

August 2016

Art News

New drawing tutor reporting for duty

We extend a warm welcome to our new drawing class tutor, Craig Rawlings.

A member of The Australian Guild of Realist Artists, Craig will take over from our Ray Jones in the second week of term 3.

Having taught drawing, colour theory and digital design over the years, Craig currently tutors in Photoshop at RMIT University while also teaching life drawing at the Manningham Art Centre.

Comfortable working in mixed media - covering pencil, water colour, ink and acrylics – Craig believes that drawing is the foundation of all art, so it comes as no surprise that he has been working on his own drawing skills for the past 30 years.

Browsing through some of Craig's illustrations at right, our members are in for continued exciting times as we explore the art of drawing.



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Creating masterpieces with the Box Hill Art Group

Singers, musicians and composers who paint art

I think it's fair to say artists in one area are often more inclined to be successful practicing art in other areas. This would account for why so many singers, musicians and composers can also successfully create visual art. The only difference, as noted by orchestral conductor Leopold Stokowski, is that "a painter paints pictures on canvas, but musicians paint their pictures on silence."

Here we take a look at just a few examples of musicians who paint.

Joni Mitchell – singer, musician and composer
"I'm a painter first and a musician second," said Joni. Referencing both Cezanne and Van Gogh as her influences, Joni works in both figurative and abstract styles, and began writing and playing music to support her art classes and cigarette smoking as a young girl. Joni painted many of her own album covers and many of her paintings are now commercially exhibited.

Janis Joplin – singer, musician and composer
"Painting is kind of a hold in and be quiet kind of thing and singing in more free, flow out kind of a thing," said Janis, the flower power child and blues singer. Painting all through high school and creating sketches of friends in college,

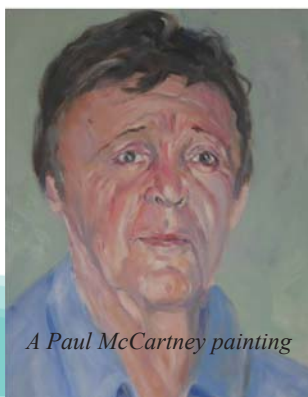
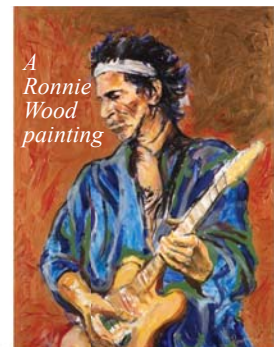
Janis abandoned her painting for music upon graduation. Since her death in 1971, some of Janis's art has since been commercially exhibited.

Tony Bennett – Singer and musician
"When you're at the canvas, you're alone. This is your own story. And when you're painting, you're thinking about your own story. Just you," said Tony. Having studied at the School of Industrial Arts, Tony has become just as famous for his landscapes and portraits as his singing. Two books of his artwork have been published and four works have places in the permanent collections of the Smithsonian Institution and the National Portrait Gallery.

Paul McCartney – Singer, musician and composer
"I basically like to apply paint onto canvas. I just like the act of it – I make it up as I go along. I really don't analyse them that much," said Sir Paul. His admiration for artists began in his early teens and he won awards for his drawings at a local church, but let it all go to join The Beatles. It wasn't until 30 years later that Paul started painting again with a vengeance. Today he has created hundreds of paintings evocative of Abstract Expressionism and the work of William de Kooning, as well as having published a book, Paul McCartney: Paintings.

Cat Stevens – singer, musician and composer
"Art was what I originally started out to do and music came second at first. I had a year at Art College but I left because it was too much like school. I give all my paintings away to people I like," said Cat. Cat Stevens became a world famous singer songwriter before giving it all away to change his name to Yusuf Islam and ultimately devote his life to Islam. However, during his music career, his love of drawing and painting was never very far away as he used his artistic skills to create his album art and even producing an illustrated children's book entitled Teaser and the firecat.

Ronnie Wood – singer, musician and composer
"I am a big fan of the Impressionists, and in my school days, I was inspired by Caravaggio, Velazquez and Rembrandt," said Ronnie. Born into an artistic family and having formal art training at Ealing College of Art, Ronnie chose music over art as his primary career, notably with The Rolling Stones. Well respected in the art world, he has exhibited all over the world, regularly featuring members of The Rolling Stones and other musicians and celebrities on his canvases.





Training the brain with art

New research suggests that the brains of artists are structurally different to those of non-artists. A limited study in 2014 of 21 art students and 23 non-artists using a scanning method known as voxel-based morphometry, found that artists had more grey and white matter in the motor areas of the brain than non-artists.

In another research study, psychologist Alexander Schlegel maintained that taking an introductory class in painting or drawing literally altered student's brains. Such trained induced changes not only improved fine motor control needed for sophisticated sketching, but it also boosted the student's creative thinking.

This would seem to support the assertion that practicing art helps the brain fight against depression and dementia. Something to think about.

Painting in real time

Getting out into the elements to paint what you see is like painting in 3-dimensional rather than 1-dimensional from a photograph. Being in a natural environment and experiencing its movement, lighting and depth offers the artist more scope for an

original interpretation of a subject. This is what our regular paint outs offer participants. Equally, our paint outs also provide for safety in numbers, opportunities to discuss sketching and painting techniques with fellow participants, and the social aspect of enjoying each other's company over lunch that follows each paint out.

The following pics show one of our 10 intrepid artists who braved wintery conditions for our May paint out at Gardiners Creek Reserve before retreating to the comfort of the Box Hill Golf Club for lunch, as well as some of the resulting art. Next paint outs: Sunday 7 August, Sunday 11 September and Sunday 2 October 2016



Vale Col Waddingham

Long-time member of the Box Hill Art Group Col Waddingham died on 13 May after an extended period of failing health. Col was both a participant and a demonstrator with our group, with many of his water colours and oil painting gracing homes throughout Australia and abroad. Col also featured in many exhibitions, both in a solo capacity and with other notable artists. He will be missed.

Artist quote

“When I call myself a peasant-painter, it is a real fact, and it will become more and more clear to you in the future that I feel at home there. And it has not been in vain that I spent so many evenings at the house of miners, and peat cutters, and weavers, and farmers, musing by the fire, unless I was too hard at work for musing.”
Vincent Van Gough, 13 April 1885

Working the workshop

As good as our tutors and classes are, attending one of our special workshops under the tutorship of guest artists can throw open new challenges, techniques and mindsets. They also provide for far more intensity and depth of learning and can take participants way out of their comfort zones. Said our President Ray Jones, “After my dismal efforts at the recent workshop run by Ron Reynolds, I was determined to have another shot at modifying a conventional composition into a more adventurous study.

Ron's event was a great success, however it was my mindset that limited the outcome. At our Wednesday afternoon workshop the week before I worked on a pastel still life so this week I decided to tackle the same elements with a two dimensional approach in mind. Luckily Kathy Best was working alongside to give me inspiration.

My approach was to draw each object on the paper in silhouette, overlapping each shape in a cubist style. I included lines of various thickness and sharpness to add interest and overlaid the colours for contrast.”



Next workshop: 24 September 2016, tentatively titled Water Reflections, Boats and all that conducted by Walter Magilton, a great communicator and accomplished artist. Check our website for details at www.boxhillartgroup.com.au

Road treasures by Ray Jones

Calling into a small café come art gallery in High Street Avoca, we unexpectedly entered a treasure trove of incredible art work. While sipping on our tea we noticed an art gallery at the rear of the café that was established by acclaimed local artist Laurie McMurray. As well as his own art, to our delight, it also displayed a number of paintings by Robert William Bugg and some were for sale!

Born in London in 1853, Robert Bugg came to Melbourne as a five year old to become one of our leading painters and photographers.

A student of Louis Buvelot, Robert became a member of the Victorian Academy of Arts in 1879 and exhibited his water colours and oils annually in Bendigo. Some of these exhibitions were officially opened by Robert's friend Alfred Deakin.

Pay by the term and keep the dream alive

Being a not-for-profit community art group, it is always a struggle to make ends meet financially. Without a consistent cash flow it becomes difficult to cover our regular expenses, such as paying for our tutors. While our hard working committee does the best it can in making things work out so members can enjoy their artistic pursuits with us, it would really help if as many people possible could pay in full by the term. By doing so, we can move ahead with confidence about the future.



Departures

Sheryl Stuart is leaving us to relocate to Phillip Island, while Heather Mansell will be relocating to Castlemaine. Both are long time members and we thank them for their participation and support over the years. Of equal importance, we wish them well in their new homes.

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To critique or not to critique, that is the question.

What makes a good drawing or painting? Is it determined by its subject, layout, media or treatment? Perhaps the more realistic the painting the better it is, but then how does one deal with a work of art that is abstract?

Perhaps like the law which is based on precedents, the goodness of a painting should be based against previous paintings that have been deemed to be good?

But then again, would this encourage artists to take new risks in their approaches to art with the conceptualisation, technique and treatment of their work? Would it encourage artists to explore new boundaries?

Regardless of the benchmarks applied in determining whether a painting is good or not, is critiquing a painting healthy? I would argue that it is not!

Sure it's nice to have your painting awarded a prize at exhibition, but on what basis? The opinions of a number of judges who are benchmarking your technique, subject, style and layout against what they think is good?

I would argue that art critics simply provide subjective personal opinions based on personal taste in the same way that music critics, film critics and lots of other critics do.

And in doing so, they divide works of art into perceived good and bad – hardly the way to encourage more people to become actively involved within the arts.

At the end of the day, surely beauty is in the eye of the beholder and if you subscribe to that belief, all paintings have their place with different people for different reasons.

I tend to believe that those who can do, while those who can't critique.

What do you think? Let us know by writing to Letters to the editor at editor@boxhillartgroup.com.au

Letters to the editor gives you the opportunity to have your say about what we do and how we do it, so drop us a line today.