

# panorama



Official Newsletter of Brighton Art Society Inc.

Issue  
361  
November

## FROM THE PRESIDENT

*Dear BAS members,*

This will be the last Panorama for 2021. It has been another difficult year, but the Committee is presently working on plans for 2022, which we hope will go more smoothly and allow us to return to activities at the studio.

We plan to commence Term One Classes on the week of Monday February 7th. The Bayside Council has stipulated that all people entering the Town Hall building are required to be fully vaccinated against Covid19 and to show their certification, so this will be a condition of enrolment and attendance at classes or sessions.

On other matters, our tutor, Michelle Zuccolo, currently has a major exhibition of her work on display at the BACC Gallery, downstairs from the studio. There is further detail inside this edition. We encourage you all to visit the Town Hall and enjoy it.

Some of us will already have noticed that our long term sponsor Moorabbin Picture Framing has moved. They are now called BENFORD CUSTOM FRAMING and have moved to new premises at 239 East Boundary Rd Bentleigh East. The business has been a good supporter of BAS over many years, so I encourage you to continue supporting them at their new location.

The BAS Annual General Meeting this year, will be held at the studio on Sunday 12th December at 1pm. All are welcome and encouraged to attend.

We wish everyone well for the holiday season and new year.

**LYNTON DAEHLI**

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# ARCHIE 100

## *Celebrating the centenary of the Archibald Prize at Geelong*

**E**arlier this year, the ABC screened a program titled “Finding the Archibald” which many of us may have seen. It was presented by the actor Rachel Griffiths, who across the three episodes, endeavoured to select a favourite from amongst the many pictures entered in this esteemed portrait prize since its inception. Not surprisingly, this proved a challenge, given her expressed goal to: “hunt through a hundred years of Archibald history, to find one portrait that captures the changing face of the nation”. By the program’s conclusion, she had narrowed her selection down to three paintings and left it at that. Along the way, we got to see and hear discussed, a broad selection of portraits that had been included over the years, some familiar and some less so.

In the course of the program, we were also made aware of a project being concurrently pursued by the Art Gallery of New South Wales, to prepare an exhibition celebrating the centenary of the prize, by selecting one hundred paintings for display, from amongst the many hundreds included since 1921. This exhibition was first shown at the AGNSW and has now travelled to the Art Gallery of Geelong, for its Victorian display. It will remain open until 20th of February 2022.

A few days ago, I ventured to Geelong, to see what was on offer and certainly found the trip worthwhile. The exhibition is extensive and includes ninety-five of the one hundred paintings displayed in Sydney.

In many ways, it was more rewarding than the average Archibald selection, as the curators had the opportunity to sieve through a hundred years of finalist entries when making their choice. Included were many pictures which had been winners in their relevant years, but there were also many which had been selected and hung, but over time, have slipped from focus, perhaps held in private collections, or stowed away in the artists’ studios.

Another particular strength of the exhibition, is the way in which it documents stylistic changes in painting across the past century, in this case as they may apply to portraiture. Rarely does one have any doubts about which approximate era any given painting is likely to stem from. In the first couple of decades of the prize, tastes and approaches were conservative and traditional, with much sombre brown tonalism evident. The controversies surrounding the choice of winners by the mid C20th, attest to changing tastes and priorities in art, which were belatedly seeping through to the gallery trustees.

I will select a few of the works I enjoyed for more detailed comment. Again however, I would stress the value of seeing the actual works. No reproduction, even one of the highest fidelity, offers a substitute for what can be gleaned from an actual picture. There is joy and insight to be gained in seeing at close hand, the brush-marks as the artist has laid them down.



**WB Mc Innes** was the inaugural recipient of the Prize in 1921 and went on to win it on multiple occasions in the early years. His work falls firmly into the category of “traditional”. However, this portrait of young society woman Miss Neville Collins, which received the award in 1924, is certainly a deserving recipient. It is sumptuous and totally assured in its composition and paint handling.

The palette is restrained and fits within the brown key, preferred of tonal realists. The distribution of lights and darks across the surface is however, superbly controlled. The vertical splitting of the backdrop into a dark and a mid-tone is shrewd. The darker tone behind the sitter’s head, can be followed down through the jacket, as exposed beneath fur and onto the shadow beneath the sitter’s right forearm. This dark provides a perfect foil for the picture’s lightest tones, centring on the hands, chest and to a lesser extent the face.

The underlying rhythms of the composition are entrancing. Our eye can sweep downward on the curve of the hat's brim, over the shoulders of the fur coat and continue round until we bounce to a rest at the awkwardly positioned hands. Of course, they are totally assured in their rendering. Other counter rhythms are established as the coat lapels and its inner lining, slice through at an incline beneath the hands. I would draw attention to the simple diffuse brush marks with which the lush fur coat is assuredly captured.

**William Dargie's** 1956 Archibald winning portrait of Albert Namatjira, as well as being in the current show at Geelong, was included in the final selection of Rachel Griffiths television series. It is largely conventional in its approach, however the economy and assuredness of its technique, combined with its powerful expressive value is breathtaking. Close viewing reveals the most simplified of marks are used to capture the sitter (e.g. note the definition of the shirt collar). Even Namatjira's face, which sustains complex sentiment and is more detailed, is in no way laboured in its painting. Great skill in both drawing and observation is displayed here by Dargie.



This portrait of the environmental activist and former politician, Bob Brown was included in the 1993 Archibald. Brown was central to the campaign in the early 1980s to prevent the damming of Tasmania's Franklin River and the painting combines reference to landscape, depicting a dramatic, precipitous river gorge, plunging behind the rather monumental capturing of the sitter. It is of its time, with its heavy impasto evoking German neo-expressionists of that era such as Anselm Kiefer. Also the sense in which it is telling a story and offering psychological insights, rather than just capturing the sitter gives it distinction.



Self Portrait as Sarah Wisse by **Margaret Woodward**, was included in the 1996 Archibald. Despite the fact that she has had work included in eight Archibalds dating back to 1970, I must concede that I was previously unaware of this painter. The present picture however, hangs in the first room as one enters at Geelong and (across a crowded room 🎵), it immediately captured my attention.

As the title states, it is a self portrait, but the artist imagines herself through her C18th convict ancestor: Sarah Wisse. The accompanying explanatory panel gives more detail on this narrative, however, my interest was with the painting itself, which is both alluring and beautifully painted.

The first thing I found of note, is the dramatic flattening of the picture-space. Although the figure and the table with its abundance of fish, approach a naturalistic rendering, they certainly don't sit in a naturalistic space. They are pressed flat, with the table suspended almost vertically. The graphic white line, perhaps indicating a high backed chair, circles around the figure, reinforcing this flatness, as does the defined rectangle containing the chalkboard scribbles and suggestion of prison bars. Outside of this defined area, the picture is just black, with no certainty of its spatial dimension.

The sitter's face, along with the table and its stranded school of fish, are painted with the most delicate build up of transparent paint layers. The hands, though in heavy shadow, are also beautifully rendered and show an assured drawing skill. You will perhaps need to take my word on this until you are able to see the actual painting. However, for us as painters, there are definitely craft skills to be learnt here.

Ray Hughes was a flamboyant Sydney art dealer and gallery owner, who had a keen interest in the early C20th French art dealers: Ambroise Vollard and Daniel Henry Kahnweiler. They in turn, had represented Cézanne and Picasso amongst others, in the early modernist period.

The painter **Ian Smith**, who has been accepted into the Archibald in nine occasions, had Hughes as his dealer for many years and painted many portraits of him. This one from 2003, is entitled: Ray Hughes enjoying pre-dinner drinks With Ambroise Vollard and Daniel Kahnweiler.

It is a large and adventurous painting, which includes Cézanne's portrait of Vollard in the upper left and Picasso's cubist image of Kahnweiler, just to the right of Hughes centrally positioned face. Although the borrowed Cézanne portrait is more conventionally painted, much of the remaining picture is held together by a black skeleton of drawn brush-marks, beneath which areas of colour slip loosely around. It offers a refreshing if ambitious view of how a portrait might be approached.

A visit to this show is highly recommended, especially for those amongst us who enjoy painting portraits. Trains run frequently between Melbourne and Geelong if you'd rather not drive and the gallery at Geelong is within sight of the station.





Brighton Art Society Paint en Plein Air

## Introduction to Painting Outdoors

1 day Workshop with Ben Winspear

10am to 3.30pm

Sunday 5 November

Monday 13 December

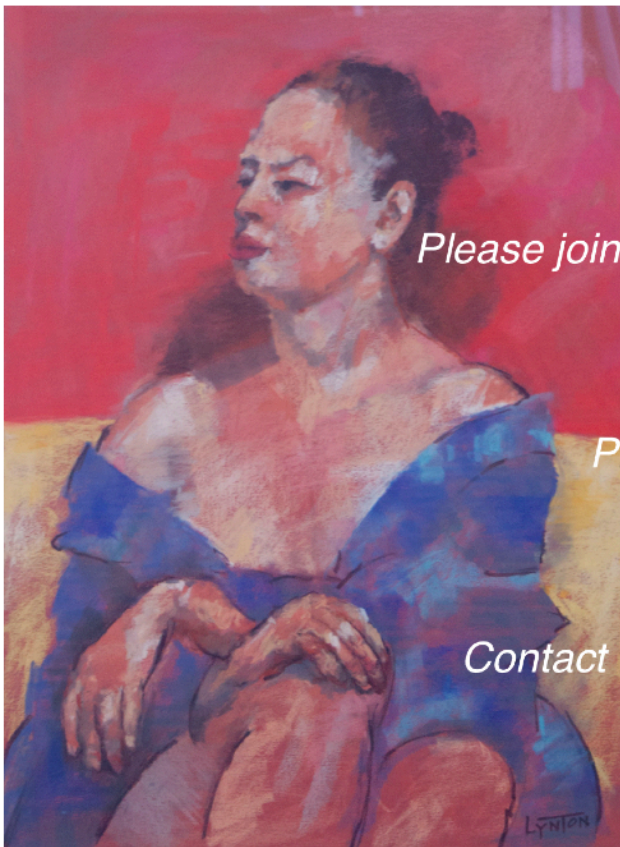
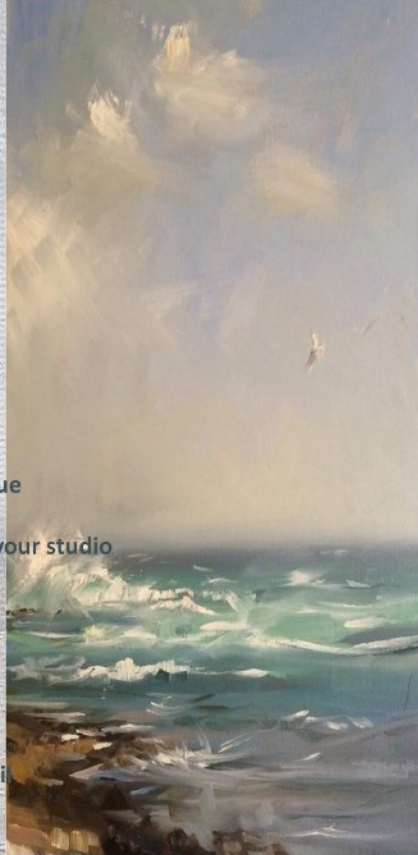
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MICHELLE ZUCCOLO:  
**THE  
ENCOUNTER**

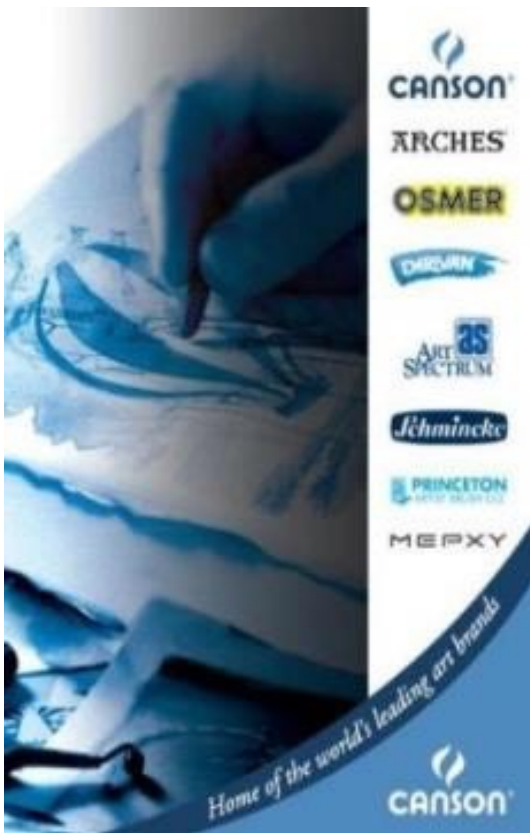
*The encounter brings together paintings and drawings by Michelle Zuccolo focusing largely on portraits and still life subjects. Zuccolo's practice is defined by a deep engagement with the craft of art-making from a classical perspective. The exhibition reveals her endless fascination with the still life genre and an almost forensic approach to portraiture.*

5 NOV –  
16 JAN

Bayside Gallery  
Brighton Town Hall  
Cnr Carpenter & Wilson Streets  
Brighton, Victoria

**Opening hours**  
Wednesday–Friday, 11am–5pm  
Saturday & Sunday, 1pm–5pm

**Enquiries**  
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**November 2021**  
**EDITION**

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COMMITTEE	Charly Savory
COMMITTEE	Richard Impey

BAS OFFICE 9553 8506

## Dates to remember:

### DATES TO REMEMBER:

**December 12**  
Annual General Meeting  
1pm @ The Studio

**7 February - 8 April 2022**  
BAS Term One

**February 2022**  
Saturday Portrait Group resumes  
Ann Black - ph: 9598 7626