



**ADFAS Gold Coast Inc.**

# NEWSLETTER

**Summer 2023**

Member of the Association of Australian Decorative & Fine Arts  
Societies Group  
Associate Member of NADFAS



**Vignette: Bonsai Artist, Leigh Taafe** *Ligustrum undulatum*

**From the Chair**

**Hello Everyone...**

**... and welcome to our bumper Summer Edition of the ADFAS Gold Coast Newsletter.**

I hope you enjoy reading this edition as much as I have.

Take some time out, away from the heat, and browse an eclectic and entertaining range of stories and experiences.

This edition covers: visual arts and design; travel; helpful listings of "must see" exhibitions in Queensland and around Australia; a report from our last Special Event of 2022 – the visit to "Fernberg" and Mt Coot-tha – and of course our very popular Photo Gallery.

In terms of **Visual Arts and Design**, there are articles on the **art of bonsai** featuring **Leigh Taafe, the Curator of the National Arboretum in Canberra** and a great article on the extraordinarily talented and eccentric **Cecil Beaton**. The political and well known **Afghan Street Artist, Shamsia Hassani**, is also featured. Her recent works highlight the plight of women and girls in Afghanistan. In a poignant but powerful comment in the article, Shamsia says she sometimes feels hopeless, but "is dedicated to giving power and strength to people through art". She certainly does that!

In stark contrast to Shamsia's work, and in the lead-up to our April lecture on the Art Nouveau period, there's a quirky and visually arresting piece on **Art Nouveau cake decorating**. Simply stunning! Finally, I have to mention the wonderful **Dutch sculptor Theo Jansen** and his "**Sand Animals**". Click on the links provided and explore the work of this talented artist.

Our **Travel Story** in this Summer Edition will be a treat for lovers of Japan. It explores the "**Art of the Geisha**", that intriguing class of female Japanese performing artists and entertainers, trained in traditional Japanese arts such as dance and music as well as in the art of communication. It's a great travel story and insight into their world.

Our intrepid Editor, Val Shooter, and her contributors are to be congratulated for their work in creating such an interesting and stimulating Summer Newsletter. Thank you.

Relax and Enjoy!

**Patricia Ruzzene**  
**Chairman**  
**ADFAS Gold Coast**



Right: Graeme and Felicite Wylie and "Notorious" at Sanctuary Cove, March 4 and 5, 2023. Graeme was our Vignette Artist in the Spring 2022 Newsletter. He recreated an authentic 15<sup>th</sup> Century Portuguese Caravel from 300 tonnes of Monterey Cypress logs lying around his back yard. There were no plans, ships or wrecks to work from, so for two years he researched old charts, maps and paintings. Building started in 2002 and finished in 2010. Everything above the waterline was based on historic works of art – a truly remarkable achievement.



**GOVERNMENT HOUSE 'FERNBERG' and MT COOT-THA BOTANICAL GARDENS and LOOKOUT**



None of us had realised at the time that the re-scheduling of the Government House coach trip to October would incorporate the spectacular jacaranda show for which Brisbane is famous. Stunning panoramas and purple floral carpets greeted us at almost every turn.



Built in the suburb of Paddington and the foothills of Mt Coot-tha, 'Fernberg' has served as the home and workplace of Queensland Governors since 1910. This mansion is one of Brisbane's first houses and currently *Her Excellency the Honourable Dr Jeannette Young PSM* resides here. The flag at full mast indicated that the Governor 'was in' and we were delighted when she had made herself available to meet and chat with us at several stages of the



House tour. As a heritage-listed, State-owned residence surrounded by 14 hectares of Estate, it is an important Queensland landmark steeped in historical, cultural and environmental significance.

We adjourned to **Mt Coot-tha Botanic Gardens Cafe** for lunch,



followed by ice creams at the highest point in Brisbane; heritage registered **Mt Coot-tha Lookout**, before commencing our home journey. It was another great day out with ADFAS members and friends.

Other coach trips and events are being planned for 2023, providing more ADFAS Gold Coast social opportunities.



Wendy Spencer



**Next trip: Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2023**  
**Tweed River Eco Cruise, Tweed Regional Gallery and Margaret Olley Centre**





### VIGNETTE: Bonsai Artist LEIGH TAAFE



Bonsai is the art of growing mature trees in small containers. Trees can vary in size but the pots in which they grow are proportionally tiny and range in size from a tin can to a shallow bowl like the one in the photo below. Some live for hundreds of years and are worth well over \$1million.

Left: Leigh Taafe tending to bonsai, courtesy National Bonsai and Penjing Collection of Australia Photographer: Adam McGrath.

Below right: After negotiations lasting more than ten years, this 10ft tall (just over 3m) *Ficus retusa linn* bonsai arrived in Italy in 1986 from China. Said to be more than 1000 years old, it now graces the Crespi Bonsai Museum. The spectacular trunk has a dense network of aerial roots and grows in an unusual pot made and fired in a single block – the world's largest bonsai pot.



Left: In 2011, a white pine bonsai tree (over 800-years-old) was sold for \$1.3 million dollars at a bonsai exhibition in Takamatsu, Japan – and officially stands as the most expensive bonsai tree today.

Below left: The 600-year-old “Pine of the Phoenix” is a prime example of a gorgeous, gigantic bonsai. Housed at the exotic Akao Herb and Rose Garden in Japan, this mammoth specimen is 16 feet (4.87m) tall and 30 feet (9.14m) wide, making it one of the tallest and oldest bonsai trees in the world.

Although Bonsai is a Japanese word, the 2000-year-old art of growing miniature trees originated in China, where it is called "Penjing" or "Penzai". Penjing 盆景 is Chinese for a landscape or scene (jing) in a pot (pen).

Students of the art believed miniature landscapes combining rocks, water, trees and figurines have magical properties and the smaller the creation, the more magically potent they would be.

Right top to bottom: Penjing photos from the National Bonsai and Penjing Collection of Australia, Canberra, showing a landscape of



rocks, trees, mosses and other plants, water and figurines; close up of figurines; this tree represents a mythical Chinese dragon.

During the Kamakura period (700 years ago) the Japanese copied the art-form and from that moment on, a distinctive Japanese style emerged. Instead of entire landscapes, the Japanese started growing individual trees – what we now call Bonsai.

In the 1980s, thirteen year old Leigh Taafe had a fascination with growing cacti. He says, “As a young kid I used to help Mum in the garden, which sparked my interest in all things gardening. I would also accompany her to the grocery store each week and she would buy me a small cactus to add to my collection. Growing cacti was a great introduction to container gardening, particularly for a young person as they are quite resilient and are not affected by lack of attention.”

When the movie *The Karate Kid* was released, Leigh was intrigued by scenes with bonsai trees and the way Mr Miyagi mentored young teenager, Daniel, teaching him to deal with life with strength and resilience, mimicking the bonsai tree's struggle for existence. *The Karate Kid*: adventure, action, balance, mysticism, standing up to and triumphing over bullies... a heady combination when you're 13... and it all revolved around the serenity of caring for a miniature tree and Mr Miyagi's qualities of discipline and commitment.

Watch some movie clips from *The Karate Kid Part III* (1989) - *Save the Tree*:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CgGVTC8scBU> (3 min) and

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2HtTE40d3rE> (10 min)

[The Karate Kid Part III \(1989\) - Strong Roots Scene | Movieclips - YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2HtTE40d3rE) (2 min)

Aged 14, Leigh decided Bonsai would be his hobby and through his school and university years he studied the craft from books seeing the internet wasn't available in those days and the opportunities in Australia to study with a master were few and far between.

Eventually graduating with a Business/ IT degree, he opened Ledanta Bonsai Nursery in 2000 which offered bonsai maintenance, workshops and masterclasses. Since then, Leigh has exhibited and won prizes at National Conventions, been guest speaker nationally and internationally, won multiple awards like *Best in Show*





and *People's Choice* and been editor of bonsai publications. He was inducted into the Association of Australian Bonsai Clubs' prestigious *Visiting Tutor Program* and now conducts demonstrations and workshops at conventions, exhibitions and societies across Australia.

In 2016 he was invited to represent Australia at the *Bonsai Without Borders Convention* in China and in 2019 he was inducted as *World Penjing Cultural Exchange Ambassador* by The China Xinyi Government and the China Penjing Artists Association.



Since 2010 Leigh has been working with the National Bonsai and Penjing Collection of Australia (NBPCA) as Assistant Curator of the National Arboretum, Canberra and in 2013 he assumed the inaugural role of Curator (photo left). He currently manages over 120 trees including the permanent collection and trees on loan, trains bonsai volunteers and engages the public and professionals through events programs. He says, "The NBPCA is a partnership between the ACT Government and the Australian

Bonsai Community. The Collection consists of bonsai and penjing that have been

donated permanently and others on short term loan (mostly up to 2 years). All maintenance tasks for donated trees are completed by staff and volunteers with a background in bonsai care. Plants on loan are simply cared for and maintained as the lender has requested. The loans program allows the Collection to be ever changing, thus offering a dynamic display for around 200,000 visitors annually."



Right: Repotting. As bonsai and penjing are contained in a pot or similar vessel, it is important for the health of the tree to undergo periodic root pruning and refreshing of potting media to avoid the tree becoming pot bound. Generally this is conducted every 2 or 3 years, depending on the rate of growth of the roots.

Left: wiring a growing specimen to achieve the desired shape

Below L-R: Trimming bonsai in the Collection;

Niwaki pruning – Niwaki is a Japanese term for "Garden Tree". The Collection has two Japanese black pines, grown from seed imported from Japan in 1951 and trained in this fashion. Donated in 2008, they require annual pruning to keep them in shape; The two Niwaki-style Japanese black pines (*Pinus thunbergii*) are larger and similar to Bonsai but they grow outdoors; Instructing volunteers and collaborating with other artists (Leigh with Sandra) is an important aspect of the role of Curator.



Leigh and some of the trees in the NBPCA were featured on stamps in the Australian Native Bonsai stamp issue which was released in July 2021. Leigh provided expert advice to the philatelic researcher as well as access to specimens and photographs.

Left: Australian Native Bonsai medallion cover © Copyright Australian Postal Corporation. Reproduced with permission



Bonsai styles include formal upright (no bends in the trunk), informal upright (some curve and lean permitted), slanting (where the apex of the trunk falls between 10 and 45 degrees to the left or right),

semi-cascading (where the trunk grows upwards and then downwards over the pot, but not below the base) and cascading (where the lowest branch falls below the base of the pot). Featured on the stamps are three examples of bonsai'd Australian native plants: a bottlebrush (*Callistemon viminalis* 'Captain Cook'), in an informal upright style; a fig (*Ficus ribiginosa*), in a formal upright style; and a paperbark (*Melaleuca linariifolia* 'Claret Tops'), in a slanting style. The minisheet features a





banksia (*Banksia integrifolia*) in a semi-cascading style.

**More information on traditional Bonsai Shapes and styles:** <https://www.bonsaiempire.com/origin/bonsai-styles>

Creativity and aesthetics are important parts of the art form, and various techniques are employed by the bonsai artist to create an impression of age: downward-leaning branches that are thicker and longer towards the bottom of the trunk with new growth at the top; a trunk that tapers from thick at the base to thinner at the top; thick, exposed surface roots, small leaves and flowers. Other styles can replicate trees growing in, on or around rocks or hanging over a cliff; have windswept appearances or a trunk that has cracked or missing patches of bark. Bonsais can look like a forest of trees or be one specimen with many trunks. Whatever style it is, proportion is important. As well as having the appearance of a mature tree, the plant must look beautiful and be a healthy specimen.

**Bonsai styles created by Leigh Taafe:** Below L-R: Box Leaf Privet bonsai created from a hedge that was planted in 1880, styled in a multiple trunk style, donated to the NBPCA in 2012; the same bonsai flowering; Juniper bonsai in the cascade style, now part of the permanent NBPCA Collection; Catlin elm bonsai in the Informal upright style, now a part of the permanent NBPCA Collection. (Photos: Adam McGrath)



In case you are inspired to create your own Bonsai, we asked Leigh if he would pass on some tips. Perhaps your bonsai could end up a legacy to be treasured and tended by your family for generations – and be known by your descendants as “Great, great, great Grandma’s/Grandpa’s bonsai tree”.

### Val Shooter

#### Tips for Beginners

Bonsai care and maintenance differs from one region to the next. Find a local bonsai club, nursery or professional, and talk to them about what they do.

Watering is the most challenging task. Check your trees morning and evening to see if the tree needs anything. Letting a tree dry is as important as watering it. Too much water is worse than too little. Saturate the soil each time you water and then wait until it dries out before watering again. This exchange of water and oxygen to the roots will keep your bonsai strong and healthy.

Bonsai are created from normal trees and bushes that belong outdoors so growing them indoors can be difficult. They are best kept outside with morning sun and shaded from hot afternoon sun. Short displays indoors are fine but no longer than 2 or 3 days in a row.

Bonsai need to be fed. They are restricted in their pot and cannot find their own food. Use a liquid or slow release fertiliser in all seasons other than winter.

Don't be afraid to trim your bonsai to keep it in shape. Not trimming will create a tree in a pot. It must be trimmed to resemble a big, old tree in miniature.

### Leigh Taafe

#### Footpath gardens with bonsai-style camellia and other decorations in Kyoto, Japan

Read Carol Little's *Art of the Geisha* on page 10



## CECIL BEATON 1904 – 1980



Sir Cecil Walter Hardy Beaton CBE (left) was a fashion, portrait and war photographer, diarist, illustrator, painter, interior designer and an Oscar winning stage and costume designer for both films and the theatre.

Born into an affluent Edwardian family, his Nanny had a Kodak camera\* and taught him the basics of photography and the development of film. His mother and sisters were his models. Beaton spent time at Cambridge where he studied history, art and architecture and was involved with the Dramatic Society. He joined a group of London Bohemian socialites and aristocrats known as the 'Bright Young Things' Right: Cecil Beaton, The Silver Soap Suds (from left, Baba Beaton, the Hon. Mrs Charles Baillie-Hamilton, and Lady Bridget Poulett), 1930 © The Cecil Beaton Studio Archive



He launched his career as a society fashion photographer at the age of 22 with an exhibition which won him an immediate contract with Conde Nast for Vogue magazine where he worked for the following thirty years.



\* [Kodak No. 3A Folding Pocket Camera with Case](#), 1908, in the Fox Talbot Museum, Wiltshire, via National Trust UK

From <https://www.thecollector.com/cecil-beaton-photographer/>

Having come a long way from his first Kodak 3A folding camera (above), Cecil Beaton employed a diverse range of cameras throughout his career which included both smaller Rolleiflex cameras and large format cameras. Rolleiflex cameras were originally made by the German company [Franke & Heidecke](#), and are a long-running, high-end type of camera renowned for their durability. Large format cameras are used for the high-quality image they produce and are regarded for the control over the plane of focus and depth of field within the image they give the user.

Beaton's images were not just about beauty as it was through his keen eye that he portrayed a powerful likeness expressing a sense of character in those he photographed. His fascination with high society prevailed and in 1937 he became Court Photographer to the British Royal Family. He is credited with saving the Royal Family's image after the abdication in 1936 and took the wedding photos of the Duke and Duchess of Windsor in France. Beaton produced a more accessible and modern image of the Windsors – think of Princess Margaret's 21st birthday portrait. Right: Princess Margaret - A 21 St. Birthday Portrait - This 21st Birthday Portrait of Princess Margaret was made by Cecil Beaton in the music room of Buckingham Palace. Her Royal Highness wears a five-ropé pearls necklace above her dress of white taffeta.



<https://c8.alamy.com/zooms/9/05de378bd0474ca0b9beafec6d90f7b9/2jaym2n.jpg>



In 1946 Beaton designed the set, costumes and lighting for the production of 'Lady Windermere's Fan' in which he acted. His designs for the productions of 'My Fair Lady' and 'Gigi' defined the glamorous look of the era as well as winning him three Oscars and four Tony awards for costume and art direction. Left: A Cecil Beaton design for [Audrey Hepburn](#) in the film [My Fair Lady](#) (1964), for which he won an [Academy Award](#).

It is believed he contributed to jewellery collections world-wide by taking photos of the Duchess of Windsor's famous collection seen in Vogue and Vanity Fair. He organized an exhibition at the Victoria and Albert Museum in 1971, persuading the well-dressed elite of the world to lend items for the prestigious exhibition of 20<sup>th</sup> Century Haute Couture clothing.

Below: Cecil Beaton (Self Portrait) by Cecil Beaton, 1925 (left); with Audrey Hepburn on the set of My Fair Lady by Cecil Beaton, 1963 (centre); and Nancy Beaton as a Shooting Star by Cecil Beaton, 1928, via Tate, London (right) <https://wp.thecollector.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/cecil-beaton-self-portrait-featured.jpg>



Cecil Day-Lewis plus the philosophers Albert Camus and Jean-Paul Sartre. While he never married it was Greta Garbo who had particular impact. He always remained fond of her and they kept in contact throughout his life.

Beaton's capturing of over 50 years of fashion, art and celebrity included the Sitwells in the 1920s to the Rolling Stones in the late 1960s. Known amongst his contemporaries as having both charm and a vivacious personality, he had a huge circle of friends and in 1930 established a visitor's book, a 'Who's Who' of 20th Century high society. He collected signatures of the likes of Frederick Ashton, Dali, the Queen Mother and the stars of the time: Elizabeth Taylor, Audrey Hepburn, Maria Callas, Grace Kelly, Ingrid Bergmann, Coco Chanel, Leslie Caron, Sammy Davis Jnr, Lucian Freud, John Betjeman, Walter Sickert, Benjamin Britten and



With the outbreak of WWII Beaton was appointed the official war photographer. He showed photos of a 3 year old holding her doll amongst ruins of the Blitz, of soldiers and plane wreckages in the Western Desert in Egypt. He was sent to other Middle Eastern countries as well as China and India.

Right: [Eileen Dunne aged three, sits in bed with her doll at Great Ormond Street Hospital for Sick Children, after being injured during an air raid on London in September 1940 by Cecil Beaton](#), 1940, via Imperial War Museums, London



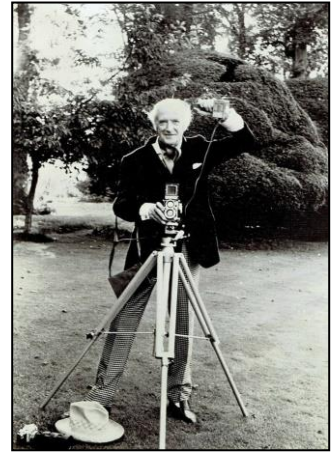
Cecil Beaton was knighted in 1972 and two years later suffered a stroke at which time he became extremely anxious about his financial security. Sotheby's acquired Beaton's photographs excluding the portraits of the Royal Family, and five decades of prints are held by Vogue. These archives are based in London at the Victoria and Albert Museum and the Imperial War Museum where some 7000 photographs are kept. TA catalogue is held by Sotheby's.

He was the author of 38 books showing collections of his photographs, travel albums and chronicles of style with many witty notations. It is only recently that a number of his intact diaries spanning the years from 1922 – 1974 have been

published as during his lifetime he feared libel suits regarding some of his frank observations.

Left: [Young Cecil Beaton in Sandwich](#), 1920s, via Vogue

Cecil Beaton incorporated a sense of theatricality in his fashion photography by adding dramatic backdrops to the portrayal of the elegance of clothing. It is seen that the recording of these changes over time blurred the line between art and commerce, suggesting this particular concept was tied to both vanity and the wealthy. His influence on portrait photography was profound. He is said to have inspired the works of Tony Armstrong-Jones,



Mario Testino and David Bailey and it is believed his photographs continue to exude a timeless quality which might grace a magazine cover today.

### Carole Byron

#### Sotheby's auction

A Himalaya Retourne Kelly 25 bag has sold for more than \$500,000. The luxury handbag got its moniker after Princess Grace Kelly was photographed carrying one in 1956.



Remember Carole Byron's write-up about the Kelly Bag in our 2022 Summer Newsletter? Carole has just found this report of a Sotheby's auction in the Sydney Morning Herald. If only we all had a spare Kelly Bag to sell! *In 1956 Princess Grace was famously photographed for Life Magazine, using the*



*handbag to cover her first pregnancy. This became known as the 'Kelly Bag'*

<https://www.adfas.org.au/gold-coast-summer-2022/>

### Arty Facts: EXHIBITIONS TO SEE AROUND AUSTRALIA

#### Victoria

[Alexander McQueen: Mind Mythos Muse](#) National Gallery of Victoria, until April 16 2023

#### New South Wales

[Adrián Villar Rojas, The End of Imagination](#) National Gallery of NSW, until mid-2023

[The Oil Tank Gallery](#) Sydney Modern Project

#### Queensland

[Air](#) QAGOMA, until April 23, 2023

#### Western Australia

[Yeahnahmesia](#) Art Gallery of Western Australia (image right), until March 26, 2023



[Tasmania Tomás Saraceno's Oceans of Air](#) Museum of Old and New Art (image left), until July 24, 2023



#### ACT

<https://preview.nga.gov.au/events/members-2023-program-presentation/> National Gallery of Australia, Canberra

### Barbara Corrigan

**LIGHT in the DARKNESS – A picture tells a thousand words: Afghan Street Artist, SHAMSIA HASSANI**



Left: Shamsia Hassani, Afghanistan's first female street artist who depicts Afghan women as they face renewed Taliban threats. (Image credit: [Deutsche Welle](https://www.deutsche-welle.com) 20 AUG)

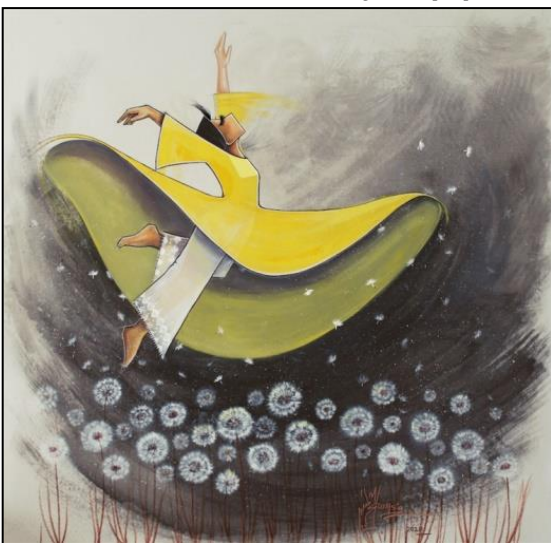
Born in 1988 in Iran to refugee Afghan parents, graffiti artist, Shamsia Hassani returned to Afghanistan after the fall of the Taliban in 2001 and in 2005 began studying painting and visual arts at Kabul University. By 2010 she had completed her degrees and took up graffiti and street art. She said, "Art was evolving there. The number of artists and art lovers was gradually increasing. Of course, there were still many who opposed art, but it was available for everyone and we had the freedom to be an artist. We had planted a seed and were watching it grow into a plant. My country and my art gave me an identity. The day Kabul

fell, I could not believe it; my heart was on fire." <https://www.outlookindia.com/website/story/entertainment-news-shamsia-hassani-the-afghan-female-graffiti-artist-capturing-womens-voices/392021>



**Works by the graffiti artist Shamsia Hassani:**

Left: the first image she painted after the fall of Kabul. Images credit *The Guardian* <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2021/oct/23/we-planted-a-seed-the-afghan-artists-who-painted-for-freedom> Right: *مک تب دختر* / Right: *School girl* March 25 2022 by Shamsia Hassani on Facebook: *On the first day of the new school year, when Afghan girls returned to their schools with thousands of hopes and aspirations, the Taliban expelled them from their classrooms and sent them back home. It seems that these ignorant people have no purpose other than plotting to darken the lives of Afghan women*



Hassani's distinctive style of graffiti – featuring a young woman with closed eyes – appeared on many walls in the Afghan capital as a symbol of social change, empowerment and peace. Unfortunately, much of her work has since been erased. "The plants I nurtured with years of effort and hopes were all destroyed," she said. "I used to believe that art is stronger than war, but now I realise that war is stronger, and everything we built over 20 years could be destroyed within minutes by its darkness. The reason I am still painting here is to help myself stay afloat and not sink in this darkness."

Her depictions of women express a broad spectrum of emotions: longing and defiance, hope and heartbreak, freedom and fear. They tend to be boldly outlined geometric figures with many shades of lustrous colours melding seamlessly. Long, thick eyelashes fall over closed eyes as hair flows from under headscarves or freely like film rolls or medusa tentacles. They have no mouths, but often have elements of nature or musical instruments incorporated into their figures.

Above: An example of her latest body of work, "Birds of No Nations" depicts the people in her country who travel constantly, trying to keep safe and find a peaceful life, much like birds travelling all the time. Image address: <https://storage.googleapis.com/production-hostgator-v1-0-3/743/584743/JZBfkGHT/fdb11d7fbf1640dfb0f4ba4180f65d12>



In 2018 she explained, *"I use musical instruments as a symbol for a woman to play as an expression of her voice. She can use it to talk with people, speak louder and get more attention, as she has no mouth. But this musical instrument gives her power to speak in society. Her eyes are closed, because usually she has nothing good around herself to see ... and sometimes she cannot see her future. That's why her eyes are closed but it doesn't mean she cannot see."*

Right: Shamsia Hassani with her street art. Image credit and for images on walls and footpaths below: <https://www.shamsiahassani.net/murals>  
<https://storage.googleapis.com/production-hostgator-v1-0-3/743/584743/JZBfkGHT/2dd002e85fb34c1eb971f71912783b71>

The public nature of graffiti also attracted Shamsia, who thought it was a good way to introduce art to people who have little chance of visiting a gallery or museum. Yet working creatively in public as a woman in Kabul — even when the city was under Afghan government control — had its risks. *"I am really scared of public spaces and explosions that happen all the time. It's difficult for women to do graffiti and street art because usually people are not happy with women's activities. All the time I am careful."*

On the streets of Kabul (below left: working on her art; right: completed work) she would do graffiti that was not too large, so she could move quickly. To circumvent these challenges, she started taking photographs of buildings and



painting her graffiti directly onto the snapshots, calling it her "Dreaming Graffiti" series.

She works rapidly in her studio, too, which has led to a prolific output that includes everything from largescale canvases to miniature series on dollar bills — a commentary on US foreign policy. Despite her success in the artistic world, Hassani admitted in 2018 to sometimes feeling hopeless, unable to make a difference. Nevertheless, she said she is dedicated to giving power and strength to people through her art: *"I think I change people's minds with my artwork and sharing my ideas with people."*



Left: Dreaming of escaping to safer places; Right above: heartbroken – shattered dreams Below: *Earth Day 2022*

Her recent images publicise the plight of women and girls in Afghanistan and helps to ensure they are not forgotten.

Information from The Guardian: <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2021/oct/23/we-planted-a-seed-the-afghan-artists-who-painted-for-freedom> and

Deutsche Welle 20 AUG 2021 <https://www.outlookindia.com/website/story/entertainment-news-shamsia-hassani-the-afghan-female-graffiti-artist-capturing-womens-voices/392021>

Shamsia Hassani website: <https://www.shamsiahassani.net/>

For more information and to watch *The Creators Project* YouTube interview with Shamsia Hassani when they travelled to Kabul to meet her to find out her work challenges and opinions about the role of women in Afghan society: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HlvdFIVYjQ>

She expresses her perspective on life in a country recovering from decades of war and discusses why she thinks condemning the burqa isn't the answer and why she thinks art can bring about cultural and social change for Afghanistan.

Val Shooter



### ART of the GEISHA



Geisha will wear a pure white collar with no ornamentation (left and below right). The tradition also involves moving from styling their hair themselves as a Maiko to wearing a wig as a Geisha. Above left: two of Kyoto's older, experienced Geiko

Though the number of Geisha in Japan has steadily declined since the golden age of the late Edo Period (1603-1867), it is estimated that there are still around 600 Geisha working in Japan today. Around half live and work in Kyoto, though there are still a



few Geisha districts remaining in Tokyo, Kanazawa, Niigata, and Hachioji. Geisha districts are known as "hanamachi," meaning "flower town," and were established during the 17th century when laws were passed to contain certain forms of entertainment within specific neighbourhoods.

Geisha wear extremely white makeup called Oshiroi. The original reason for this was that during the 19th century, teahouses were only dimly lit by candlelight, and the bright white makeup of the geisha helped illuminate their faces during the performance.

Geisha wear extremely white makeup called Oshiroi. The original reason for this was that during the 19th century, teahouses were only dimly lit by candlelight, and the bright white makeup of the geisha helped illuminate their faces during the performance.

**Right: Footwear is made by hand by individual craftsmen. Maiko wear distinctive geta called okobo up to 15cm tall (similar to the chopines worn in Venice during the Renaissance). Geisha footwear is a low wooden sandal called Senryō Geta. Geta are traditional Japanese sandals which are stilted to keep the hem of a kimono above the ground and allow the person's feet to stay out of the mud. They are worn with tabi socks (right) which separate the big toe from the other**



toes. Tabi socks first appeared in the 15<sup>th</sup> century and are usually white. As it is customary to remove shoes on entering a home, the socks can be kept on to provide cosy indoor footwear.

Few people know that initially, Geisha were men who entertained at court as jesters and were called Taikomochi or Hokan but around the 17th century the term changed to Geisha. Women began performing around the mid-18th century, quickly becoming far more popular than their male counterparts. By the early 19th century most Geisha were women.

Geisha are not permitted to marry and if they decide to do so, they lose their status of Geisha immediately.

**Carole Little**



## ART NOUVEAU CAKE DECORATION

You thought Art Nouveau was just for architecture – perhaps interior design, clothing or jewellery? Welcome to the world of Art Nouveau cake decoration where they say, “No one’s ever asked me to describe *art nouveau* in four words or less, but if they did, I’d say it’s ‘in your face elegance’. This style is meant to be noticed, dahling.”



Art Nouveau features ornately-organic, flowing shapes and forms. Nature is a definitive source of inspiration, with many designers imitating the sinuous, asymmetric curves and lines of plant and flower forms. This style is usually elongated and exaggerated to heighten dramatic impact – and what could be more stylishly elongated – or noticeable – than a wedding cake?



Decorators painstakingly work hour upon hour to transform the works of artists like Klimt, Mucha and Tiffany into the dazzlingly-beautiful mosaics, arches, curving plants and stained glass embellishments adorning these edible works of art. Linear contours take precedence over colour. Traditional colours are hues such as muted greens, browns, yellows, and blues, but with the introduction of modern stained glass and floral designs, there is now an explosion of colour. Noticeable? Absolutely.



Discover much more about *Art Nouveau* in Claudia Chan Shaw’s April 15 lecture.

### Val Shooter

To see images of the most gloriously decorated cakes, Google *Art Nouveau Cakes* and follow the links.

Image websites:

<https://www.cakewrecks.com/home/2014/3/9/sunday-sweets-art-nouveau.html>

Cake decorators and designers:

Anna Taart; Comper Cakes; Elegantly Iced; La Bella Torta

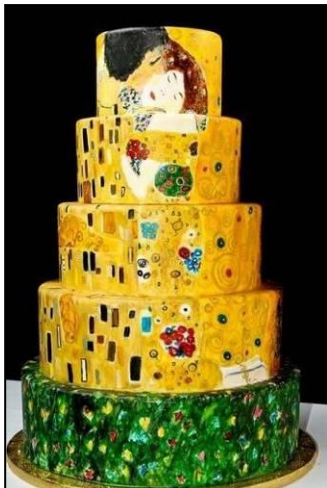
Hand painted William Morris inspired cake: [www.bakedinbunbury.co.uk](http://www.bakedinbunbury.co.uk)

Klimt inspired wedding cake: <https://i.pinimg.com/originals/96/1a/b4/961ab4c794505ef057df94c7c511b03d.jpg>

Mucha inspired wedding cake: [facebook.com/dinacimarustiart](https://i.pinimg.com/originals/ef/ab/7f/efab7fa4c7810ee1aaa352231722a3f.jpg)

Tiffany Inspired Wedding Cake: <https://i.pinimg.com/originals/ef/ab/7f/efab7fa4c7810ee1aaa352231722a3f.jpg>

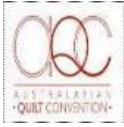
<https://i.pinimg.com/564x/7c/b6/22/7cb622aa99b9294138323fb99b2c10f4.jpg>



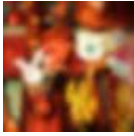


**BRISBANE EXHIBITIONS and CONCERTS****Stitches and Craft Show – Brisbane**

Fri 9 – Sun 11 June  
Brisbane Convention & Exhibition Centre, Glenelg St  
South Brisbane QLD

**Australian Quilt Convention 2023**

Thu 13 – Sun 16 Apr  
Brisbane Convention & Exhibition Centre, Glenelg St  
South Brisbane QLD

**Craft and Quilt Fair – Brisbane**

Wed 11 – Sat 14 Oct  
Brisbane Convention & Exhibition Centre, Glenelg St  
South Brisbane QLD

**Australasian Scrapbook and Papercraft Convention**

Sun 11 – Tue 13 June  
Brisbane Convention & Exhibition Centre, Glenelg St  
South Brisbane QLD

**Dinosaurs of Patagonia** and other cultural, scientific and family experiences

March to October  
Queensland Museum, Brisbane: <https://qm.t.qtix.com.au/events>  
Corner of Grey Street and Melbourne Street, South Brisbane QLD 4101

**Lord Mayor's City Hall Concerts**

Our popular lunchtime concert series is back for 2023. Head to Brisbane City Hall and enjoy free performances on Tuesdays from 12 noon-1pm. Bookings not required.

[https://www.brisbane.qld.gov.au/whats-on-and-events/search?parent=1704&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=Brisbane-City-Council--February-2023&utm\\_content=Lord+Mayor%27s+City+Hall+Concerts&utm\\_source=enews.mailer.brisbane.qld.gov.au](https://www.brisbane.qld.gov.au/whats-on-and-events/search?parent=1704&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Brisbane-City-Council--February-2023&utm_content=Lord+Mayor%27s+City+Hall+Concerts&utm_source=enews.mailer.brisbane.qld.gov.au)



**Candlelight Concerts** With its sea of candles, exceptionally-talented musicians and wide-ranging selection of concerts, Candlelight enchants and enthral audiences all year round. But come summertime in Brisbane, there's just a little something extra in the air that transforms nights out into unforgettable live-music experiences. Some concerts will also be held on the Gold Coast. [https://feverup.com/en/brisbane/candlelight?utm\\_content=candlelight-concerts&utm\\_source=secretbrisbane&utm\\_medium=post&utm\\_term=cta5](https://feverup.com/en/brisbane/candlelight?utm_content=candlelight-concerts&utm_source=secretbrisbane&utm_medium=post&utm_term=cta5)

**HOTA EXHIBITIONS**

Sat 18 Feb - Sun 4 Jun

**Pop Masters: Art from the Mugarb Collection, New York**

Sat 17 Jun - Sun 27 Aug

**Kungka Kunpu: Strong Women** FREE ALL AGES

Sat 11 Mar - Sun 21 May

**Lost in Palm Springs** FREE ALL AGES

**... and now for something completely different – THEO JANSEN and his SAND ANIMALS...**



**Dutch artist and sculptor, Theo Jansen and Strandbeeste (Sand Animal)** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C97kMKwZ2-g>

**Strandbeeste Evolution 2021** (4.31 min) Theo Jansen's work since 1990 is making new animated forms of animals to live on beaches.

His animals get their energy from the wind so they don't have to eat. In the future he wants to put them out in herds.

Image address: [https://www.stirworld.com/images/article\\_gallery/animaris-umerus-2009-met-theo-theo-jansen-stirworld-200703020038.jpg](https://www.stirworld.com/images/article_gallery/animaris-umerus-2009-met-theo-theo-jansen-stirworld-200703020038.jpg)

\*Turn the sound on to also enjoy the accompanying *Adagio of Spartacus and Phrygia (The Onedin Line)* by Armenian composer, Aram Khachaturian.

\* Acknowledged images, links, recordings and videos in the newsletter have been sourced by Editor, Val Shooter. No copyright infringement is intended. The intent is to make our members aware of a wide variety of artists and websites so they can access information of personal interest.

\* Contributing Photographers: Leigh Taafe, Shamsia Hassani, Carol Little, Helen O'Reilly, Wendy Spencer



**PHOTO GALLERY**

**Coach trip to Brisbane: Government House, Mt Coot-tha Botanical Gardens and Lookout; October Lecture and Bowties and Bling**



**BOWTIES and BLING**