

ADFAS Camden

Australian Decorative and Fine Arts Society, Camden Inc

ABN: 41 917 925 347

Member of the Association of ADFAS (ArtsNational)

NEWSLETTER

March 2024

From the Chair

Dear Members and Friends

Welcome to our Autumn edition of the newsletter.

We had a very successful first lecture for 2024 on 17 February with Clare Blatherwick presenting the beautiful work of Faberge. It was excellent to see so many of you there.

At the Camden Australia Day Citizenship Awards we were very pleased to see the Arts and Culture Award go to our foundation Chair, Patricia Johnston FRAS. See the article following.

I am also delighted to welcome back our retired Editor, Peter Claxton, who has agreed to edit our last four newsletters and to include articles on the proud history of ADFAS Camden. Thank you, Peter!

And meanwhile, we are planning a farewell lunch in November, aiming for **Saturday 30 November**. More details to follow.

We look forward to seeing you in April.

Linda



Lectures are held at
**Carrington
Recreation Centre,
Grasmere.**

Annual membership
\$145,

Visitors \$30 per
lecture. Please book for
visitors –

camden@adfias.org.au

or

Gaylene 0417 659 587

or

Pamela 0412 311 194

Our Autumn Lectures

6 April 2024

Literary England – Top Ten Places

ADFAS Camden welcomes back
one of our most popular presenters
– **Susannah Fullerton**.

Join us for a lively tour around the
sites in England made famous by
literary connections.



4 May 2024

Photography Comes of Age

How has photography changed over
200 years? What part does
photography play in the art world
and how do artists use it? Come and
learn more in an illustrated lecture
from award winning UK
photographer, **Roger Mendham**.



Patricia Johnston FRAS

At the 2024 Camden Australia Day Citizenship Awards our Foundation Chair, Patricia Johnston very deservedly received the Arts and Culture Award for her many years of involvement in and support of arts and cultural activities in the Camden area.

The following text is a lightly abridged and edited version of the wonderful Citation to the award, prepared by Philippa and Roger Percy from Camden Council.

Born in Ashfield Sydney in 1932, Patricia Johnston first came to Camden in 1959 as a young bride, settling into a newly built home in Elderslie in 1963, her home to this day. Her early pursuits were as a Research Specialist Librarian, pioneering the establishment of the University of Sydney Veterinary Science and Agriculture Library in the 1960's, and Camden Hospital's Medical Library in the 1970's.

Patricia began her arts and cultural work and studies following the arrival of her two children Georgina and Bruce in the late 1960's and early 1970's. Initially dabbling in china painting, Patricia enjoyed working with powdered glazes infused with oils, creating murals to feature in her family home. She sought out opportunities to enjoy her creativity, fascinated by the opportunities art brought.

Firmly entrenched in the community Patricia worked with a fellow artist in 1965 to bring together arts and crafts people to raise funds for the very first kindergarten in Elderslie, again in 1972 for the establishment of Mawarra Primary School.



Reaching out to a network of fellow arts and crafts people she held two large community exhibitions and markets including potters, weavers, textiles, jewellers, artisans to present affordable crafts and art that would appeal to various budgets and raise much needed funds for the establishing schools. Her voluntary efforts led to the first picnic area at Little Sandy being established, and the first Mawarra Nature Garden.

Recognised for her determination and love for arts and community, Patricia was approached to be an inaugural member of the Camden Art Group. Patricia as a regular attendee finessed her art practice under Alan Baker's guidance where she discovered the simplicity of drawing and tone, an observation that she has shared with many to this day.

The philosophy of art being tuition free, without limitations and open to everyone is the ethos she has lived by since the beginning. Along with fellow artists and dearly loved

friends Nola Tegel and Olive McAleer, Patricia went on to complete a Diploma with the Royal Arts Society, and a Diploma of Fine Arts and was graded to become a Royal Arts Society Fellow in 1998.

As a Fellow she was able to share her skills and learnings both formally and as a volunteer. Patricia is a prize-winning artist who is well respected by her peers in the arts.

Inspired and mentored by John Nichols, Patricia led the crusade to establish ADFAS in Camden. Her thought was that the Society would provide intellectual stimulation to those non-sport types, offering a general appeal for lovers of music, song, arts, history and photography.

Patricia throughout her years has volunteered immeasurably, examples include:

- The preparation of the inaugural condition reports for the Alan Baker Art Gallery
- Various loans of works for exhibitions within the ABAG – Baker’s and her own
- Art demonstrations and ongoing support for various arts societies including Central Coast, Wollondilly, Fairfield, Scone
- Judging for various art exhibitions including Camden Art Prize
- Member of both Camden Art Society and Macarthur Art Group, playing an integral role in MAG through its establishment and tutoring sessions
- Art demonstrations at cultural events
- Engagement with the filming of Sydney Weekender Camden segment
- Cultural Fusion community events - exhibiting fabrics hand woven by her mother post war, and clothing she tailored from those fabrics

Following the death of her beloved husband in 1988, Patricia embarked on Leading European Arts Tours for the Royal Arts Society chaperoning 15 art lovers of various skill levels on 6 coordinated tours – leading participants to explore culture including food, wine, *en plein air* painting whilst informally tutoring those on the tour and inspiring their creative pursuits.

Patricia has inspired and mentored many, she has lived her arts life dedicated to sharing her talent and educating others. She believes that throughout life she has stumbled into one thing from another, opportunities have opened up, and she has taken advantage of what those opportunities have provided to contribute to her community, the Camden she loves and the creative community she feels extremely blessed to be part of.

At 91 years young Patricia claims the brain is willing, but the flesh is weak! Despite all she is determined to remain part of Camden’s Creative Community.

BIG SWOOP

On 16 March 2022 a giant sculpture of an Australian magpie, by local artist Yanni Pounartzi, was unveiled in Garema Place Civic, ACT as part of the city Renewal Authority’s Place-making Grants Program. It was immediately and appropriately christened BIG SWOOP.

Magpies are one of Australia’s most highly-regarded songbirds, having a wide range of sometimes complex calls which may vary over up to an amazing four octaves. They truly represent outback Australia and can be found almost anywhere in the country, even in the backyards of outer suburban areas of our large cities.

Unfortunately, within two weeks of its unveiling the sculpture was badly damaged by vandals and had to be removed for extensive repair, eventually being reinstalled in a more central position in Garema Place in December 2022.

The repairs involved rebuilding the sculpture with eight millimetre fibreglass designed to last for many decades. A



Big Swoop is back bigger and stronger than ever.
Photo: Yanni Pounartzi

fibreglass expert, Stuart Roswell assisted Yanni in the reconstruction process.

BIG SWOOP is an impressive 3.5 metres long, 2.4 metres high and weighs half a tonne. The plinth on which BIG SWOOP now sits is made of steel”so it’s really solid and super robust” stated Yanni. “It’s an exact replica of the original Big Swoop. It’s basically identical” he commented.



Realism is the aim

Photo: Yanni Pounartzi



To construct the original sculpture, Yanni first designed a small mock-up before approaching sculptors and engineers in Sydney with CV’s in movie set design. It was then prepared in a studio in Sydney before being transported to its new home in Garema Place.

The structure consisted of a steel skeleton coated in plaster and welded to a base plate. It was then coated in resin and painted to ‘make it as realistic as possible’.

To rebuild the vandalised sculpture, a mould was formed from the original using fibreglass, which took about three weeks. It was then repainted and finally coated with ultraviolet protection and an anti-graffiti product.

“Part of the objective with the grant was to bring more people into Garema Place. Now Big Swoop is in a better location that is a lot more visible and surrounded by shops. I think it will definitely achieve that. Hopefully, everyone will respect it this time.....I’m confident people are going to take care of it.

“Everyone’s happy and excited to see Big Swoop back and people are making trips to the city just to see it.”



The magpie sculpture was finished in Sydney.

Photo: Yanni Pounartzi

It is now a permanent fixture in Garema Place and is considered to be one of Australia’s ‘big things’. It was selected for the Royal Australian Mint’s and Australia Post’s 2023 ‘Aussie Big Things’ coin and stamp set. (Wikipedia)

YANNI THE ARTIST

Yanni was born in Canberra and moved to Sydney where he became a professional artist. He attended National Art School in 2004. He developed a distinct style of minimalist abstract paintings. In 2014 he spent six months painting in Berlin. In 2015 he returned to Canberra where he held three exhibitions, including ‘The Lost Plans’ based on Griffins original plan of Canberra.

Yanni was one of four recipients of the \$50,000 grant for ‘Big ideas’ from the City Renewal Authority’s Place-making Grants Program.

He has received many messages of support from the community including ‘magpie profiles’ on Instagram.

Compiled by Gaylene Feld and Peter Claxton



Yanni at work at the ticket box at the Carousel outside the Canberra Centre. *Photo: Yanni Pounartzi*

Resource

This is Canberra

Original Article published by James Coleman on [Riotact](#).

ADFAS Camden Part 1 – A potted history

The aims of the Association of ADFAS are ‘the promotion and advancement of aesthetic education, the cultivation and study of the decorative and fine arts and the preservation of our cultural heritage.’

For many years Camden has been the centre of a thriving arts community with many local artists, art galleries, quilting groups and other artistic activities but the decision to pursue the establishment of an Australian Decorative and Fine Arts Society in Camden added a new and very welcome dimension to that community.

The inspiration to form a Society came in 2001 after Patricia Johnston and Nola Tegel attended a lecture at ADFAS Bowral. Over dinner after the lecture they were encouraged by John Maffey, ADFAS Bowral’s chairman, his wife and the visiting international lecturer, to explore the formation of a new ADFAS in Camden.

In February 2002 an initial approach was made by letter to the Chairman of New Societies, Miss Margaret North. After considerable correspondence and negotiation, approval was eventually granted in September 2002 to set up a steering committee and arrange three trial lectures in 2003 – to be assessed for quality by John Maffey, Lawrence West, Chairman of ADFAS Ku-ring-gai, and John Nichols, former Chairman of ADFAS Ku-ring-gai.

STEERING COMMITTEE 2002 – 2003

Chairman:	Patricia Johnston, FRAS
Vice-Chairman:	Nola Tegel, FRAS
Secretary:	Dr Rodna Siebels
Treasurer:	John Hill
Membership Secretary:	Rosemary Farquharson
Committee Members:	Marjory Baker, Jo Carr, Ian Clifton, Margaret Harding, Peter Hennings, Ian McKenzie, Edwina Macarthur-Stanham, Sylvia Robinson, Justine Warner

During the planning phase in 2002, Keith Smith, Properties Manager of the University Farms, Camden (established as a campus of the University of Sydney to give practical experience and academic training to final year Veterinary Science and Agricultural students) offered the use of a University facility and equipment, free of charge, for our lectures once we commenced as a Society.

Unfortunately, the Breakwell Building, with its raked lecture hall, TV and sound equipment, where we planned to hold our lectures, was condemned and later demolished because of white ant infestations in its roof. As a consequence two of our three ‘trial’ lectures in 2003 were held in a demountable building at the University Farms, which, although more primitive than the Breakwell Building, adequately accommodated the 70 interested people at our first lecture.

That first lecture, titled “Death on the Nile: ancient Egyptian funerary beliefs” was presented by our inaugural Secretary, Historian and Egyptologist Dr Rodna Siebels.

The second lecture was presented by Helen Glad, granddaughter of artist Norman Lindsay. It was held in the beautiful private Tegel Gallery at Cobbitty. Helen spoke of recollections of her famous grandfather. This lecture was so successful it was held twice.

MENTOR



John Nichols

CHAIRS



**Patricia Johnston FRAS
2003-2006**



Hugh Davies 2007



Lesley Hook 2008

The third lecture “Time on our hands” was presented by local clockmaker Andrew Markerink on the development of pocket and wrist watches – and included viewing of many valuable and beautiful examples from his collection.

These lectures were all well attended and full membership to the Association of ADFAS was granted on 12th September, 2003, as the 28th ADFAS. In our first full year of operation (2004) we hosted seven Australian speakers and one international speaker.

During this formative period the Society was blessed to have been provided with John Nichols as our mentor. He managed to keep us on the ‘straight and narrow’ during the early ‘learning’ years. John and his wife, Caroline, became members of our fledgling Society and both remained members for the next decade or more.

Over the past two decades ADFAS Camden has striven to achieve all of the aims of the Association. The regular lecture series and special interest programs have indeed promoted and advanced aesthetic education and the cultivation and study of the decorative and fine arts. These activities have been supplemented by very enjoyable tours and trips to significant art galleries for major exhibitions.

In more recent years ADFAS Camden also became active in promoting ‘Young Arts’ through the annual Marjory Baker Youth Award and the annual Toddler Proms in conjunction with the Fisher’s Ghost Youth Orchestra.

The Society has also been involved in preservation of our cultural heritage through Church Recording activities at the historic Heber Chapel / St Paul’s Anglican Church, Cobbitty (2014) and St James Anglican Church, Menangle (2017). ADFAS Camden, in association with Camden Historical Society also participated in the ADFAS Schools of Arts project, resulting in a published report on the history of Camden School of Arts (2017).

In the early years, all lectures were presented using 35 mm slides and slide projectors, which were notoriously difficult to set up and retain in focus. Our audiences ‘happily’ tolerated this now antiquated technology but have certainly enjoyed the change to digital presentations in recent years.

As our membership grew new venues have had to be found to accommodate our lectures - the Ferguson Gallery and then the Undercroft at Camden Civic Centre followed by the Redgum & Ironbark Rooms at Narellan Library – and for the last few years, the wonderful facilities of the Recreation Centre, Carrington Retirement Village at Grasmere.

Optimism in the future of ADFAS Camden was put to a severe test with the arrival of the COVID 19 pandemic in early 2020. Following the lecture in March of that year, no face-to-face meetings were permitted or possible until the lecture program was able to recommence in March 2022, with all Australian lecturers. It was not until 2023 that overseas lecturers were again available for the Australian circuits.

During this period connection with members and friends was maintained through the monthly newsletter, with members being encouraged (very successfully) to contribute articles, book reviews etc – and even a regular arts quiz (thanks Cliff) that was much appreciated.

Rising costs, falling membership numbers largely due to the impact of the pandemic, and difficulty in recruiting members to the committee have resulted in 2024 most likely being the last for ADFAS Camden.

However in the two decades of its existence, our Society has been able to establish quite a legacy, some of which will be discussed in the next three editions of the Newsletter.



***Nola Tegel FRAS
2009-2011***



***Pamela Hartley
2012-2014***



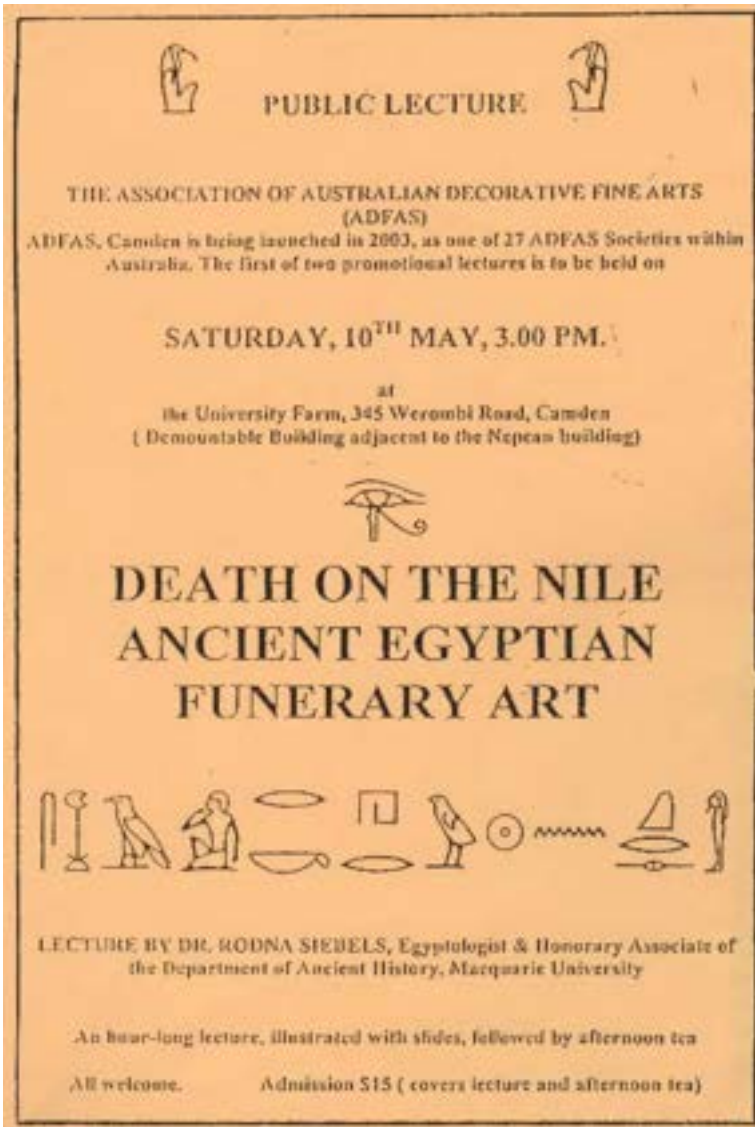
Gay Wilson 2015-2017



Carla Hill 2018-2020



Linda Inglis 2021-2024



The first Annual General Meeting of ADFAS Camden, held on 5th December, 2004, at the Tegel Gallery, surrounded by an exhibition of the works of Alan Baker



Peter Haywood, Patricia Johnston, Chairman, Dr Rodna Siebels, Secretary, Ian McKenzie, Vice Chairman (obscured) and John Hill, Treasurer



Lecturer Paul Brunton with Marjory Baker 2005



A special event in 2006.

An Egyptian lecture and luncheon, with hieroglyph-embellished menu, 'genuine' Egyptian dishes – and a chairman-elect, Hugh Davies, prepared to do all the washing up.



2007 AGM at the Tegel Gallery, followed by Christmas luncheon in the garden

Art Gallery of NSW - Upcoming

JELENA TELECKI

Mothers, Fathers

Opens 9 March 2024

Free



24TH BIENNALE OF SYDNEY

Ten Thousand Suns

Opens 9 March 2024

Free



WENDY SHARPE

Spellbound

Opens 25th May 2024

Free



ARCHIBALD, WYNNE AND SULMAN PRIZES 2024

Opens 8 June 2024

Charges Apply



ALPHONSE MUCHA

Spirit of Art Nouveau

Opens 15 June 2024

Charges apply



WHAT DOES THE JUKE BOX DREAM OF?

Art Gallery of NSW

Collection

Opens 9 March 2024

Free



EMILY HUNT

Art is an Act of Magic

Opens 22 June 2024

Free



Art Gallery Road, Sydney NSW 2000

T: General 02 9225 1700

T: Information: 02 9225 1744

E: artmail@agsw.gov.au

ALAN BAKER ART GALLERY

John Street Camden

SENIORS FESTIVAL WORKSHOP

As part of the 2024 Seniors Festival Workshop, the Alan Baker Art Gallery will be providing two seniors-focused workshops:

- Still life watercolours – 12th March, 10-12 pm
- Reed-Pen Ink Painting – 13th March, 10-12 pm

Each class includes a tour of the Gallery's current exhibition, Alan's Art Deco, as well as light morning tea.

Email creative@camden.nsw.gov.au to be advised when the workshops become live.

CAMDEN SHORTS

Expressions of interest are now open calling for young people aged 12-24 to be involved in this event designed to showcase emerging talents in musical, visual, performance and theatre art.

This is an annual event held during National Youth Week in April each year. The program is competitive, offering limited spots and interested parties are encouraged to email creative@camden.nsw.gov.au to register and receive further information.

Camden Shorts will be held at Camden Civic Centre on 12 April and is free

AN EVENING AT THE MUSEUM – FREE EVENT

Explore the rich heritage and history of Camden in 'An Evening at Camden Museum'. Guided by Museum and Family History Society volunteers, enjoy a FREE sneak peek behind the scenes of the establishment after hours.

Learn how to begin the process of uncovering your own family history. Rediscover historic John Street through the eyes of local history experts on a guided walking tour. Book now through <https://www.trybooking.com/coxnd>

Frequently Retired Editor

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Gaylene Feld

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