parts of our digital artwork onto separate "layers" and offer a range of valuable practical and creative possibilities.

Procreate 2 Layers

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.

In this second article, I'm discussing the use of layers in Procreate.

Working with layers is an excellent and easy way to plan and test your ideas for a future artwork whether it be a painting, drawing or print. You can test and create your colour scheme, define your shapes, and arrange the compositional layout of your future masterpiece.

Layers are like sheets of glass. You can see through them to the layers below. You can paint a background on the bottom layer and then other things on the layers above. Each object painted on a layer can overlap and obscure the object below. Layers are easy to add or delete. They can be hidden, and their order can also be changed.

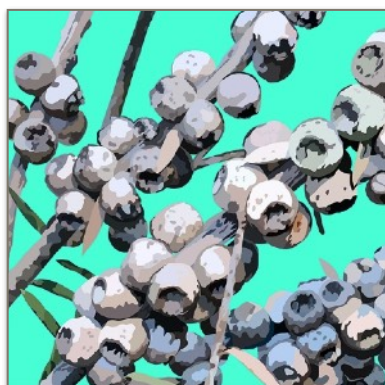
By painting on different layers, you can separate the objects in your image. This means if you want to change something like the background layer, then it is easy to do and won't affect the other layers. Layers can also be duplicated which allows you to make some test changes to a copy without destroying the original layer.

Another handy feature of layers is that you can change their opacity or transparency so as to be able to partially see through the objects on one layer to those below.

The maximum layers in Procreate are dynamically determined based on canvas size. The larger your canvas, the fewer layers you'll have to work with. This is to ensure a high level of performance, no matter what canvas dimensions you're working with. Currently, A2 is the largest size I can create in Procreate. With an A2 sized document I can only have eleven layers. This can be very tight when working with a complex artwork. An A4 document, I can have fifty-seven layers.

See below my iPad painting of Tea-Tree seed pods each image displaying different visible layers.

Richard Impey (Instagram @richardimpeyartist)



LITTLE GEMS

On the 17th of August 1889, Buxtons Rooms in Swanston Street Melbourne, a Retail Stationer with a gallery space on the first floor, saw the opening of an influential art exhibition entitled: The 9 by 5 Impression Exhibition.



Charles Conder, *Catalogue of the 9 by 5 Impression Exhibition*, 1889

The wealth that Australia had obtained by that time, in particular in Victoria as a result of the Gold Rush, had spurred a growth of interest in the arts amongst the wider public. The exhibition itself, was a carefully planned, marketed and presented display. 183 pictures, were complemented by elegant floral arrangements and carefully placed sumptuous fabrics and furnishings.

The 9 by 5 of the title, refers to the size of the majority of paintings, which measured nine by five inches. This is the approximate equivalent of 23 x 13 cm, so they were indeed modest in scale. The petite size, was determined by the fact that most were painted on the wooden lids of cigar boxes. At the time, cigars were commonly packed in boxes made from cedar wood, which though quite soft, is highly durable and rot resistant and at its best, has a lovely warm reddish colour and lustrous sheen. On closer examination, it can be seen, that many of the pictures were painted directly onto the wood surface, allowing its colour and lustre to become part of the finished painting. The artists were able to obtain these panels from accommodating tobacconists at little cost and they provided a good serviceable support, particularly for use in outdoor painting.

Tom Roberts, now one of Australia's most revered painters of the C19th, was the prime driver behind the exhibition, along with his colleagues Arthur Streeton and Charles Conder and the work of these three artists formed the bulk of the works on display.



TOM ROBERTS - 1889 - ACROSS THE DANDENONGS - 13.7 x 23.1 cm - NGV

Roberts was born in the UK, although he migrated to Australia with his family in 1869 at the age of 13. He subsequently studied at the National Gallery School. Following that, with the encouragement of his teachers, he returned to Europe in 1881, where he remained for the next four years, studying at the Royal Academy in London and having the opportunity to travel and experience first hand, contemporary trends in European painting. We should remember, that the first "Impressionist Exhibition" had been held in Paris, not so long before in 1874 and the acceptance and appreciation of this approach, was becoming widespread by the time Roberts was in Europe.

Roberts returned to Australia in 1885 and was keen to pass on this newfound approach in painting. The first "artists camp" was established at Box Hill in 1886 where Roberts was joined by Streeton and Conder amongst others. This group subsequently reformed in Eaglemont and became the basis of the famous Heidelberg School of Australian painting. Temporary camps were also conducted at Mentone and the painting of the surrounding Bayside suburbs forms an important part of this group's output.

The emphasis was firmly on the distinctive character of Australian subjects, landscape and light and accorded with the growth of nationalist sentiments more generally at that time. Painting directly outdoors, or en plein air as the French referred to it, was an important component of the Impressionist tradition. Capturing transitory effects of light and atmosphere and a sense of immediacy of engagement between the artist and his or her subject matter was central. Outdoor sketching had been popular since the C18th, but at that time, it was used primarily as a basis for more

considered studio produced works. With the arrival of Impressionism, works produced en plein air, could themselves legitimately become the final artistic expression.

There is something satisfying about the coincidence of practical convenience and artistic expression. The fact that the 9x5 cigar box lids were available at a time when the artists perhaps could not readily afford canvases and that the compact size was well suited to a swift capturing of what were often transitory effects, reinforces the old adage connecting necessity and invention.

It should be noted, that the introduction of artists paints in metal tubes, only dates from 1841. Prior to this, oil paint had been packed in pigs bladders or was ground from pigments and oil by the artists themselves in the studio. The availability of such compact and portable paint in tubes from the mid C19th on, was in itself an important facilitator of the growth of en plain air painting practice from that time.



THE VIOLIN LESSON - IN ITS ORIGINAL FRAME

Many of the paintings in the 9by5 Exhibition, were in frames similar to this one. Each cut from a single piece of American Redwood and believed to have been made by the artists themselves.

Some of the frames have surface decoration or painting and many, like this one, locate the painting off-centre.



CHARLES CONDER-
1888 - HERRICKS
BLOSSOM - 13.1 x 24 cm
- NGA

CURLEW CAMP

Sirius Cove on the north shore of Sydney Harbour, became the site of another artists camp during the 1890s. Both Roberts and Streeton spent time here during that decade and some exquisite paintings resulted. Again, there was a happy meeting of available materials and artistic expression.

Many of the works, particularly by Streeton, are painted on what were referred to as “drapers boards”. These were wooden panels, also commonly of cedar, which were used for the winding up of lengths of fabric for storage or display. Whilst of larger dimensions than the wooden cigar box lids, they are characteristically of very long and narrow proportions. Measurements such as 17x70cm for example, were not uncommon. These proportions were well suited to such as seascapes, where horizontality can add powerful expression, but Streeton also at times used them vertically to great effect as can be seen in the picture titled “Sirius Cove” illustrated here.



ARTHUR STREETON - 1895 - SIRIUS COVE - 68.8 x 16.8 cm - NGA

Streeton used this slender “drapers board” vertically to great effect. It captures just the stacked tips of land, jutting into the water.



ARTHUR STREETON - 1892 - CIRCULAR QUAY - 19.3 x 47.6 cm - AGNSW



ARTHUR STREETON - 1926 - GUM TREE, PALM BEACH - 22.5 x 71.2 - NGA

This painting set on the coast north of Sydney, is from later in Streeton’s career. Its detailed capturing of the splendid eucalypt which dominates the compact format, is enhanced by the cropping selected to accommodate it to the small height of this panel.

ARTHUR STREETON - 1895 - AT COOGEE - 9.6 x 54.6 cm - NGV

A Sydney beach, but on display in Melbourne. One of my favourites at the NGV. The picture’s height is barely more than a hand width, but it shows a superb capturing of the sea as it meets the land.



The NGV has a good collection of 9x5 paintings and a selected group is usually on display at the Federation Square venue. I was pleased to hear recently that the Gallery will reopen on June 27, so we will again have the opportunity to take advantage of this fine institution.

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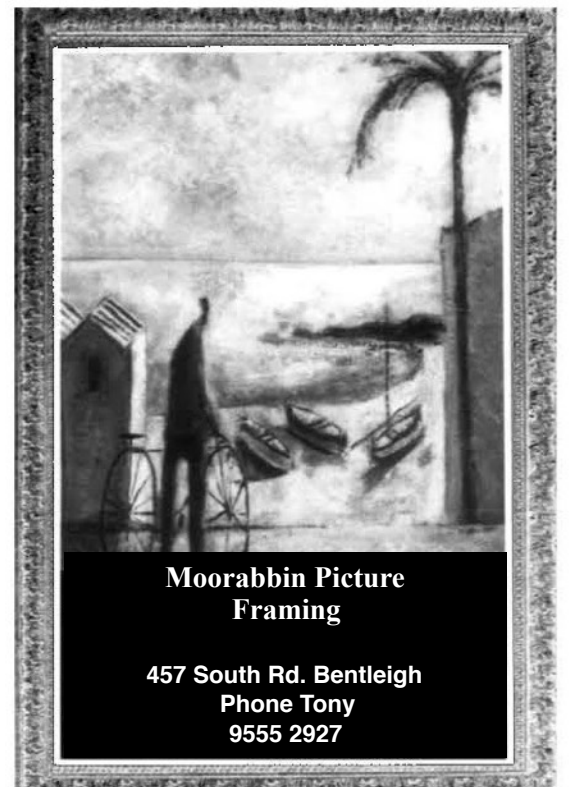
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