

Northern Rivers

Newsletter 25 ♦ April 2025



Detail from *Landscape with large terracotta jars*, by Hans Feibusch

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From the Vice Chair with Craig Snyder

Welcome to our 2025 series of presentations. This year we have another great set of guest speakers covering an array of topics. Our aim is to present something new – providing a different aspect to a common subject, or something entirely unexpected. We are fortunate to be able to select from a rich cultural base.

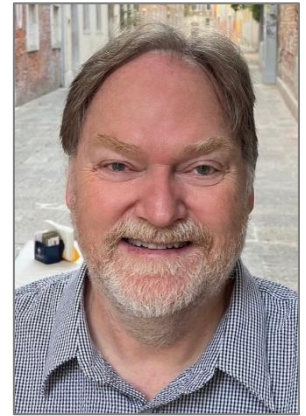
As the newly nominated vice chair, I am pleased to be able to assist Dianne Stuart who has shouldered the position of chair in a solo capacity for five years. We have a great committee, who each have a role they undertake most efficiently, however Dianne spends several hours a week liaising with the national body in addition to the tasks required to organise our own Northern Rivers society.

I have long been interested in the arts, and was a member of ADFAS Geelong for several years. One of the very first things my wife Marion and I did when we moved to the Northern Rivers, was join the Byron Bay ADFAS. We were welcomed warmly, and

have since really enjoyed the sincere friendships we have made.

I have been operating the audio-visual equipment for the last two years, and I am happy to increase my participation.

 Craig Snyder



Craig Snyder

A Word from our Treasurer with Peter Harden

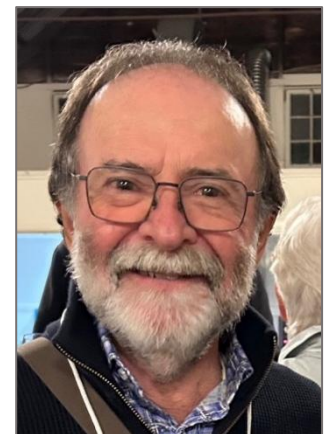
The ArtsNational lecturer's committee has put together a great set of speakers and topics for 2025. We hope you enjoy each and every one.

Our Northern Rivers society does face the continuing challenge of financial viability. We enjoy a loyal but relatively small membership base, for which we are very grateful. To pay for the hall and lecturers we depend on membership subscriptions primarily. Additionally, guest fees and raffle sales help us significantly. It is important to recognise the additional contribution that is made by your very active Committee. We provide the supper and home host the lecturers (with the help of a few members), all of which reduces our cost of operating.

We've made the tough decision to temporarily suspend our Young Arts Program. Instead, we will combine with other local entities such as the Lismore Regional Art Gallery for cross promotions and support.

Finally, 2025 will be my 5th and final year as Treasurer. I'm hopeful that my role will be taken from within the existing Committee however we will need a few members to join the Committee for 2026. Di Stuart is also in her final year and other Committee members are in their 5th, 6th and 7th years, so I feel it is appropriate to plant the seed early rather than later. Di Stuart I know enjoys working as a part of the Committee, as do I, but it is time for some new energy. Please consider joining us and talk to Di. The pay isn't great (none) but the camaraderie is fabulous.

 Peter Harden



Peter Harden

Thank You Luncheon

On 7th December last year, Dianne and James Stuart invited the 2024 committee to a luncheon held at their beautiful Coopers Shoot property as a thank you gesture for the group's dedication and hard work. Everyone was in festive mode while enjoying the delicious food, funny banter and some ridiculous Kris Kringle gifts.



Back: Catherine White, Tom Trembath and Craig Snyder
 Front: Diana Harden, Marion Pescud, Dianne Stuart, Erica Light, Sue Anderson and Peter Harden
 Absent: Chris Chaseling and Wendy Edwards

November Raffle

The happy November raffle winners were Mary-Jo Payten, who received a beautiful book on J.M.W. Turner's art; Shirley Sholtz who won a delicious home-made Christmas cake; and Catherine White who took home an ArtsNational canvas tote bag and the 'Mr Turner' DVD.



Left: Raffle coordinator Erica Light with winner Mary-Jo Payten
 Centre: Shirley Scholtz with the Christmas cake donated by Chris Chaseling
 Right: Catherine White, delighted with her tote bag and DVD

2024 Annual General Meeting Report

Dianne Stuart delivered the ArtsNational Northern Rivers 2024 Report at the AGM, held on 18th November. In it, she outlined the year and advised the members that after four years, next year would definitely be her last as Chair of Northern Rivers. She had only agreed to do so because Craig Snyder would take the role of Vice Chair. If a new Chair is not forthcoming by the 2025 AGM, regrettably the society will have to disband, as have three other societies.



Dianne Stuart

Over the past three years, smaller societies with less reserves, were supported by the Association via a reduced affiliation fee. At the recent September Council meeting, it was decided to discontinue that support.

In 2025 our affiliation fee to the UK Arts Society, is \$37 per member – an increase of \$12. We must gauge in advance if we can meet our 2025 cost obligations - such as presenter fees, transport costs and hall hire. We curb expenditure by home hosting and self-catering. We need to both retain existing members and attract new ones, so please renew your membership sooner rather than later.

Recently, we were invited to submit a story for the next edition of the *Bangalow Herald*, in which we applauded the dedication of those who have voluntarily given their time and energy to keep this wonderful society going since the year 2000. Over the past 24 years, this society has welcomed close on 200 renowned experts from both the UK and Australia to share their knowledge and insights across a smorgasbord of arts-related fields. We owe it to the Northern Rivers community to keep this going.

At the national level, the new name ArtsNational, has re-energised societies, encouraging them to embrace the technology and communicate with the wider community via social media. Nationally, there's been a 3% increase in membership, not as high as hoped, but at least the decline has been reversed. Our membership crept up to 72, which was slightly down on 2023.

There's a positive and engaged vibe amongst our members. Guest numbers increase as we gain more publicity via social media. Guests and raffle takings boost our income, enabling us to contribute to the Patricia Robertson Fund, and support our modest Young Arts program.

This year, our established Young Arts program, was impacted when the Annual Bangalow Music Festival was abruptly cancelled and relocated to the Gold Coast. We subsequently supported Oliver Bailey, a young percussionist from the Northern Rivers Conservatorium. In July, Dianne Stuart and Catherine White attended an inspirational performance by the Northern Rivers Conservatorium Youth Orchestra Concert, where Oliver was presented with his award at the conclusion of the performance.

In September, James and Dianne Stuart were invited to the preview and reopening of the newly restored Lismore Regional Gallery. It is heartening to see this vital community space open again. On behalf of Arts National, Dianne congratulated the staff and Friends of the Gallery on their determined and focussed commitment during those long bleak months of its restoration.

In collaboration with the Gold Coast, Brisbane and Rockhampton societies, we select two Australian presenters and organise their itineraries, travel and accommodation. This year we were delighted to have Kendrah Morgan and David Banney. Diana Harden organised the 2023 and 2024 mini-tours, and Catherine White has already taken this on for 2025 and 2026.

Dianne thanked our secretary Diana and treasurer Peter Harden for their loyal support and engagement with administrative tasks. She also praised Erica Light on her selection and procuring relevant and high-quality raffle prizes.

We have a quality line-up of 2025 presenters and for that we owe much to Erica and Marion for their forensic scrutiny of the committee's topic selection process. Our 2024 program was diverse and balanced. On occasion, we were the outlier with our topic choice – and apparently, the envy of some in other societies.

Our Northern Rivers Newsletters are a standout and we are fortunate to have Marion's experience and expertise in preparing them. There is much to read in each of our editions. Topics are varied, well researched and supporting by stunning images, interspersed with happy snaps of ArtsNational members and friends. Wendy Edwards and Diana Harden also contributed articles in 2024.

Catherine White, Chris Chaseling, Susan Anderson and Tom Trembath continue their vital roles – with the Australian Lecturers, home hosting, marketing, catering and back-up support.

Nationally, ArtsNational continues to be managed by the Executive Committee, a small group of dedicated society members who manage and administer the Association through its 'virtual office' with the help of the part-time Executive Assistant Carolyn Larkin and newly appointed part-time General Manager Bevan Rigato. The Executive workload includes:

- selecting the 18 UK presenters and manages their internal travel;
- sourcing, vetting and promoting suitable Australian presenters;
- managing the Associations' reserves;
- maintaining and improving our prime marketing tool – ArtsNational website;
- guiding and supporting the annual turnover of committees;
- raising the ArtsNational profile; and
- encouraging YoungArts and ArtsNational community programs.

Recently, the Executive has secured an increasing number of partnerships, which have the potential to increase the value of an Arts National membership. The most recent additions include the NSW Art Gallery, Musica Viva, and the Brandenburg Orchestra. Further, a deal has been struck with the QSO for a likely 20% discount on Maestro concerts in 2025 and a 10% discount on subscriptions.

A partnership deal, negotiated with Northern Rivers member Kim Rabbidge, has been recently negotiated with Opulent Journeys for its Mid-Atlantic USA: 'The Art of Gardens Tour', in June 2025. Our own Annie Abbink is serving her second year on the National Executive as Chair of the Patricia Robertson Fund.

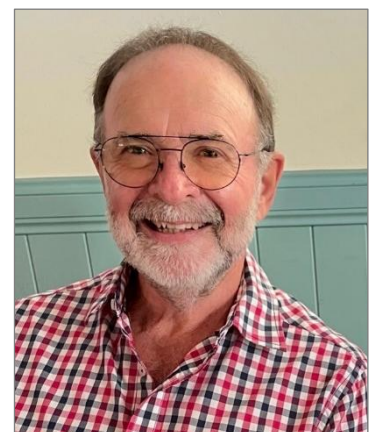
Finally, Dianne commended every member of the ArtsNational Northern Rivers Committee as a hard-working team dedicated to keep us running.

2024 Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Peter Harden presented his report for 1 October 2023 to 30 September 2024, advising that the balance at end of September 24 was \$7,414.16.

Relative to 22-23, our income increased by 5.5%, due largely to a continued improvement in our guest numbers, however our expenses also increased by 18.5%. Membership renewals fell to 72 which is well below our target level of 90 plus. This remains the strategic focus for our society to be sustainable in the medium term.

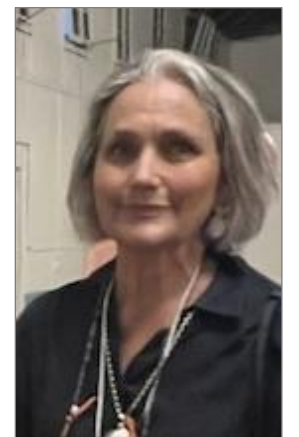
Peter thanked fellow committee members for their hard work and support throughout the year and looked forward to working together in the coming year.



Peter Harden

2024 End-of-Year Function

Following the AGM, it was intended to screen the acclaimed film 'Mr Turner' which concentrated the latter end of the British artist's life. However, despite Peter Harden's best efforts, he was unable to overcome the technical problems, particularly affecting the sound, so the exercise was abandoned. Instead, those attending gathered to enjoy a special supper and drinks while they mingled with friends old and new.





Meet Our Northern Rivers 2025 Committee

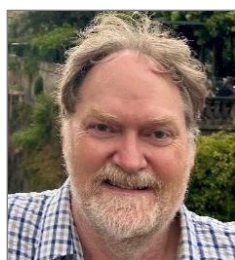
We are fortunate that members of last year's committee have agreed to serve again for 2025. This is such good news because each has specific role which generally coincides with their professional lives prior to retirement.

Our new member is Craig Snyder. He has been our IT specialist for some time, but now adds Vice Chair to his ArtsNational duties.



Dianne Stuart – Chair

Dianne was born in Goulburn; the youngest of three girls. She completed an Arts Degree at the Australian National University and a Diploma of Education at Sydney University. She taught in the government and private systems in regional NSW, Sydney and Canberra, and at International Schools in Pakistan and Malaysia. She also spent 20 years as an education adviser to both the resources and agriculture sectors. Dianne met James in Pakistan. Dianne enjoys music, ballet and gardening and has served on ArtsNational committees since 2017.



Craig Snyder – Vice Chair

Craig is Canadian, but decided to settle in Australia after having gained his doctorate in Political Science at the University of Queensland. Craig was a senior lecturer at Deakin University, where he was director of the Masters' program in International Relations. He has written widely on the subject, and his academic book on strategic studies was also translated and published in China. Craig loves art, and is very interested in architecture. His administrative experience will be a valuable asset to our Northern Rivers Committee.



Peter Harden – Treasurer

Prior to his career in logistics (transport), Peter was a practising dilettante. He spent most of his working life in Sydney before bringing his position with a global logistics company to Ballina in 2010, where he worked remotely from home. He and Diana married in 1978, and they share two grown sons. He retired in 2016, and now plays golf and tennis several times a week. He calls himself a 'Renaissance man' because he also cooks, cleans and does the laundry! Peter is an avid reader, and treasurer extraordinaire.



Diana Harden – Secretary

Diana was born and lived in Sydney prior to moving to the Northern Rivers with husband Peter in 2010. She is interested in all aspects of the arts, architecture, literature, film and especially gardens of all eras, types and sizes. She worked as a landscape designer for architectural firms in Sydney for 15 years, and has operated her own business for the last 15 years in the Northern Rivers. Diana is also Secretary of the Bangalow Garden club. When not in the garden, she enjoys tennis, and walking on the beach or in the bush.



Sue Anderson

Sue moved from Sydney where she spent most of her life and raised her family. As an educator, she worked across several sectors in a variety of management positions, finally retiring from Southern Cross University as a lecturer in the 'Preparing for Success' program. Now in retirement, she enjoys the relaxed Northern Rivers lifestyle, and the many cultural and social opportunities it provides. She is interested in all arts and crafts movements, and literature in all its forms. Sue handles the print and broadcasting publicity for ArtsNational Northern Rivers.

Northern Rivers Committee 2025



Chris Chaseling

Chris trained as a librarian with the State Library of NSW, then worked for Qantas Airlines for a number of years. She later transferred her talents to publishing, working for Rydges and other smaller publications. She moved from Sydney to Byron Bay in 2020 to join her sons and their families. With her interest in the arts, literature and travel, ArtsNational was a natural fit for her. She had been a member of both the Art Gallery of NSW and the National Trust. We value Chris's input as the Northern Rivers Home Host Coordinator.



Wendy Edwards

Wendy was born in Canberra and grew up in rural NSW and Papua New Guinea. She obtained a Bachelor of Arts (Psychology and Asian History) from the Australian National University before spending considerable time living and working in the UK, USA, Singapore and Hong Kong. On returning to Australia, she recently completed a Fine Arts (Hons) degree and a Master of Fine Art from the National Art School in Sydney. She continues to work as a practicing artist and as a guide at the Tweed Regional Gallery.



Erica Light

Erica was born in South Africa, and has a Librarianship degree from the University of Pretoria. Vehemently against apartheid, she and her husband Irwin left their homeland and spent 18 months in Sydney, before travelling around Europe and working in London. They returned to settle in Sydney in the 1980s. Erica owned a bookshop in Paddington, after which she spent her energies running marathons. She loves literature, film (attends the Sydney Film Festival every year), art, and classical music, and is passionate about Bob Dylan, whom she has travelled the world to see in concert. Erica and Irwin retired to the North Coast in 2016. She coordinates our raffle, and also heads the team for selecting the presentation topics.



Marion Pescud

Marion is originally from Geelong. She studied at Deakin University and has majors in Art History, Journalism and Literature, and has authored a book on the life and art of Victorian painter, Susan Sutton. Marion was employed as administration officer for the Head of the School of Social Sciences at Deakin before establishing her own renovation and design company. She produces our newsletter and is responsible for the publicity material of ArtsNational Northern Rivers.



Tom Trembath

Tom is from NSW's Riverina. To avoid a life of poverty, he went to Sydney at age 23, working full time while he studied part-time to graduate with a BA, LLB (Law degree) and Dip SocC. He worked in the Criminal Justice System for 36 years. He believes he has heard every improbable story ever told, but has determined that politicians worldwide spin more inventive fairytales than his former clients. Tom loves art, architecture, garden design and Italian opera. He brings a sage word to our committee and also runs the bar at our events.



Catherine White

Catherine was born Northern Rivers. She studied Medical Science and worked in direct healthcare and healthcare management for many years, completing a Masters' Degree in Business Administration. She later moved into commercial marketing. Catherine returned to the Northern Rivers five years ago, and thoroughly enjoys the local community and environment. She enjoys art and literature in many forms, keeping an open mind to encounter a fresh perspective.

Distant Friendships, Great Memories and Home-Hosting

The book club to which Diana Harden belongs is made up solely of ArtsNational members who share a love of books, art, culture and travel. Last year's November book was 'Lady Tan's Circle of Women' by Lisa See, about by a female doctor from a privileged household during the Chinese Ming Dynasty. The doctor was a real identity and had penned a book detailing her patients and their prescribed treatments.



Diana Harden

Diana brought a book on Imperial Chinese Robes to the book club meeting to show the members photographs of the beautiful robes and better understand the symbols and status of the embroidery on the clothes, which featured highly in Lady Tan's Circle of Women.

The volume 'Imperial Chinese Robes' was a gift to Diana and her husband Peter, from international lecturer David Rosier (from Scotland) as a thank you for hosting him and his wife when he gave (an ADFAS) presentation on the subject in 2018. He also showed several embroidered panels from imperial robes that he had collected while working in Hong Kong.

Diana wrote to David telling him that there were 'lots of oohs and aahs from the group', and to let him know how much his gift was appreciated. Below is an extract from his reply:

Greetings from a very snowy Perthshire - in the midst of an early Winter Storm. Luckily, I made it home from 2 weeks of lecturing yesterday before the bad weather arrived.

Lovely to hear from you and hope you are keeping well and active. We certainly remember our visit and your wonderful hospitality – particularly the whale watching. Tell Peter his advice to purchase a pair of R W Williams boots was followed, and they are still going strong.

I am still very active with Arts Society lecturing and whilst the range of topics on Imperial China has expanded over the years, I still prefer my speciality of Imperial Court Costume.

Wendy and I were very fortunate because in late 2019 we agreed for The Shanghai Museum to acquire our collection of nearly 700 items in its entirety – timing was perfect as events played out because the collection left UK in Jan 2020, a month before Covid would close China. The only negative is that the new Eastern Annex of the museum which should have opened in 2021 has still to do so but scheduled for next year. This will be the new home for our collection.

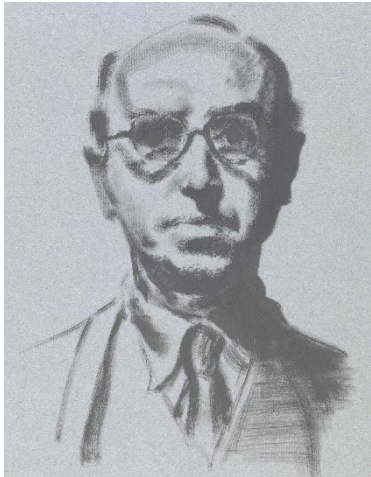
This is a good news story on all levels. Happy memories, intellectual stimulation, distant friendships, the joys of home-hosting, and the appreciation extended by the guests.

March Presentation: Hans Feibusch: Artist of Glowing Palette

International lecturer, Marc Allum, began his presentation with an anecdote about purchasing an antique plate in Tasmania, but not before telling the dealer the piece was not what she's assumed it to be. Having recognized Marc from the BBC's Antiques Roadshow, the lady offered him a further 50% discount!



Marc Allum



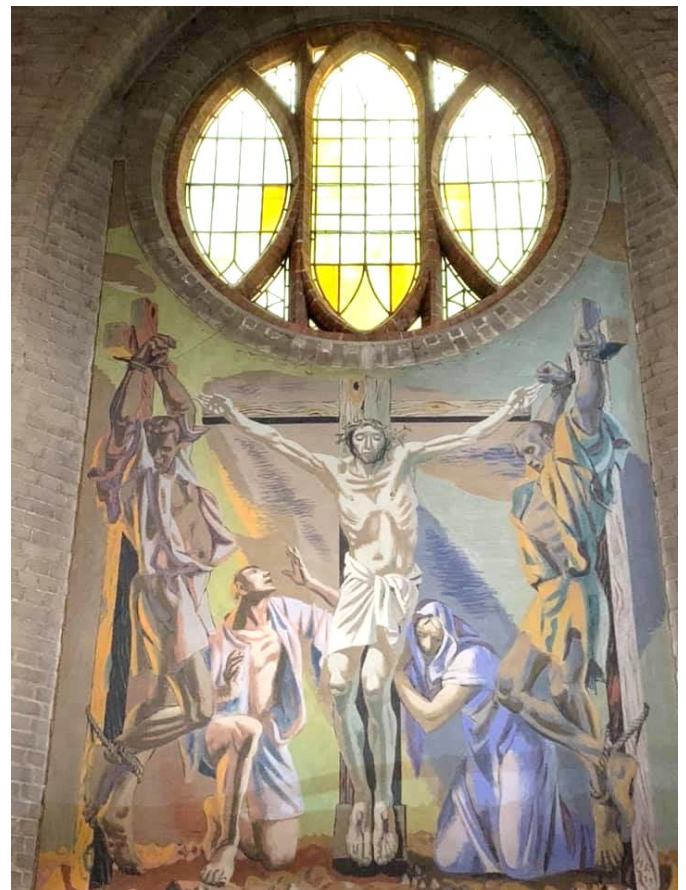
Self Portrait, Hans Feibusch

This is Marc's first trip to Australia, and he said that he's enjoying the greatly differing countryside, from Tasmania to Cairns with various lecture stops between. He admitted that he was just a tad surprised at how much Australians enjoy the cultural arts and at how very well travelled we are. Given that, he was not surprised that only a few had heard of Hans Feibusch.

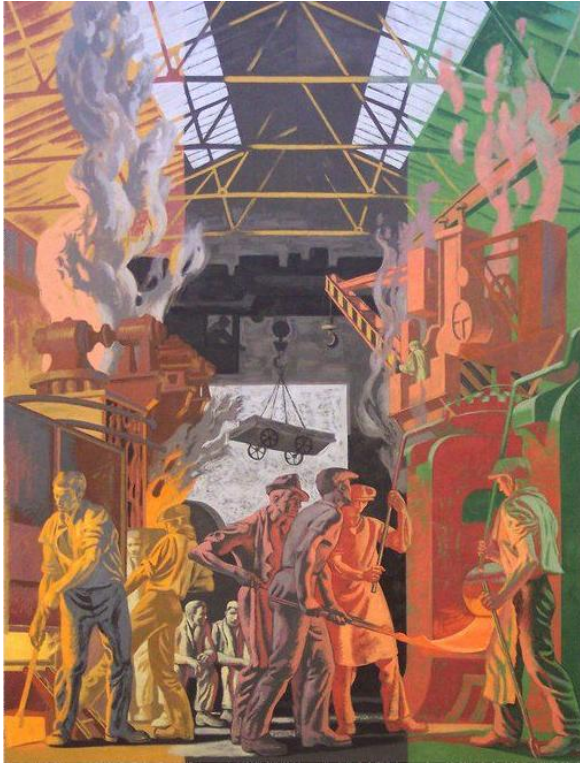
Marc was introduced to Feibusch's work at an early age when he first saw his work in the post-war redevelopment of Coventry Cathedral. He was immediately enchanted with the luminous glow of the paintings that mostly featured biblical-like figures juxtaposed against an abstract background. Some years later, he purchased a Feibusch painting of *The Prodigal Son*. At £3,000, it was a splurge, but he 'just had to have it'!

Feibusch was born in Frankfurt in 1898, Germany, to middle class Jewish parents - his father was a dental surgeon and his mother an amateur painter. He served with the German Army on the Russian front during the First World War. After being discharged, he studied art in Munich and then Paris, before returning to Frankfurt in 1925 to work as an artist. In 1931, he won a Prussian Academy of Arts prize, and was just tasting success when the Nazi Party came to power. He was forced to flee the country when a Nazi informer infiltrated his art group and discovered he was Jewish. Some of his lost paintings were displayed in a 1937 exhibition the Nazis labeled 'Degenerate Art', then ceremonially burnt in the yard of the Berlin Fire Brigade.

Leaving everything behind, he emigrated to England in 1933, and designed bookcovers and posters for a living. By the following year he had joined the 'London Group' of artists who mixed in influential



Right: Mural, St Martin's Church Hans Feibusch, 1949



Newport Civic Centre Mural, Feibusch (1960-64)

The three recurring themes in Feibusch's work were the natural world, old and new testaments and mythology. He brought flair and boldness to the rather staid English tradition. He reduced perspective to a minimum, thus achieving an impression of distance through colour. In his words, he "reduced simple forms and bright colours to hold a balance between what seemed spiritually significant and fussy detail."

In old age, after viewing a film about the Holocaust, he captured 'the hunting, the running away, the fall into terror' through a series of paintings he executed in 'burning' Expressionist colours.

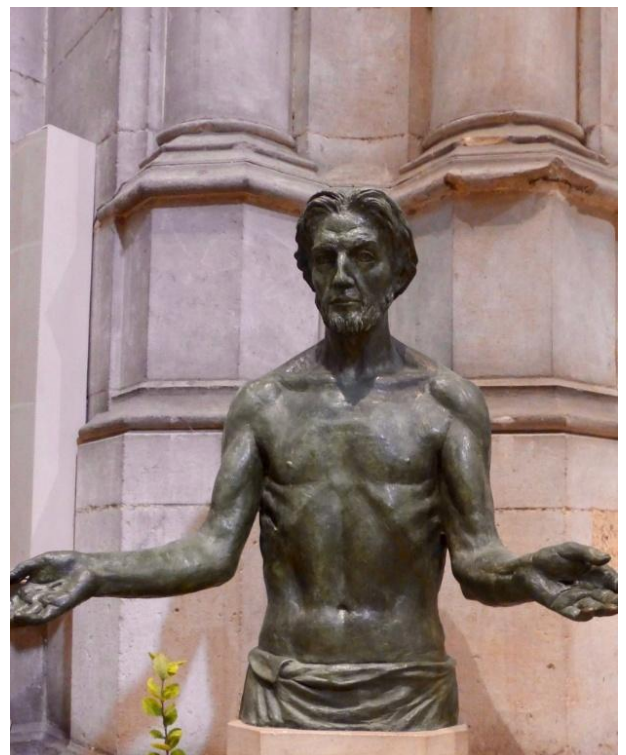
Feibusch turned to sculpture after his sight failed in 1973. It was partially restored by the ophthalmic surgeon Patrick Trevor-Roper, who was a leading activist in the gay movement, and played a large part in having homosexuality legalised in Britain. This is where Marc Allum's story becomes circular. While reading an article about Feibusch and Roper, Marc recognised his painting of *The Prodigal Son* on the wall behind a photograph of the surgeon. It had been a thank you gift to Roper from Feibusch.

In 1992, Feibusch reconverted to Judaism. He died in London just after attending a celebration of his work and life held at the Royal College of Art – four weeks short of his 100th birthday. His legacy consists of over 30 religious murals, a plethora of secular art and sculpture.

circles. He married a socialite and began to gain favour, exhibiting his work at the Royal Academy in 1944.

After the War, he worked mainly on murals, being mostly commissioned by the Anglicans who were rebuilding their churches destroyed during the German blitz. He called these his 'reconciliation works', trying to come to terms with the destruction the Germans had inflicted all over Europe, and effect on his own life when he had to flee everything he'd known and begin again. He swore an oath of allegiance to the British Crown in 1940, and converted to Christianity in 1965.

Feibusch also worked on murals for civic projects, and wrote a book, *Mural Painting* (1946). He came to the attention of Sir Clough Williams-Ellis who had established the very fanciful village of Portmerion, in Wales. It was a confection of architectural styles on which Feibusch painted many murals and created whimsical sculptures that dotted the outside spaces.



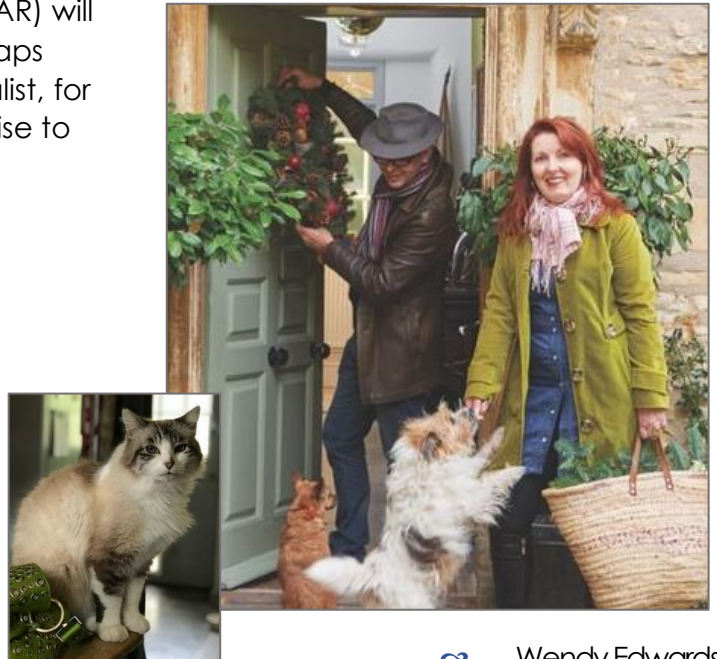
Christos, Ely Cathedral, Feibusch (1981)

What You Don't Know About Marc Allum

Fans of the popular BBC *Antiques Roadshow* (AR) will have recognised Marc Allum. While he is perhaps best known as a miscellaneous antique specialist, for our March lecture he drew on his wider expertise to introduce us to the German Jewish artist, Hans Feibusch.

Marc is not the only family member that is well known as a result of the *Antiques Roadshow*. He is married to the AR eclectic specialist, Lisa Lloyd, and their cat, Minou became famous while rubbing up against a fragile vase in the opening credits of AR. Sadly a much-loved Minou died in 2023 but Minou continues to appear in the show credits.

Photo: Marc Allum and Lisa Lloyd with their dogs
Inset: Minou, the BBC's *Antique Roadshow*'s cat



Wendy Edwards



March Raffle

Marc Allum presented raffle winner, Stephen Stocker with *The Art of the Mural*, by Shane Pomajambo. The hard-cover book, is a celebratory tour of some of the most vibrant, impressive, contemporary mural art in the world. Fifty artists from six continents share nearly 400 examples of their best work.

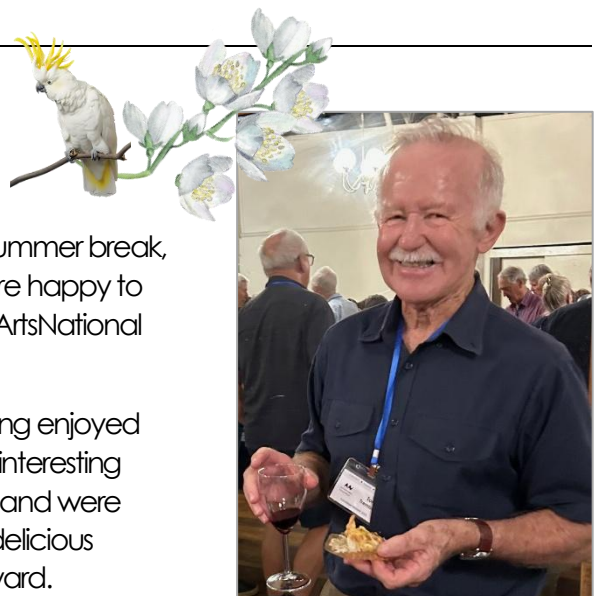
Left: Marc Allum and Stephen Stocker

Post Presentation Supper



After a long summer break, members were happy to return for the ArtsNational 2025 season.

Those attending enjoyed Marc Allum's interesting presentation, and were treated to a delicious supper afterward.





Post Presentation Refreshments

If anyone would like copies of the photographs in this issue, please contact Marion Pescud via email: marionpescud@inet.net.au



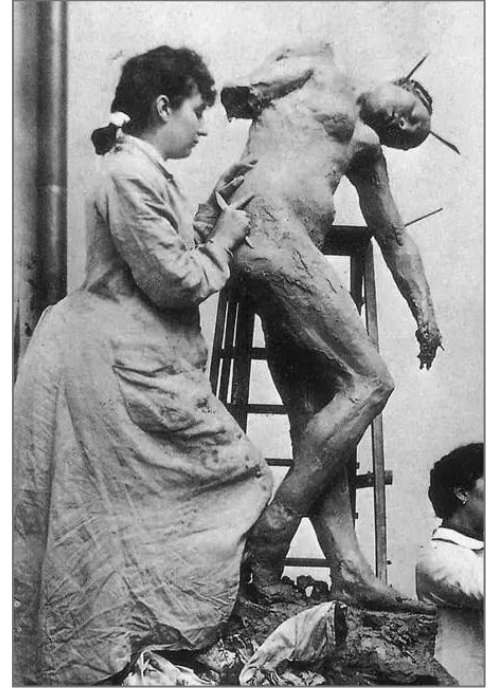
Camille Claudel

Sculptor and tragic mistress of Auguste Rodin

Camille Rosalie Claudel (1864–1943) was born in Fère-en-Tardenois in northern France. At age 12, she began working with the local clay, and became well known for her figurative works in bronze and marble.

Despite her mother's disapproval of Claudel's 'unladylike desire to become an artist', she was supported by her father who introduced her to Alfred Boucher, the sculptor who became her tutor and mentor when she moved to Paris with her mother, brother and younger sister in 1881.

When Boucher relocated to Florence to accept the Grand Prix du Salon award, he asked Auguste Rodin to take over the instruction of his pupils. Rodin and Claudel's artistic association soon developed into a tumultuous passionate relationship. The French sculptor was 42, she was just 19.



Camille Claudel



Camille Claudel and Auguste Rodin

Claudel started working in Rodin's workshop in 1883 and became a source of inspiration for him. She was his model, his confidante, and his lover. He however, refused to end his 20-year relationship with Rose Beuret.

Her mother strongly disapproved of the affair, and Claudel was forced to leave the family home and live in her workshop. After an abortion, Claudel ended the intimate aspect of her relationship with Rodin, although they continued their artistic collaboration until 1898.

Because of sex-based censorship and the sexual element of her work, Claudel was unable to get funding, so had to collaborate with Rodin and depend on him financially.

Claudel's reputation survived not merely because of her notorious association with Rodin, but because of her work. She was described her as 'a revolt against nature: a woman genius.' Her early work was similar to Rodin's, but showed an imagination and lyricism that was her own.

Contemporary French critics agreed that while Rodin's work was soft and delicate, Claudel's style was more virile and vigorous. There was a sharp divergence to their vision. Unlike Rodin and other male artists of the time, Claudel 'did not shy away from exploring the female grotesque'. She could exemplify something rare and exhilarating: with an 'utter indifference to the male gaze'.

After Rodin saw Claudel's sculpture 'The Mature Age' in 1899, he reacted with anger, and ceased all support for Claudel. It was claimed that he may have pressured the Ministry of Fine Arts to cancel the funding for the bronze commission. Rodin was known to have signed some of her early work (which



was not unusual as artists often signed their apprentice's work), but he never acknowledged her input, as he began to view her as a potential rival.

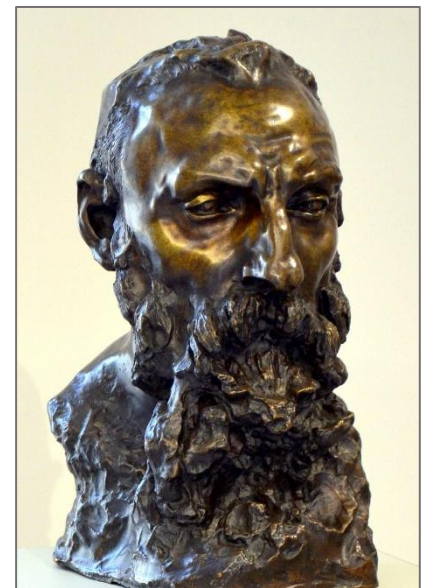
At this time Claudel was recognised by many as a leading sculptor. Historians believe that her decline was due to neglect by the art world. Other difficulties included the medium and the market – sculpting was an expensive art, and commissions were few because her highly unusual style was not to contemporary conservative tastes.

After 1905, Claudel appeared to have mental issues. She destroyed many of her statues, disappeared for long periods of time, and exhibited signs of paranoia. She accused Rodin of stealing her ideas and of leading a conspiracy to kill her.

Claudel was not informed of her father's death in 1913, after which her mother and brother (poet and playwright, Paul Claudel) gained control of the family fortune and cut her off, leaving her to wander the streets dressed in beggars' clothing. Eight days later her brother had her committed to the psychiatric hospital of Ville-Évrard in Neuilly-sur-Marne. It is suspected that he was jealous of her genius, and that he conspired with her mother, who never forgave her for her supposed immorality, to later ruin her and keep her confined to a mental hospital. Historian Kavalier-Adler, noted that her younger sister Louise, was also jealous, desired Claudel's inheritance and was delighted at her sister's downfall.

While many mental outbursts were recorded, she was clear-headed while working on her art. Doctors and other asylum staff tried to convince her mother and siblings that she did not need to be institutionalised, but they insisted adamantly that she remain there.

Claudel's mother forbade her to receive mail from anyone other than her brother, who only visited her seven times during her 30-year confinement. Her sister came to see her just once in 1929, and her mother never visited at all. Camille Claudel died on 19 October 1943, aged 78. Her remains are buried in a communal grave at the asylum.



Rodin, Claudel, c 1888

Widely considered to be the most gifted female sculptor the world has ever known, only 90 of Claudel's works in total exist today. The outstanding genius, who started with wealth, beauty and iron will, died in loneliness, poverty, and obscurity.

There is however, a growing interest in her life and work, with films, numerous biographies, a play and a ballet produced in recent years, many of which naturally concentrate on her intense relationship with Rodin.

Rodin, however, never forgot her and set up a small fund to establish a 'Camille Claudel Room' in a planned space dedicated to his own work in Paris. The Rodin Museum opened two years after Rodin's death – without the Claudel Room. Instead, there is now a Camille Claudel Museum in Nogent-sur-Seine, about 100 kilometres southeast of Paris.