

# Art Fair awards for excellence



Left: Established Artist Award winners Charlotte Sayer and John Whittaker. Right: Judges Delia Silvan and Alistair Truong congratulating Joe Landers from Tuntable Falls Community School.

by Karen Welsh

The Gallery's annual Nimbin Art Fair has once again provided a fabulous opportunity for our local artists to shine and prosper in an otherwise economic downturn.

The exhibition provides a platform for the Margaret McLaren Art Foundation art awards, with an overall award of \$3,000 to the most outstanding work, and an Emerging Artist Award of \$2,000.

Such was the high standard of all works entered, the judges turned the Awards on their heads, so to speak. So an Emerging Artist entry became the overall \$3,000 winner, and the secondary \$2,000 Emerging Artist award

became a split \$1,000 to two Established Artists.

This resulted in the Tuntable Creek Community School being declared the 2025 winner of the Margaret McLaren \$3,000 prize. Congratulations to all students and teachers involved.

The two Established Artist \$1,000 awards went to Charlotte Sayer for her body of work, and to John Whittaker for his artistic and technical skill in his timbered mirrors.

Huge thanks go to our judges this year, Alistair Trung, Melbourne-based Fashion and Art Practitioner (and designer extraordinaire!), and Delia Silvan, an award-winning Australian dancer and performer in film, opera and dance productions. Their

dedication to our local art gallery is truly appreciated.

## New exhibits

May sees the installation of new works by Clare Johnson. Clare lives and works in the shelter of the Caldera, finding peace and tranquility in her surroundings, reflecting an appreciation of the simple joys, and also reflecting her sense of the absurd.

Her original works and pique assiette mosaic pieces showcase this absurdity with fine-arts skill in all her framed works, mosaic pots and mirrors.

And finally I would like to acknowledge and give special thanks to all our gallery volunteers, without whom none of the above would have been possible. What a team!

# Three exhibitions in May

In recognition of our First Nations Artists, Serpentine Gallery is hosting an exhibition called 'Bulaanglii', which means 'Come Together' in Bundjalung. This is a diverse and dynamic exhibition celebrating culture and community. Bulaanglii runs from 10th to 24th May.

Please join us at the official opening on Saturday 10th May, 3-7pm. Each artwork in this exhibition is a testament to the resilience, cultural pride, and artistic talent of indigenous artists who reside on Bundjalung Country.

Come and enjoy traditional to contemporary artworks, including paintings, printmaking, digital art, ceramics, woodwork, weaving and sculpture.

The featured artwork created by Kristin Townsend-Gailer explains, "Where We Gather, brings us all together, and that's Home".

Most of Kristin's body of work investigates her feelings of home. Kristin is inspired by what comes to her, she draws it up on paper and then paints it out on canvas. A mother of six who enjoys gathering with her family and friends, she is a proud Wiradjuri woman who has lived on Bundjalung country for over 30 years.

In conjunction with World Environment Day, we are hosting a double opening with 'Waterways of Wisdom' and 'Natural Observations: Art over three generations of Nicholsons and Terania Creek' exhibitions, opening on 30th May.

'Waterways of Wisdom' is a group exhibition dedicated to the beauty and vitality of our rivers. Through a diverse collection of artworks, images and sound recordings, this exhibition informs, inspires, and celebrates the life-sustaining role of rivers and wetland in our ecosystem.

From their role in nurturing biodiversity to their deep cultural and historical significance, this exhibition examines the interconnectedness of human life and these natural waterways. By showcasing the delicate balance of nature, the exhibition calls for a shared commitment to protect and preserve, fostering a deeper understanding and respect for our waterways and our stories with them.

'Natural Observations: Art over three generations of Nicholsons and Terania Creek'



'Where We Gather' by Kirstin Townsend-Gailer

is a family group exhibition which draws inspiration from their deep connection, appreciation and protection of nature, especially the rainforest of Terania Creek.

These generational art works complement each other with the theme of nature connection evident in all: Hugh's botanical and landscape photography; Terri's botanical ecoprinted and intricate burn art works; Elke's stunning acrylic paintings and Tahlo's hyper-realistic pencil drawings.

"I had a vision a while ago of my family members spanning different generations all exhibiting together. The common theme is not just being family but being deep lovers and protectors of nature. It is lovely to see it come together," said Terri Nicholson.

Opening night is Friday 30th May 5.30-8.30pm at Serpentine Gallery, 3/104 Conway Street Lismore, and the exhibitions will be on show until Friday 20th June.

Serpentine Community Gallery is open Monday to Friday 10am-4pm and Saturday 10am-2pm. For more info, email: [galler@serpentinearts.org](mailto:galler@serpentinearts.org) or phone 02 9296-4819.

# Exhibitions at Blue Knob Gallery

*Pandora's Box* is a group exhibition based on the myth of Pandora, which continues to mirror our modern struggles: climate change, political unrest, inequality and global crises.

Pandora released suffering and chaos into the world, and is an eternal metaphor for the human experience and its final message – hope.

The artists have created works that cover many of these elements, with the uplifting message of hope in many of the works.

*The Magician* is an exhibition by Jennifer Unwin in the Solo Space inspired by "The Magician's Nephew" by C.S. Lewis, relating to magical themes through the ages.

Using Shibori dying techniques, cutting and stitching, her interpretation has a cohesive continuum with layers of elements used to support and stimulate through thought, sight and tactile processes.

Jennifer Unwin seeks to expose and interpret elements in each piece which surrounds and delights while it draws the audience into another realm.

Both exhibitions will run until Saturday 24th May.

- **Blue Knob Cafe** has a great selection of freshly made gourmet toasties, pies, savoury pastries, specials, cakes and coffee/drinks. See our Facebook page for more info about the Café.
- **Blue Knob Writers Group** meet weekly at Blue Knob Cafe on Sundays. For more info contact Alex 6689-7268 or Helen 0487-385-134.
- **Blue Knob Singers** meet on Thursdays from 3.45pm at Blue Knob Hall. Everyone



'Ghosts of Avalon' by Lessi Rees (detail)

is welcome, just turn up, or for more info, call Peter on 0458-487-865.

- **Moore Workshop Space** is available for hire. Please contact the Gallery for more information.

# Research inspires painting

by Jennifer Edwards

Step into my world as I unveil my newest collection, 'Turquoise Clouds' at Blue Knob Gallery, Cafe and Ceramic Studio.

This journey is so close to my heart, and I'd be honoured to have you there to share this special moment. Let's celebrate art, creativity, and community together.

The exhibition opening will be held on Sunday 1st June from 2 to 4pm, and I would love you to come dressed in your cowboy attire. Refreshments will be provided.

My work is based on what's around me and in my environment, and features portraits of my family, my favourite doggos and a self-portrait called Powder Room.

I find research a way of finding influence, then my art becomes a language, like a piece of music that communicates to the audience.

The landscape outdoor wagon pictures are my interpretation of the Wild West, and during my research I found Mark Maggiori,

a French contemporary artist living and painting in Arizona.

His work is based on the Western Cowboy, and I tried to convey a feeling of a storm brewing on an atmospheric full moon evening. I painted clouds with a wagon and the feeling of walking into the camp.

I originally came to Lismore to obtain an Arts degree (BA) majoring in painting with drawing credits. I have studied art history and I



am trying to improve my techniques. I was taught by my grandmother who was an oil painter and was a winner at the Royal Easter Show.

See more at: [facebook.com/jennifer.edwards.wildwest](https://facebook.com/jennifer.edwards.wildwest)



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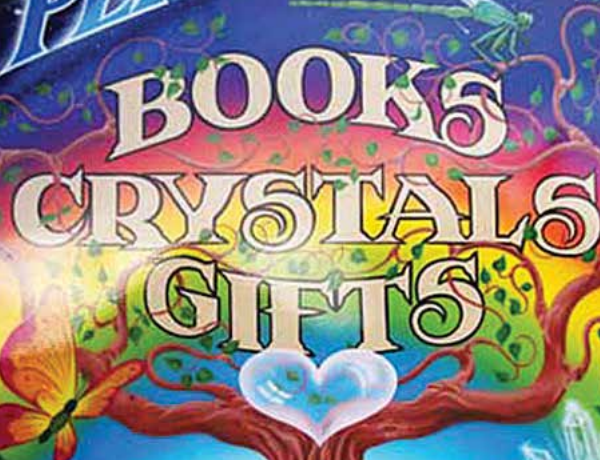
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# Water heals landscapes

On 3rd June there is an exciting opportunity to learn about Landscape Rehydration from the Mulloon Institute.

Learn how to read water processes to interpret landscape health and discover strategies that deliver results.

This introductory Landscape Rehydration Field Day, supported by the North Coast Regional Landcare Network under the Caring for Catchments project and presented by the Mulloon Institute, provides a foundational understanding of a farm's water cycle and our approaches to rehydrating rural landscapes.

Explore a range of structures including natural structures that can optimise a farm's water cycle and improve landscape function.

As part of this field day at Siddha Farm community, landholder and community member, Janelle Schafer (pictured) will showcase the work she has been doing in Blue Pearl Pty Ltd's Caring for Catchments project.

This involves rehabilitating the riparian zone of an eroded gully, which has been colonised by Banna Grass, to reduce fire risk, increase biodiversity and slow water flow.



Janelle has 30 years' experience in permaculture and teaching at the local Djanbung Gardens Permaculture College. She has completed Mulloon Institute's Professional Intensive Course and is now using those skills to implement this landscape rehydration project.

Course presenters are Erin Healy, Environmental Engineer and Program Manager, and Annabel Manning, Landscape Planner.

Mulloon Institute is a leading research and education organisation helping to build resilient regional communities by supporting the long-term sustainable growth of Australian agricultures.

Contact Janelle Schafer on 0408-659-587 to register.




**GOOLMANGAR  
MARKET DAY**

Save the date for the Goolmangar Trash and Treasure market: Sunday 1st June from 8.30am-2.30pm at the School of Arts.

The early bird gets the worm, with an array of bric-a-brac stalls, books, plants, clothes and vintage unknowns.

Come along and say G'day to the local community, there's a coffee van and BBQ on the day.

Stalls are still available, and if you'd like to book a table, please contact Coral on 0428-867-111.

## CWA Nimbin Branch doings

by Sage Bryant

April was a busy month for the branch. We had the pleasure of being asked to do the catering for Lismore City Council Strategic Planning Day in the Nimbin Town Hall.

Everyone who attended had a lovely engaging time and appreciated the food immensely.

We also had a lovely day catering at the Nimbin Youth fundraiser, and many thanks to Rain for asking us to join the event.

We appreciate being asked to cater these events and thank all those who supported us through buying food and drinks.

All funds raised from our various activities go directly back into assisting our community, and we have recently made donations to Nimbin Youth, Nimbin Neighbourhood Centre and the NSW State Disaster fund.

### Thank-yous

CWA Nimbin Branch would like to extend our thanks and appreciation and to the following businesses for their recent donations:

- Mehar Maku from Bunnings Warehouse Lismore for the industrial storage unit.
- Elke Robinson from Summerland Farm Alstonville for the Mother's Day hamper.
- Liddy from Officeworks Lismore for the black printer cartridge.

These generous donations help our

branch continue to serve the local community.

### Op Shop donations call-out

It's that time of year again: the weather is getting cold and the need for warm blankets and clothing is growing.

Nimbin CWA is looking for donations of clean warm bedding and clothing to distribute to those in need especially blankets, sleeping bags etc.

Our Op Shop is either very cheap or free to those in need. We are not-for-profit with any extra funds raised above running costs going straight back into the community.

If you can help, please drop items off to our rooms, any Wednesday after 10am.

### Meet our members

Each month we'll hear from one of our members about their CWA journey.

This month we meet Sarah, who lives in Nimbin and joined the Nimbin CWA in September 2022.

**Why did you decide to join:** I was looking for ways to build connections with other locals and the CWA seemed to be the obvious fit for me, knowing the value that it provides for women and their families in regional and remote Australia.

**What do you enjoy most about your membership:** Learning skills from other members. They all have different expertise, whether it's art, cooking, gardening or sewing, there is always someone to share their knowledge.

**What do you look forward to:**



Sarah with another sold-out raffle book.

Continuing to help our community.

### Dates to remember

- **Open Days:** 10am-3pm on the 2nd and 3rd Wednesdays of the month, plus every Wednesday following the Community Market Sunday.
- **Op Shop Days:** 10am-3pm, 1st and 4th Wednesdays of the month.
- **Community Market Days:** 9.30am-3pm on the 4th and 5th Sundays of the month.
- **Street Stall:** 10am-12noon, most Saturdays, outside the newsagents.
- **Branch Meeting:** 5pm on the 2nd Monday of the month, new members always welcome!

We are located at Figtree House, 81 Cullen Street, Nimbin (next to the firehouse via Sibley Street)

For all general enquires please phone: 0461-412-831 or email: [secretary.cwa.nimbin@gmail.com](mailto:secretary.cwa.nimbin@gmail.com)



# Koala response team on the ground in Alfred’s aftermath



A wet koala hanging to a branch in the wind during Tropical Cyclone Alfred. Photo: Sue Ashton

by the International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW)

Through the tireless efforts of the Northern Rivers Emergency Response Network, led by our partner Friends of the Koala and emergency response co-ordinator Maria Matthes, nearly 200 koalas have been found and visually assessed in the two weeks following the cyclonic conditions.

Six were sadly found dead at the bases of trees.

The team found 12 koalas caked in mud, and they acted quickly, so far capturing two of them and bringing them to our partners’ specialist veterinary teams for cleaning and health checks.

One mud-covered koala, named Tamami (Japanese for ‘beautiful gem’) was found with a tiny joey in her pouch. She spent the night in the care of the dedicated team at Friends of the Koala, who gently washed all the mud off both mother and baby.

The following afternoon, Tamami and her joey were released back to the wild. Though the team picked a great tree for her release site, Tamami deemed it not good enough, quickly scurrying to another one nearby. We are so happy to see her thriving again in the wild, clean and healthy.

The next day, another mud-covered koala named Nima was found in our trap; she had been detected high in a tree by IFAW and the UniSC specialist koala detection dog, Bear the day before.

Nima was brought to our partner Byron Bay Wildlife Hospital and also had a very young joey in her pouch. Both were cleaned carefully and released back to their home soon after.

# Holey ground

by Scott O’Keeffe, ecologist

A forest isn’t just green stuff and soil isn’t dirt.

Particles and chunks of weathered stone and minerals are the most basic components of soil, but the stuff that forests grow on, the stuff that supports your vegetables and sticks to your boots, is an ecosystem. In fact, soil is a vast mosaic of many ecosystems with breadth and depth, like oceans or tall forests.

The soil ecosystem includes water, gasses, fractures and voids between particles and diverse organisms, living and dead. Soil is not inert. It hums with activity and processes. It evolves over time, responding to changes and perturbations like any other ecosystem. Fires, floods, drought and cold all shape the physical properties, chemistry and biodiversity of soil.

All terrestrial life depends upon soil, yet we know remarkably little about its biodiversity. Less than 15% of the organisms in soils have been documented, described or studied. Of this 15%, a few have been given names. They might have names, but we know little about how they live or how they influence and respond to the physical and chemical properties of soil, and the other organisms around them.

Some organisms live exclusively in soil ecosystems. Tiny nematode worms, for example, live only in the voids and water droplets between soil particles. There are fungi that create networks of hyphae in the roots of particular species of plants; each organism is dependent upon the other for its existence.

There are tens of thousands of species of these miniature organisms. They drive the breakdown of organic matter and nutrient cycling needed to maintain soil structure and fertility.

Larger organisms (macrofauna) that inhabit soil are often ecosystem engineers. They profoundly shape the physical and chemical properties of soil. Whole biological communities depend



Termites have massive above ground mounds in arid areas. Photo: Oliver Frank

upon their excavating, tunnelling and cultivation activities.

Subterranean termites, for example, are abundant in Australia, especially in the tropics and sub tropics where they are found in all ecosystems. They are most obvious in arid and semi-arid areas where their massive above ground mounds are prominent landscape features.

These mounds are just the hub for vast underground foraging and storage tunnels and surface trails. These tunnels, mounds and trails are crucial for water infiltration and storage. Within these structures, masses of living and dead plant material and animal dung are broken down. The scale of termite activity is truly mind-boggling.

Many species of ants construct nests in soil. Some individual nests may be very large, but even small nests can have a significant impact on soil ecosystems when they are abundant. This ant activity is obvious in the Northern Rivers district at the moment.

Walk across some ground without dense vegetation – grassed areas are ideal. Look for small chimney-like structures composed of grey or brown soils. Ants construct these ‘chimneys’ after periods of prolonged wet weather.

The burrowing and nesting activities of ants, like those of termites, influence soil fertility and drainage. Ants also

play an important role in dispersing plants. Ants transport and bury seeds that provide them with food. Acacia seeds, for example, often have fatty structures attached to them. The fat is a nutritious food for ants. The ants gather the seeds, remove the fat and dump the seeds, often near their nests where the soil is favourable for growth.

Farmers and gardeners know how necessary worms are for growing crops. Like termites, their burrowing increases water penetration and improves aeration. As they feed and excrete, they break down organic matter. This is especially important deep in the soil where worms accelerate mineralisation of organic matter, a process that plants depend upon for growth.

Australia has about 1000 native worm species, including the world’s largest. The Gippsland Giant Earthworm, *Megascolides australis* can reach three metres. Another species, *Digaster*, found near Kyogle, can grow to the diameter of a garden hose. Another giant inhabits rainforests near Mount Tamborine. Imagine the network of tunnels these titans must produce!

Some large mammal species have a significant impact on soil ecosystems. Some familiar species degrade soil ecosystems. Cattle, sheep and other livestock can reduce water penetration, increase soil compaction, reduce fertility and damage native vegetation cover.

Many native animals, however, have important roles in maintaining the integrity of soil ecosystems. For example, bandicoots disperse fungi that are essential for many woody plants. Bandicoots consume the reproductive organs of the fungi (‘truffles’) and excrete the spores, depositing them across the landscape. The bandicoot’s fondness for this delicacy ensures the survival of both truffles and trees.

Digging, burrowing and denning by other large animals like wombats, echidnas and monitor lizards can incorporate plant matter and dung into soil, increase aeration and improve water penetration. Burrows and dens also create habitat for smaller animals, especially invertebrates.

Soil ecosystems are diverse, like rainforests. They might not be as easy to observe and study, but they should certainly be better understood and appreciated. After all, we wouldn’t exist without soil.

# The soil under your feet might just save your life

by Kerry Hagan, Nimbin Garden Club

Something unusual is stirring in the world of soil. It’s not fertiliser. It’s not compost tea. It’s not worm juice. It’s life itself – coming back to the land through living microbes.

And on Saturday 17th May, Bronwyn Holm (pictured), the powerhouse behind the Earthfood movement, is bringing this radical truth to Nimbin for a free talk that’s bound to shake loose a few weeds – and a few assumptions.

If you’ve ever felt like the garden isn’t what it used to be... If your tomatoes look tired no matter how much love you give them... If your gut, your energy, or your clarity feels off... This talk might be exactly what you didn’t know you were missing.

**Not all microbes are created equal**

Bronwyn Holm doesn’t mince words. Her Earthfood microbes aren’t “inspired by nature” – they are nature.

They’re not waterborne microbes that die in two days. They’re not the latest greenwashed “soil tonic” with fancy packaging. They’re engineered by the Earth itself – wild,



ancient, and built to live in soil, not just splash across the surface.

Earthfood isn’t just “another microbe product.” It’s engineered with true nitrifying soil microbes – living organisms specifically designed to survive in soil ecosystems, where they unlock nutrients, restore structure, and regenerate life from the ground up.

These living nitrifying microbes work like the gut-brain axis of the soil. They rebuild structure. They unlock minerals.

They feed the plants the way our ancestors fed themselves – through connection, not chemicals.

Earthfood’s microbes are true soil-dwellers. They are alive when you receive them – and alive when they hit the soil. They get to work immediately and keep working, replicating and healing the earth beneath your feet.

This is what makes Earthfood radically different – and desperately needed.

**Why this talk matters now**

Let’s be honest: we’ve been sold a lie about how to grow food, and it’s left our gardens compacted, our farmers exhausted, and our health... well, let’s just say the kale isn’t cutting it.

Bronwyn Holm is coming to Nimbin not to preach, but to un-teach; to show you what’s really going on beneath your feet, and to invite you into a movement that’s growing faster than weeds in spring.

This isn’t about products, it’s about power – returning it to the people, the gardeners, the growers and the soil itself.

You’ll leave with a whole new understanding of what it means to eat, grow and be well, because Bronwyn Holm isn’t

your average “expert”.

She’s a soul-on-fire visionary with dirt under her nails and a global mission in her heart. She’s the founder of Earthfood – a revolutionary force rooted in living microbes, soil health, and food as medicine.

She’s bold enough to DM Elon Musk, brave enough to challenge biosecurity red tape, and generous enough to hand out weed pesto to strangers.

With a Bible verse in one hand and a vial of microbes in the other, she’s here to help you wake up your garden, your gut, and maybe even your life.

This is the kind of ‘talk’ you keep in your recipe drawer – between your sourdough starter and your grandmother’s tomato sauce notes – because one day, you’ll say: “I remember when she came to Nimbin and told us the truth about the soil.”

Bronwyn Holm’s Earthfood talk ‘Soil to Soul’ will be held at the Syntropic garden of Carly and Scott at 5/56 Robb Road, Nimbin on Saturday 17th May at 2pm. Free – all welcome. It will go ahead rain, hail or shine.

“When you restore the soil, you restore the soul.” – Bronwyn Holm