

The botanical becomes fantasy

Local artist Susan Kinneally launches first solo exhibition at Tweed Regional Gallery

Wednesday, 7 December 2016

Local artist Susan Kinneally will display her first solo exhibition, *Becoming*, at Tweed Regional Gallery from 9 December 2016, showcasing a colourful series of watercolours inspired by her love of botany.

“Susan’s work will be showcased under the Gallery’s Community Access Exhibitions Program (CAEP), which caters specifically to regional artists,” Gallery Director Susi Muddiman said.

“This popular program provides an opportunity for artists who reside in the Tweed, Kyogle, Lismore, Ballina, Byron, Scenic Rim or Gold Coast City shires to exhibit their work in a world class gallery environment. Since the Gallery’s relocation to Mistral Road, Murwillumbah in 2004, we have hosted over 100 exhibitions under the CAEP, ranging from exhibitions by professionally experienced artists to those at the very beginning of their creative career.”

For 30 years, Kinneally practised as a senior art teacher at a Melbourne secondary school, teaching painting and drawing, ceramics, printmaking, set design and multi-media, among other art related subjects. She was also the Art Faculty Coordinator and edited the school magazine.

Kinneally said: “I loved the demands of teaching, which kept me busy while bringing up my children amid the usual domestic joys and traumas of modern life. Despite this busy life with work and family, I always found time to produce my own artwork. Since arriving in the Northern Rivers in 2013, I have had the time and opportunity to focus on my ambition to become an artist whose work is exhibited and appreciated.

“My creative explorations began with a course in botanical illustration. I love working with intricate detail, line and the transparency and sensitivity of watercolour. However, I found the discipline of describing botanical features tedious. My drawings started to rebel. I decided to invent my own botanical world where I merge fantasy and fairy stories with sci-fi and wild theories of quantum physics. The known kingdoms of flora and fauna meld with fantastical creatures – one does not see at first the wrapping of a mermaid’s tail around the stem of an Iris.

“All the images on display in *Becoming* use the technique of stippling, a laborious method I first encountered while studying botanical illustration. Producing these images has been a long process involving much exploratory drawing. I first make a number of botanical studies, then start pushing and pulling to bring the image to life. Once the image has been drawn onto paper, I wash in the watercolour and build up the layers of colour, tone and pattern.”

Becoming will be officially opened on **Saturday 10 December at 6pm (for 6.30pm) DST by Kinneally’s long-time friend Karen MacDonald**, and will be on display until 26 February 2017.

On Sunday 5 February 2017 from 1-3pm DST, visitors will be able to engage with the artist in the Gallery Foyer as she works on preparatory botanical sketches. A folio of her work and resource materials will be available for visitors to browse.

Image credits:

Susan Kinneally, Mermaid Iris, 2013, watercolour and pen on Saunders paper, 76 x 57cm

Susan Kinneally, Canna Lily and Dragon’s Tail, 2015, watercolour and pen on Arches paper, 76 x 57cm

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The Gallery and Café is open from Wednesday to Sunday 10am – 5pm.