

THE GALLERY CAFÉ

Enjoy having lunch, morning or afternoon tea in the beautifully situated licensed café with its magnificent views over the Tweed Valley and the Border Ranges. View the artworks and treat yourself to delicious cakes and great coffee or a light meal and a glass of wine.

The café is open from 9am - 5pm, Wednesday to Sunday. For your preferred table, time or group bookings, please phone 02 6672 5088

THE GALLERY SHOP

has a beautiful range of wares in a wide range of prices. There are many new lines, some of which use Margaret Olley artwork images and are ideal for gifts and souvenirs. Purchases at the shop help boost the Friends' contributions to the Gallery.

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Disclaimer: Please note that the information contained in *artifacts* is obtained from a variety of sources and that the views expressed are not necessarily those of the Friends of Tweed Regional Gallery Inc. or Tweed Regional Gallery.

Heather McLachlan ~ Editor

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Left: Rob OLVER
Flood Debris I 2017
digital print on cotton rag

Below: Rob OLVER
Winter dawn, Rous river 2016
digital print on cotton rag



Of Rivers and Floods

Rivers have always been important to the Tweed Valley. Indigenous people used them as a source of food and water and for travel by canoes. The earliest European settlers were cedar getters who harvested logs and then floated them down the Tweed River to waiting ships. Then, for almost a hundred years, boats on the rivers were the main form of transport in the region, until the advent of better cars and roads after WWII. Our beautiful rivers are still used extensively for recreation, fishing, boating and as a source of water. But there is a darker side to this beauty. In late March 2017 ex-tropical cyclone Debbie hit the Tweed Valley and dumped up to 750 mm of rain on the catchment in little more than 24 hours. What followed was the largest flood to affect this region in recorded history.

I was deeply affected by the scale of this natural disaster. I spent time shovelling mud in South Murwillumbah and the experience was as close to a war zone as I have ever been! But mixed with this were wonderful stories of human community and caring. Strangers turned up and asked if they could help, brought Anzac biscuits or offered laundry services to affected families. About five days after the flood I began taking photographs, partly as a way of understanding my own traumatic response to the event. I decided to use a medium format Pentax film camera and a tripod, both of which force me to slow down and be more contemplative in my image making. This camera and black and white film produces a wide tonal range, remarkable blacks and lovely "bokeh" or out of focus effects. Unusual scenes caught my eye like flood debris lodging on fence posts and trees. I was intrigued by the coping

mechanisms of people in the flood zone which included painting cheeky slogans on signs out the front of affected dwellings.

I wanted to take different images to the ones I had seen on Facebook or in the newspapers. Somewhat like the contemporary photographic team of Adam Broomberg and Oliver Chanarin I didn't want to document only the damage the flood caused. Adam and Oliver are known for (among others) their pictures of everyday objects like watermelons and pet cages used by suicide bombers to disguise their bombs. They depict these instead of shooting the blood-soaked bomb site. I have also included an image of the Tweed Valley rivers at their tranquil best to set the scene and contrast with the fury they are capable of. In shooting with film and a medium format camera I am trying, in a small way, to continue the photographic tradition carried out by great Australian photographers like Harold Cazneaux, Olive Cotton, Max Dupain and Frank Hurley, among others. As part of the exhibition I will be running a film photography course over two Sundays for interested participants.

In my exhibition I attempt to capture the resilience and humour of the people involved in this event, and their generosity. I have sought to depict the flood through different eyes and hope that this exhibition can be a part of the healing process for residents of the Tweed. Sometimes the psychological scars are harder to heal than the physical damage of an event such as this. Murwillumbah is an unusual combination of a country and commuter town, but the March 2017 flood did show that it still has a very strong sense of community – which is why I love living here!

Rob Olver, December 2017

Of Rivers and Floods, Temporary Exhibitions Gallery
Friday 2 March – Sunday 20 May 2018



We look forward to seeing you out at the Gallery, at openings, floortalks or special events. Each mailout you receive will be filled with opportunities to enjoy Gallery and Friends' activities and there's always the free guided tours at 11.30 each day (Wednesday – Sunday).



FROM THE DIRECTOR

I have just returned to work following a wonderful holiday in Europe and Hong Kong. I thoroughly enjoyed my time away, and have been inspired by the many art galleries and museums I visited in London, Paris and Hong Kong. During my brief stay in Paris, I made an effort to only visit museums and galleries that I hadn't enjoyed previously. I have some new favourites, and

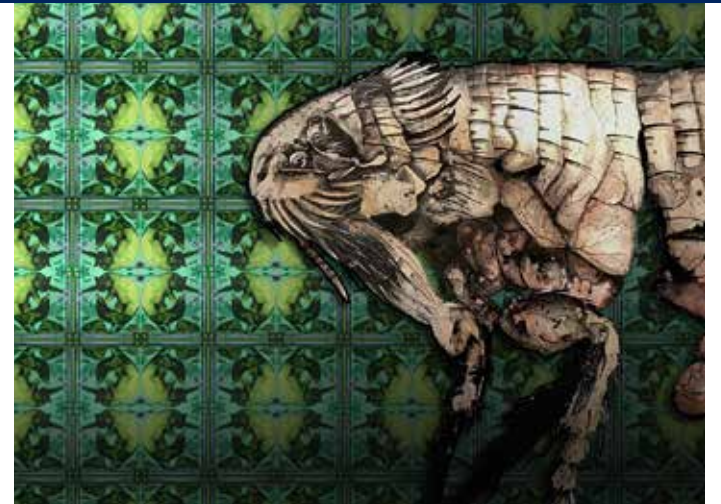
there's a couple I must mention, just in case any of you have travel plans. One is the Musée Marmottan Monet. Originally a hunting lodge for the Duke of Valmy, the stately building which houses this outstanding collection is located at the edge of the Bois de Boulogne, and was purchased by Jules Marmottan in 1882. He bequeathed it to his son Paul. Paul Marmottan had an interest in the Napoleonic era and expanded his father's collection. He bequeathed his home and collection to the Académie des Beaux-Arts, which opened it up as the Museum Marmottan in 1934. Today the Musée Marmottan Monet features a collection of over 300 Impressionist and Post-Impressionist works by Claude Monet (with the largest collection of his works in the world), Berthe Morisot, Edgar Degas, Édouard Manet, Alfred Sisley, Camille Pissarro, Paul Gauguin, Paul Signac and Pierre-Auguste Renoir. In addition, the museum houses stunning illuminated manuscripts, Marmottan's collection of Napoleonic era art and furniture, and Italian and Flemish primitive paintings.

The other cultural destination in Paris I visited, the new(ish) Fondation Louis Vuitton, is also located in the Bois de Boulogne, adjacent to the Jardin d'Acclimatation. Designed by architect Frank Gehry, the building is absolutely stunning. The current exhibition, *Being Modern: MoMA in Paris*, was a pure delight, but the real joy was to observe how visitors interacted with the architecture. From the outside of the building I wondered how there could possibly be enough usable wall space, but Gehry's design is extraordinary and there are floors of exhibition spaces which all flow seamlessly. I highly recommend a visit to this new Parisian cultural institution – you won't be disappointed!

On home ground, I was delighted to come back and see the hang of the new exhibitions here, the Michael Cook show from our collection *Object*, the touring exhibitions and the body of work by hardworking regional artist Phil Barron. The Gallery looks great, and it is so nice to see visitors enjoying the current exhibitions over the holiday period. Before we know it though, it will be time to install the next round of exhibitions in the last week of February! We are lucky to be one of 5 venues to host, from 2 March to 20 May, *Abstraction: celebrating Australian women abstract artists*, a touring exhibition from the National Gallery of Australia.

Women artists have been at the forefront of the development of abstraction and yet, until recently, their contribution has been largely overlooked. There's no doubt that abstraction is one of the most influential developments in art history, evolving from avant-garde movements in Europe at the end of the 19th Century. This exhibition examines how abstraction has continued to flourish and follows the response to abstraction in the works of progressive Australian women artists from the 1920s onwards. It includes stunning works by artists including Dorrit Black, Grace Crowley, Melinda Harper and Emily Kame Kngwarreye. We'll have some excellent programs to complement this exhibition, and it will be a thrill to have some colleagues from the National Gallery visiting us here in Tweed.

The Anthony Gallery will look grand too displaying the print work of well-known Australian printmaker Andrew Antoniou. Andrew's work is represented in the Gallery's collection, and this exhibition, titled *Curtain Call*, relates to the artist's interests in the theatre, particularly



Above: Nicola HOOPER
Giant Flea & Zoonotic Wallpaper 2017
hand coloured lithographs
digitally printed onto paper
and board and wires
wallpaper variable

Right: Fondation Louis Vuitton



in relation to the Absurdist Theatre movement. Andrew's interest in this theatre genre incorporates the style's utilisation of symbolism, metaphor and satire. As a result, the artist's works are quite dense and rich, with much detail in the figurative cast of characters which relay the narrative. The exhibition is aptly titled, and is bound to excite your imagination as the plots of the scripts and the prints are revealed.

The Gallery's Community Access Exhibition Program (CAEP) is an important part of the Gallery's operation and has seen many regional artists mount their first solo exhibitions here. Artist Nicola Hooper is one such artist whose new work will be displayed in the Boyd Gallery in her upcoming exhibition *Zoonoses*. Her works will be predominantly works on paper, incorporating prints, artist books and wallpaper. The unusual title refers to animal diseases that cross over to humans. It is fascinating to learn that 75% of all new human diseases have their genesis within animal hosts, and Nicola's use of printmaking, and lithography in particular, examines how visual narratives, myths and rhymes can help in providing an understanding of the perception of animals in the context of fear of disease. Lithography has a long history in publishing and storytelling, so Nicola has explored some potentially frightening and emotive issues to visually engage us with some scary subject matter!

There's a plethora of information on our website about upcoming public programs and events, or you are welcome to contact us by email on tweedart@tweed.nsw.gov.au or phone 02 6670 2790.

Until next time. Susi



FROM THE PRESIDENT

Christmas has come and gone and we're into the new year. Your Committee is pushing on with the finishing touches of the bus trip to Lismore Regional Gallery and the ambitious group visit to Adelaide to see *Colours of Impressionism: Masterpieces from the Musée d'Orsay* at the Art Gallery of South Australia. A number of the Gallery guides went to Lismore last year and came back with an

excellent report on all that is new there. Should be a fun outing and there are lots of good options for lunch. We're striving for about forty or fifty participants, so let us know if you're interested. The Adelaide visit is quite some project to organise, but Committee member Anne McLennan is up to the job. Well known in Adelaide circles she is confident of arranging an interesting guide to show us around and we may possibly get a peep behind the scenes. Anne plans to offer two or three nights away at a good hotel with suggestions of places to visit and things to do in and around the elegant city of Adelaide.

Since last report we have officially made a gift of the Joshua Yeldham *Fig of Endurance* artwork to the Gallery and have acquired Kenneth MacQueen's landscape of *Mount Warning and the Tweed River* c.1930s. The latter seems to have been painted from an unusual angle, so when the work is displayed it will be fun to see whether anyone can work out where the artist has painted it from.

We are now hard at work to build up our funds through shop sales and memberships. So, see what attracts your eye at the shop for Easter and recommend a membership of the Friends to your friends and family. We are always looking for people to swell our ranks. Many minds make better outcomes. Just give us a call and let's talk.

The past peeps through ...

Fiona Lowry, who was an invited artist in the Nancy Fairfax Artist in Residence Studio in 2017 shares a life experience with Margaret Olley, having spent her primary school years in Murwillumbah. However, that time as a local certainly did not prepare her for her experience here last year. After spending five days re-visiting childhood haunts, including the goat farm her parents had at Crystal Creek, it began to rain, and rain, and rain ... and from the studio verandah, she watched the waters start to rise across the Anthony's paddocks. Then the storm hit bringing torrential rain, winds that rocked the little studio, and an influx of campers from the nearby caravan park. With the roads in every direction cut by floodwaters and confined to the compact studio space, Fiona was happy to be invited to move to Doug and Margot Anthony's home to see out the rest of the flood event. Coincidentally, when she returned in September last year to complete her residency, it rained again, bringing up memories of that terrifying night.

Lowry saw her residency as an opportunity to revisit this area, to which she feels very attached, and to think about the ties that bind us to a place: the happy recollections but also the darker experiences that are intrinsic in our memories; and at a less personal, more global level, to ponder how the beauty of a landscape may also have an underlying historical element of darkness, which may or may not be acknowledged.

With this in mind, Lowry set about researching the local sites of Aboriginal massacres. She found the Minjungbal Aboriginal Cultural Centre in Tweed Heads to be a particularly poignant and powerful place with its nature walk, its Bora ring, its history as a sacred ceremonial site and its view to Ukerebagh Island, the birth place of Australia's first Aboriginal politician, Neville Bonner. That it is now in such close proximity to large shopping centres and highways, icons of contemporary life, seemed, to her, to amplify the site's potency and to exemplify the confusion and conflict in contemporary life that emanates from the past.

Lowry, winner of the Doug Moran National Portrait Prize in 2008, the Fleurieu Art Prize in 2013 and the Archibald Prize in 2014 (for

The winner of our last raffle prize, *Church at Uki*, generously donated by artist David Preston, was Ruth Stephens of Tweed Heads. Pictured below is Ruth and Murray Baker (Ruth's partner and also new Gallery volunteer!), with the raffle prize and myself.

Best wishes, Alan



Artwork in progress in Fiona Lowry's Sydney studio

her hauntingly beautiful portrait of Penelope Seidler AM) uses an airbrushing technique for her portraiture and landscape paintings. Her works for this exhibition are figurative and somewhat Bacchanalian, inviting viewers to reflect on the cultural component of our surroundings. The image accompanying this article, taken in Lowry's studio, illustrates her airbrushing technique in one of her works in progress.

Fiona Lowry, The Friends Gallery
Friday 16 March – Sunday 29 July 2018



A painter's house

Olley described her Duxford Street home as a studio – a painter's house.

The domestic was overlaid with objects and things she collected over the course of nearly 50 years. Sitting rooms gave space to palettes and paintings in progress; blenders shared kitchen benches with brushes and tubes of paint; and the functionality of an object was secondary to its role as subject matter for painting.

Objects were arranged and re-arranged; set against backdrops of distinctive, theatrical wall colours, wallpapers and art posters; captured in changing light – morning, afternoon, evening. All of these ingredients conspired to create dramatic surrounds that were, for Olley, an endless source of inspiration.

Had Olley left no artwork for prosperity, her Duxford Street home, despite its intrigue, would have long since been forgotten. The fact that her home was, first and foremost, her studio and the subject matter for her painting, is what sustains our interest. The space and the objects that fill it echo her spirit and so the re-creation has become an evocative vehicle via which we can further understand Olley's creative processes and her paintings.

To carry on the vitality of the inspirational force of Olley's extraordinary home studio, the Gallery invited four contemporary painters to make new work in response to objects and things within the home studio re-creation - Monica Rohan (Brisbane), Guy Maestri (Sydney), John Honeywill (Brisbane) and Lewis Miller (Melbourne).

Working from the Gallery's Nancy Fairfax Artist in Residence Studio, each artist responded to the re-creation from the perspective of their own practice. The brief was intentionally unrestrictive so that the choice of subject matter, from the re-creation, was entirely their own.

The ways in which each artist deciphered the re-creation – a tangled web of form, shape, colour, pattern, texture, tone and light – unfolded as a fascinating demonstration of creativity and process. In the context of this exhibition, the significance of the subjectivity of these encounters is heightened – as we consider the re-creation as something perceived by the artist rather than 'just' a subject matter for painting.

Monica Rohan was immediately drawn to detail, in particular, patterns on cushions, clothing and wallpaper samples. She produced watercolour studies that she then worked from to produce a series of oil paintings on board. They are unexpected self-portraits in which the repetitious scale of the patterns engulf, trap and overwhelm Rohan's figure. Olley also incorporated decorative pattern and details from her home studio into her paintings – such as the wallpaper in *Bedroom still life* 1997 and the rugs and textiles in *Yellow room* c.1989.

Guy Maestri selected small groups of items - coffee pots, jugs, vases, synthetic flowers and dried flowers. For the most part Maestri isolated the objects, a single flower, a jug resting on its side – they seem abandoned and remembered; forgotten and celebrated, all at the same time. He set them against dark, dramatic backgrounds creating a feeling reminiscent of the night-time still-lives Olley painted in David Strachan's Paddington home in the 1970s. Strachan, himself



Left to right:
Guy Maestri,
John Honeywill,
Monica Rohan and
Lewis Miller.



an artist and a friend of Olley's, died in a tragic car accident in 1970. Following his death Olley used his home as a studio for nearly 10 years. Olley dismissed any sentimental readings of her use of Strachan's home as a studio preferring instead, practicalities – she liked the light, it was close to home, it was a good place to paint. Despite this, one can only imagine that just as Olley's home studio re-creation echoes Olley's spirit, so too must have Strachan's home studio to Olley.

Lewis Miller was drawn to a group of Sepik vessels Olley collected in Papua New Guinea in the 1960s. Miller also painted interior views of the home studio re-creation. Reflecting on his time here, Lewis said:

Initially I selected certain objects and took them back to the AIR studio and starting drawing a beautiful pewter "chocolatier" which was so evocative of Matisse that I struggled to find a personal connection. It was like trying to do sunflowers after Van Gogh or ballerinas after Degas.

Later I found an amazing collection of Sepik/ Papuan earthenware vessels that constantly intrigued and amazed me with their powerful imagery, instantly suggesting post cubist Picasso and endless possibilities.

I then decided to work directly from the source by painting inside the Olley house re-creation. This time the primary objects of my interest were two papier-mâché dress maker's dummies of some age that reminded me, and I suspect Olley, of the maquettes for Degas' 'Petite Danseuse de Quatorze Ans' (Small Dancer Aged 14).

John Honeywill completed his residency in December 2017. Drawn to the collection of white objects arranged on a shelf adjacent to the green kitchen, Honeywill constructed and photographed different combinations and arrangements of egg cups, jugs and bowls. His stripped back, quiet compositions celebrate the beauty of these humble, everyday objects. Honeywill also added fresh flowers to some of his compositions, connecting to Olley's famous love of flowers in her home studio and in her paintings.

On display with Olley's own paintings, these new works by Rohan, Maestri, Miller and Honeywill will reveal a wonderful sense of each artists' approach to still life and the enduring legacy of Olley's commitment to painting.

Ingrid Hedgcock
Curator MOAC and Collections Manager

A painter's house, Margaret Olley Art Centre
30 March – 7 October 2018