

A TASTE OF ART




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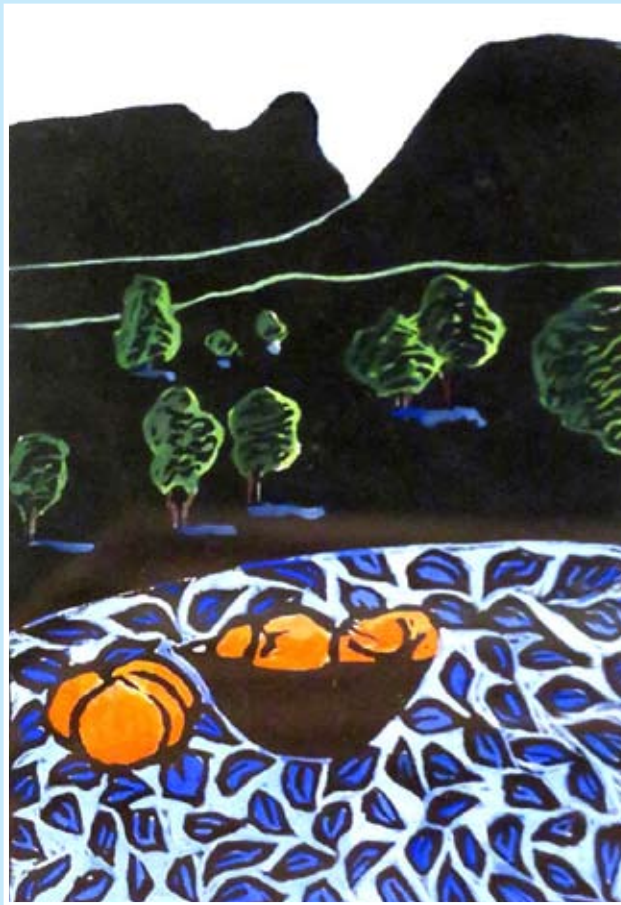
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High quality art at Blue Knob



The current exhibition at Blue Knob Hall Gallery is 'The Artists Choice' which runs until Saturday 6th February.

This is an annual show where there is no theme, and artists bring in whatever they want to exhibit without the usual constrictions to work to. It has been a popular exhibition with a great variety of mediums from paintings, sculpture, fibre and pottery, and has provided some great gifts that went into Christmas stockings all over the country.

There is still much on show, including works of local artist Shirley Miller on sale. Shirley is a well-known local and international artist, whose work has been collected and much-loved by local people. These artworks have been in storage and are now for sale at reduced prices.

Anamaya Milner's pottery piece 'Red Cauldron', created at Blue Knob Ceramic Studio, is another testament to the quality of work that has come out of the studio over the last year.



'In the absence of the sacred' by Gail Wallace



'Red Cauldron' by Anamaya Milner

Far left: 'Pumpkins' by Shirley Miller (hand-coloured linocut)

Gail Wallace's challenging mixed media wall piece, 'In the Absence of the Sacred' reminds us that after our leisurely

and relaxed break over the Christmas/New Year period, there is still much to do for the environment, poverty and the well-being of the world we live in and that we mustn't forget.

The Gallery and Cafe will be re-opening on Thursday 14th January, and the Blue Knob Community Market on Saturday 16th January. On behalf of Blue Knob Hall Gallery, Cafe & Ceramic Studio, we wish you all the best for a good start to 2021, and we hope to see you for another year of art, food and ceramics.

Arthur Boyd looks to the landscape

A new exhibition at the Tweed Regional Gallery, *Arthur Boyd: Landscape of the Soul*, focuses on Boyd's diverse notions of landscape, and traces one of the most celebrated careers in the history of Australian art through this lens.

The exhibition explores a lifetime of landscape paintings by Boyd, with some 60 paintings, including a group of masterpieces borrowed from major state art museums, as well as 20 works on paper; letters, photographs and sketchbooks spanning almost half a century.

Bookended by Boyd's never-before-seen youthful paintings of the Mornington Peninsula in the 1930s and the final phase of his career depicting the Shoalhaven area in the mid-1970s, his work considers not only the topographic landscape, but also the landscape Boyd carried within himself.

Guest curator Barry Pearce, a personal friend of Boyd, brings a unique insight to his curatorial role, allowing this exhibition to move beyond the traditional academic understanding of Boyd's career and delve deeper into the rich personal landscape of the acclaimed Australian artist.

The 1100-hectare property at



'Shoalhaven as the River Styx' c1996

Bundanon was gifted to the Australian people in 1993 by Arthur and Yvonne Boyd, and remains one of the largest donations in Australian cultural history. Bundanon Trust continues to operate the property as a centre for creative arts, education, scientific and environmental research and artist residencies.

This touring exhibition has been drawn principally from Bundanon Trust's own collection of the artist's

work, and offers the first in-depth look at the artist's powerful early grasp of the landscape as a subject.

Arthur Boyd: Landscape of the Soul is on display at Tweed Regional Gallery & Margaret Olley Art Centre from 8th January to 28th February.

On Friday 15th January, 5.30-7pm, the Tweed Regional Gallery will be hosting a special Sunset Session with Jennifer Thompson, Collections and Exhibitions Manager, Bundanon Trust, who will deliver a floor talk to the exhibition.

Bookings are essential: <https://trg-boydsunsetsession-2021.eventbrite.com.au>

As part of the exhibition, acclaimed painter Luke Sciberras will host two sold out one-day en plein air

painting workshops on Saturday 20th and Sunday 21st February, where participants will explore painterly approaches to the landscape along the Tweed River in Tumbulgum.

This exhibition is supported by the National Collecting Institutions Touring and Outreach Program, an Australian Government program aiming to improve access to the national collections for all Australians.

Provoking a sense of wonderment

by Anne Cook

Nimbin Artists Gallery's artist of the month is Deborah Lee's. Deb's unique style of painting is full of charm and fills the viewer with joy and delight. Here is her story:

Before I started painting I was a portrait photographer for many years, developing and hand colouring images, I perceived life through the lens of my camera.

To achieve the perfect image, I learnt you need three key components: colour, composition and light.

In 2001, I lost my darkroom to fire; lost everything. The new Millennium brought with it the digital age of photography. I felt very disheartened by this: darkrooms were a thing of the past, that's when I decided to start painting.

Very little experience with painting, first years in Uni, 1986, and drawing was all I had to go with, and that's how my naïve style of painting began.

I deliberately avoided any books or teachings, not wanting to be influenced by the outside world – no computer and no mobile phones back then – and that is how



my whimsy naïve style still shines through today.

My works are usually figurative, romantic and whimsical, depicting people, animals and the beauty of my environment, like a camera, I take snap shots in my mind's eye, it may be as simple as an apple in a tree that will inspire a painting.

I paint from my imagination which is influenced by my surroundings, a flower, a



tree, a story or poetry can trigger an image, a composition in my head as such, I see the cheeky, happy, sad, longing, whimsy and beauty of the world, this along with bold colours can provoke the viewer into a sense of calm, wonder and peace.

I want people to be reminded that there is beauty in the world and to see it before them, on a canvas, large as life to provoke that sense of wonderment.



I paint on a black canvas and slowly bring out the image through many layers of paint, like developing a photo, until the right composition, colour and light is achieved, my chosen mediums are oil or acrylics paint, charcoal and oil pastels.

Nimbin Artists Gallery is open seven days a week, from 10am to 5pm. Do come in to see how engaging these works of art really are.

Serpentine Gallery set for facelift

by Fiona McConnachie



Rhonda Armistead



Michael Charwood

The team at the Serpentine Community Gallery would like to extend our best wishes to you all for a fun and safe festive season and for a happy and healthy 2021.

We are open over the New Year period except for public holidays, and we still have our members' exhibition 'A Creative Landscape' up for viewing. However, the gallery will be closed from 9th January through to 9th February for some exciting new renovations.

Our refreshed gallery will kick off with a solo exhibition by local artist Dougal Binns.

The opening night is Friday 19th February, and event invitations will come out in January.

Do keep updated on the gallery's activities via Facebook



John Adams

and a reminder that we have a new phone number: 0492-964-819.

Please feel free to call with any enquiries and any one of our dedicated volunteers will be happy to answer your

questions.

Thanking you all for your endorsement and encouragement over 2020, we are very grateful, and thanks to this support from the community, we have survived!

Local takes out portrait prize with tribute

Lismore-based artist Antoinette O'Brien has been named as the winner of the \$10,000 2020 Hurford Hardwood Portrait Prize with her ceramic portrait of a Helen Deravenchecko (pictured).

The winning work, titled 'Lacuna', was selected by Sydney-based visual artist Abdul Abdullah, and announced in an on-line event.

When considering his selection, Abdullah said: "As I walked around the show, I kept coming back to this work. The combination of the ceramic bust and the reef it sits on drew me into a story about memory, and how moments attach themselves to our experience."

"Beyond likeness, the carefully sculpted head of Antoinette's sitter Helen Deravenchecko expressed to me so much about her character. The two objects that make the work synergised for me into an idea that was even greater than the sum of its already excellent parts."

The artist, Antoinette O'Brien says of this work: "This is a portrait imbued with my love and appreciation for Helen Deravenchecko. I am indebted to Helen in many ways. My mother was unwell and



incapacitated all my life and Helen helped by washing clothes, ironing and cleaning, but more importantly for me, she sat and

drank tea with Mum and me. Drinking tea and chatting with them both was nurturing and formative. Helen was quietly present, but remains loud and vibrant in my memory.

"In this work Helen sits upon the Blue Hole, a support which references a connection between geological deep time and mined memory. The Blue Hole is a seascape in which my brother and I swam 40 metres below the surface, drifting around an ancient stalagmite. Love, Helen, and the infinite depths of the Blue Hole are linked in my memory and find their expression in this portrait."

Lismore Regional Gallery Director, Brett Adlington, thanked Abdul Abdullah for his selection, and for the considered approach he took in reaching his conclusion, stating: "As this award continues to grow, it is exciting to see artists of the Northern Rivers region share the walls with artists from across the country."

"While this prize is very much about the experience of viewing all the finalists, it is vitally important that we also consider the way in which the prize supports the development of the permanent collection."

"What is so exciting this year, is that for the first time this award has gone to sculptural work, which indicates how important it has been to broaden the parameters around this award."

Abdullah also gave a Highly Commended award to Bangalow-based artist Michelle Dawson for her work, 'Vera'. On this work, Abdul stated: "The subject Vera Wasowski is a holocaust survivor who passed away in 2019. The composition felt very natural, the brushwork felt causal but very precise, and it told me so much about who this person was."

Brett Adlington also thanked the sponsors of the award, Hurford Hardwood, saying: "Their on-going commitment to the cultural life of the Northern Rivers is to be congratulated, and I thank them for supporting this prize, and the development of our permanent collection."

Members of the public have their chance to vote their winner through the People's Choice Award, with the winning artist receiving \$1,000 from the Friends of Lismore Regional Gallery.

The next Hurford Hardwood Portrait Prize will be held towards the end of 2022.

Bushwalkers start getting out and about



by Peter Moyle

Wow, what a year just finished, hopefully a big improvement coming up.

The Nimbin Bushwalkers are gearing up for another year out and about in this great backyard of ours.

We have a break during the hottest time of year, but back into it in from the end of January.

Following our recent AGM, an enthusiastic response to our suggested program was had. Each month we will have upcoming walks in the *Nimbin GoodTimes* as well as our Facebook and website.

The club has two events a month, one Sunday day walk, generally about 4-5 hours and 12 km; this varies on terrain and the length of our lunch break.

Our second walk each month is a weekend walk/camp where we get away for three days two nights, giving us a more relaxed break in some of our gorgeous National Parks.

We have separate daily walks so if convenient you can come on the day rather than stay overnight.

We grade our walks to help members and visitors decide on the suitability of their experience to participate. A call to the walk leader will help if in doubt.

Please register your interest with the leader to help them plan the day. New members and visitors are always welcome.

We have a visitor fee of \$10 to help offset our insurance costs.

Walks Programme

Sunday 31st January Brunswick Heads – on the river

Leader: Steve Johnston 0421-953-814. Contact for info and to register your attendance.

Meet: on the town side of the Bowling Club at 10am Grade 2: A paddle on the River, tides are helping both ways, so not too strenuous. Bring your canoe, kayak or paddleboard. The trip will be led by our local knowledgeable guide Steve, so come along and enjoy a relaxing day taking in this beautiful area.

Bring: good sun protection and the usual lunch and water.

Sunday 14th February Minyon Falls, Whian Whian State Conservation Area

Leader: Megan Myers 0415-063-302. Contact to register.

Meet: 9.30am at Minyon Falls main carpark/picnic area at the top of the falls not to be confused with the lookout car park.

Grade 3- 4: Mostly on formed tracks, will be some slippery rocks and tracks particularly after rain, caution needed at drop offs and cliff faces. About four hours and 11km. The best time of year to see the falls and the beautiful rainforest at the base.

Bring: the usual, hat, drinking water, lunch and good bushwalking boots/shoes. A poncho is a good idea if showery. Insect protection recommended.



Syntropy in a nutshell

by Charlotte Daly and Claire deLacey

In a nutshell, syntropic agriculture is the nexus between natural forests and agricultural systems. If permaculture is the book of living solutions, syntropy is the pharmacopeia of food agriculture production strategies.

Syntropic agriculture is true intensive regenerative food-forestry. Using specific forest architecture in the form of numerous strata and the potential for a thousand seeds per square metre, syntropy provides an opportunity to create more liveable habitats, to influence weather patterns and to stabilise the very systems that we rely on for our survival.

The word syntropy refers to a biodiverse community of 'increasing complexity'. This community shares its resources, relying on the symbiotic relationship between fungi and plants. As with native forests, deep-rooted plants draw on groundwater reserves and effectively share water with other plants across a vast subterranean transport highway called the common mycorrhizal network.

Other plant species assist in water harnessing, enabling foliar uptake. As the syntropic gardener aims to have no gaps in the stratified canopy, water is captured and recycled efficiently.

While many involved in food production focus on the nutrition, pests and diseases of their plants, or

the soil in which those plants grow, the syntropic gardener is also concerned with the maintenance of this complex relationship between plants and fungi.

Plants are grouped as either harvestable edibles or harvestable 'chop and drop' in situ, rather than via separate composting systems, to build the soil and create habitat. Importantly, nutrient recycling in these systems is more akin to that of a natural forest.

Because of this interconnectedness, syntropic systems allow for agricultural production without relying on resource-intensive fertilisers. Consequently, a range of inputs such as regular fertiliser applications, which are usually associated with harvestable resources, is not required. Importantly, the benefits of this interconnectedness can be harnessed by the home gardener and agriculturalist alike.

Syntropic gardening provides more water stability over time, and will help reverse the trend of resource depletion, while allowing for more intensive food and resource production.

If you'd like further information on syntropic agriculture/ gardening, book in to an upcoming workshop offered by syntropy gardener Charlotte at the Sustainable Living Hub, 7 Sibley Street in Nimbin (email: scarletrising1011@gmail.com) or pop in to 7 Sibley Street and have a chat with Steph Seckhold.

Other syntropy courses are also available at: www.Arcoora.org



Nimbin Garden Club notes



by Peter Brooker

2020 has had its last hoorah for the Garden Club on 5th December, and few amongst us will grieve its passing. The good news is that 2021 thus far looks to be a better, brighter, more hopeful year altogether, with gardens once again opening up for our visits.

To bring our gardening year to a defiant and festive, close 26 members arrived at our Christmas shindig in the Jarlanbah community hall on a "warmish" afternoon to enjoy what was on offer. What, I hear you ask, was on offer? Well, we decided against the Louis Roederer Cristal 2002 Jeroboam Special Edition (\$16,990.00 a bottle, well it's a very pretty three-litre bottle) and welcomed all comers with an ice-cold glass of Yellowglen instead.

Inside, the table groaned under the weight of a large ham, roast chicken, poached chicken, mushroom and nut roast, a quiche and an assortment of salads and other accompaniments.

After working our way around the table, we settled on the veranda in search of a cool breeze or gathered

around a fan, with our plates balanced on our knees. Between courses (yes, there was a second course), a glass or two of warm red or cold white were enjoyed while we discussed our gardens, our lives, other people's gardens and the many ills that have befallen the world over the last hundred years.

Unfortunately, as much as we wanted to, the lack of music and the warm afternoon, rather than the rules, prevented us tripping the light fantastic, so we circled the table again. Dessert had descended and we were drawn back to sample delicacies such as a cherry cheesecake, a pavlova, a chocolate mousse, another cheesecake and a cool, refreshing, frozen black sapote ice cream.

Suddenly the hours, like annus horribilis 2020, had passed and we returned to our lives buoyed by a day of goodwill, great company, and the hope and belief that 2021 will, like Dryden's year of 1666, become annus mirabilis, and we would all be back to share a garden, a conversation and an afternoon cup of tea somewhere in this beautifully stunning valley.



So sharpen the secateurs, sweep up the leaves, pull up that weed... that garden could be yours if you are quick enough, apply now, we only have a few spaces left.

The next Garden Club meeting will be held in February, details of which will be published in the next edition of the NGT, and an email will be sent to all members.



View from the loo

by Stuart McConville

Storm birds squawk overhead as the crows do battle with them in an attempt to stop them laying their eggs in the crows' nests.

The storm birds (channel-billed cuckoos) distract the crows and inevitably their plan comes to fruition. The next generation of cuckoos will be parented by crows in an act of natural compassion that may go unrivalled.

Crows are intelligent birds. I can't accept that they don't know the difference between their own young and the cuckoo chick. Although

The future of belief

the cuckoo chick ejects the crow's own eggs, the crow accepts that it has lost the game this year and nurtures the cuckoo. They have faith in the mind of nature, in the divine intelligence.

The crows must be pagans. Most pagans look to nature for their faith. They seek primarily to know the mind of nature, rather than the nature of the mind. Christianity has failed to protect the natural world, and has resulted in our culture being tricked into believing in a father God (independent of a female Goddess), trial and testing of the righteous, the messiah complex and apocalyptic judgment by God.

The redemptive ideology of the Christian faith is no longer "fit for purpose" in our race to protect our planet. Dogma-driven patriarchy has resulted in nature being seen as a "gift" to humans (as stated in our

own national anthem). Even the Darwinian "survival of the fittest" has done us no favour. It must be re-written as "survival of those who fit".

At the moment, our species does not fit, and we are experiencing an extinction event which may, if we don't act more quickly, take us along with it.

To survive on this planet, we must hold nature sacred, second to none. Only when we all cry in pain for the planet will we be safe from ourselves. There will be plenty of opportunity for that as time goes on, and as humans do, we will look for hope.

Having some sort of faith will become more important than it is now. I urge those who are considering their spiritual path to look outside the box. Find meaning in the splendor of nature, not otherworldly realms that we have no evidence of that suited only the ignorant of

the ancient world.

Tantric philosophy states: "What is here is elsewhere, what is not here is nowhere". Gnostic theology asserts a sentient Goddess of a sacred earth, not far removed from James Lovelock's Gaia theory.

Our species needs that level of reverence for the Earth if we are to unite with nature and "fit to survive".

There are many versions of paganism and all can co-exist because of the common cause, sacred ecology.

To this end I am setting up a facebook page called *Northern Rivers Pagan Collective*. My aim is to bring about discussion and imagination to re-dream the pagan philosophy in our region. Please join if you are aligned with this idea.

Stuart McConville runs
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Alchornea, a fascinating African herb



Nature's pharmacy

by Trish Clough, herbalist

Today I am extracting a tincture of *Alchornea cordifolia*, and as with all medicinal herbs there is a story to be told.

I was introduced to it with the work of US Herbalist Stephen Buhner in his book *Herbal Antibiotics*. I find it useful with some tick-borne infections that I see in my clinic, and also with other chronic antibiotic-resistant infections.

Alchornea is not well-known in the western world, but has a long history of traditional use and is widely used in tropical African countries including Ghana and Nigeria. Commonly known as Christmas Bush (not the same plant as here in Australia), it grows as an evergreen shrub or small tree. It is usually harvested in the wild. The plants respond well to coppicing, so sustainability of harvesting is not a problem.

The leaves, root bark and fruits are used medicinally, although the main uses are with the leaves. Prepared as a tea, the leaves are boiled for 20 minutes to extract the medicinal components.

A large cup is consumed every four hours. Studies show that the dosage lasts in



Alchornea cordifolia dried leaf and home-made tincture

the bloodstream for around four hours, so repeat dosing every four hours makes sense.

Powdered dried leaves are used to treat wounds and infected skin by sprinkling liberally on the site. It has been used effectively to treat ringworm.

Although not traditionally prepared as a tincture, I prepare medicine from the dried leaves using a strong extraction of 50% alcohol. This effectively yields the medicinal components and also preserves them. Some of the important medicinal components are alkaloids and terpenes, which do not extract well in water. Additionally, it contains glycosides, tannins, sterols, ellagic acid, gallic acid and quercetin.

Alkaloids and terpenes

indicate there will be potent medicinal uses including antimicrobial. Other ingredients indicate anti-inflammatory and antioxidant effects. These uses are consistent with traditional usage, as so often occurs when modern science looks at traditional medicinal herb uses. Understanding the plant chemistry also helps determine the most effective ratio of alcohol to water for tincturing.

The medicinal uses of alchornea are extensive. They include amoebic dysentery, asthma, bronchitis, cough, dental caries, diarrhoea, jaundice, malaria, snake bite, sore throat, thrush, toothache, ulcers, worms and wounds. Laboratory studies have found Alchornea to

be active against antibiotic-resistant bacteria such as MRSA (a resistant staph infection) and pseudomonas aeruginosa (another highly resistant bacterial infection).

Low concentrations of the herb proved to be as active as pharmaceutical antibiotics such as ampicillin, sometimes moreso. A 50% alcohol tincture of alchornea was tested against 74 microbial strains. It was active at low concentrations against all except three strains of filamentous fungi.

One very interesting use of alchornea is in the management of sickle-cell anaemia. This is a genetic disease of the red blood cells where they become a sickle shape instead of round. This reduces the oxygen-carrying capacity of the cells and starves the body of needed oxygen. Many children in African countries die by the age of five from this disease.

Although not common in Australia, it is present in people of Southern European and Middle Eastern origin, and is becoming more common with immigration from Africa and the Indian subcontinent.

Alchornea cordifolia has long been used by traditional healers in Africa, and recent scientific studies showed it to be very effective. The herb reduced sickling by 85% and was able to reverse sickling in 69% of cells. Unlike pharmaceutical treatments for the disease, alchornea showed to be non-toxic.

Trish is available for
consultations by appointment
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