



ArtsNational Gold Coast

NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2025

Formerly ADFAS—Australian Decorative and Fine Arts Society
Associate Member of the Arts Society UK



ARTSNATIONAL
Gold Coast

VIGNETTE: KEN DONE and the Ken Done Exhibition

From the Chair

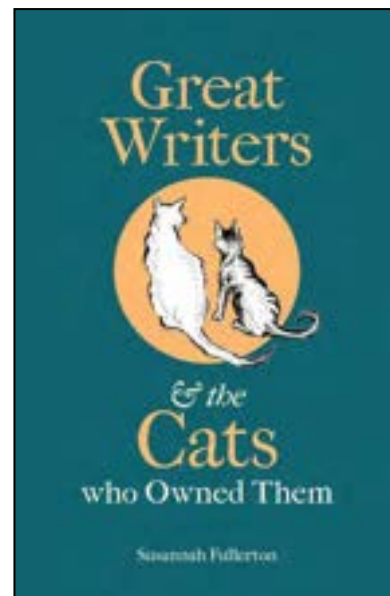
Our 2025 lecture program is now complete, and I am sure we all appreciate the outstanding work of our Program Secretary and Vice Chair, Wendy Spencer, together with our Day Coordinator, Bernadette Fulton. Managing an expensive and complex venue is no easy task, yet their careful planning has ensured a seamless and successful year. Your supportive committee has not only survived but prospered.

This year's program has offered a remarkably wide range of topics with a strong literary theme and two experts from the world of television. Traditional ArtsNational fare included picture restoration, Dutch art, and explorations of historic Sicily and the Aztecs. The delightful inclusion of a leading cartoonist added real novelty to the year, and we remain especially grateful to Harry Venning for stepping in at short notice to complete our calendar.

Looking ahead, 2026 is shaping up beautifully. Thank you to all members who renewed or joined at our final lecture. Our AGM will be held at the Broadbeach Cultural Centre on 11 December at 9:30 for 10:00 am, and I hope you can attend.

For the many admirers of Susannah Fullerton, we have an exciting event early next year — 11 February 2026 at The Fishbar, Benowa Gardens, starting at 11:30 am. The venue seats 80 comfortably and includes lunch, a drink, and Susannah's engaging presentation, "Great Writers and the Cats Who Owned Them."

If we can book out the restaurant, it will be a superb occasion. Please book early to assist with planning and to ensure a relaxed atmosphere for questions and conversation. This is definitely an event your friends will enjoy!



At our final lecture with Sarah Cove, we were delighted to make a special presentation to our wonderful raffle volunteers, Julie and Jacqui (left). Together they have managed this service for over twenty years — Julie 15 and Jacqui 7 — an extraordinary contribution, especially in an era when fewer people carry cash. And remember, you'll rarely win a more cultured prize!

There are also some excellent gallery experiences to enjoy right now and in the months ahead. The vibrant Ken Done exhibition is currently showing at HOTA. Artists by Artists opens at the Tweed Regional Gallery in early December, and Under the Modern Sun, featuring Brisbane artists from the 1930s to 1950s is on display at the Queensland Art Gallery. Even if the art is not entirely to your taste, the air-conditioning never disappoints!

Thank you once again for your ongoing support. As you travel, please think of our next newsletter — we all have cameras, and your photos and stories are always welcome.

Gordon

Gordon Wright, Chairman ArtsNational Gold Coast

VIGNETTE: KEN DONE and the KEN DONE EXHIBITION



The Ken Done Exhibition in Gallery 1 at HOTA is a must see especially for those who remember his art from the 1980s to the present day. We all may have owned a T-shirt, Tote bag, or beach Towel with a Ken Done print.

The exhibition captures Done's love of colour, nature and Australia. It is on now and until February 15, 2026.

The exhibition's title, "*Ken Done: No Rules*" is well chosen as he believed that if there were rules



for painting, he broke them. He resisted traditional art styles in favour of developing his own bold use of colour to interpret the world around him. He rejected the rigid techniques of the art world of the day, preferring to paint spontaneously and show emotion within his work. He is one of Australia's most recognised artists and his work has been celebrated for over the past four decades.



In 1988, World Expo was held in Brisbane and Done designed the exterior of the United Nations and UNICEF Pavilion. His colourful artwork (left) depicted children of the world. His artworks at the entrance and exit of the Australian Pavilion were some of the most photographed exhibits of the Expo and played a great part in the Bicentennial of Australia. These pieces have been fully restored and featured in the 30th Anniversary of Expo 88.



Left: World Expo 88 from Ken Done Projects

https://kendone.com.au/news.php?s=unicefandsrsltid=AfmBOopcBBBr-J3x6fdUnvNzj9QK9H06R3rMasMuhSmx6_FXFwai6mr1

Above right: Entrance to the Australia Pavilion (Photo from the State Library of Queensland)

Below: Ken Done World EXPO signs – then (at Expo) and now (at Caboolture Historical Village). More information: <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-10-27/revamped-expo-88-australia-sign-revealed/10428856>



Now 85 years old, Sydney-born Ken Done AM, studied at the National Art School in East Sydney. Early in his career he travelled internationally, working in advertising before turning to full time painting. His first Solo Exhibition held in Sydney

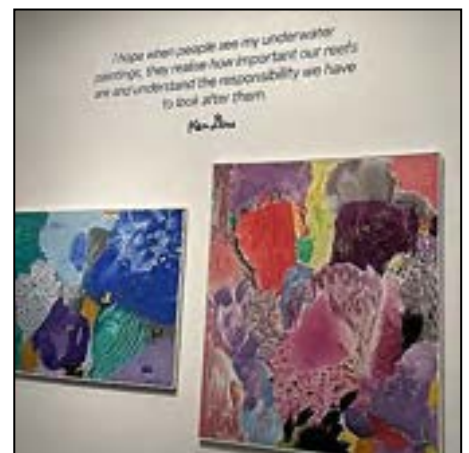


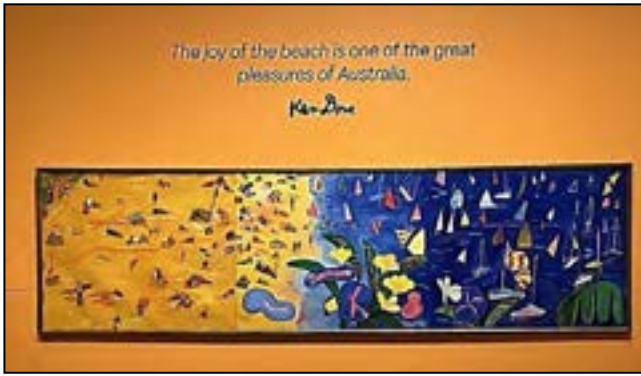
in 1980 was followed by over 100 solo exhibitions. Done's first European exhibition was in Paris in 1996 and in 2000 he exhibited in Los Angeles and London. He has won many awards including Australian Father of the Year Award in 1989, and in 1992, Order of Australia (A.M.) for services to Art, Design and Tourism. For his involvement with UNICEF and the welfare of underprivileged children, Ken Done was appointed UNIFIC Goodwill Ambassador, a position he held until 2024.

Image right address:

<https://cdn.shoplightspeed.com/shops/642491/files/39703163/1652x1652x2/limited-edition-prints-opera-house-and-harbour-bri.jpg>

Ken Done is well known for his colourful paintings of Australian reefs, beaches and coastlines.





Many of his images are available on a range of clothing and homewares which were sold under the *Done Art and Design* brand – a design company in partnership with his wife Judy who designed garments that went on to win the Fashion Industries of Australia Grand Award in 1993.



“*Ken Done: No Rules*” is an exciting exhibition featuring iconic paintings as well as outfits by designers using fabrics printed with his art works. He has exhibited nationally and internationally with works in institutions, corporate and private collections. It is an exhibition worth visiting over the Summer of 2025/26.

*Watch Ken Done creating *Big Vase*: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jHPFiAIEkxE> Ken Done: *Big Vase* - work in progress (5:11 min) from the Ken Done Gallery

*Ken Done Projects:

<https://kendone.com.au/news.php?cat=projectsandsrsltid=AfmBOoqkuCUvkVrNfOMjL18Kbm3j1nlombd54Gi2Ns5LXC3o28JDPez>

Dianne Cecil

UNDER A MODERN SUN



Frederick McCubbin.

Right: Daphne Mayo's bronze sculpture *Olympian* c 1946 was cast after 1958.

Under a Modern Sun is a wonderful retrospective exhibition at the Queensland Art Gallery. The exhibition is free and was curated in house by the Gallery from its extensive collection of Queensland artwork. Access is easy, and with the 50 cent rail fares, a trip from the Gold Coast is very affordable and accessible. Artworks include paintings, sculpture and photography.

On a recent visit I particularly enjoyed viewing the works by Margaret Olley, Vida Lahey and Daphne Mayo. The importance of women artists in this era is a clear highlight.

Left: *Winter sunshine*, 1939 painted by Gwendolyn Grant caught my attention. It is typical of the artistic style of Brisbane in the 1930s to 1950s. Grant's impressionistic style may have been developed during her time at the National Gallery School, where one of her teachers was





Left: *Sultry noon 1931* by Vida Lahey, focuses on the architecture of Brisbane's Central Station, with buildings at the corner of Ann and Edward Streets and up to the Turbot Street intersection in the background. How Brisbane has changed!

The exhibition continues for more than a month. I hope you can enjoy it.
<https://www.qagoma.qld.gov.au/stories/under-a-modern-sun-art-in-queensland-1930s%E2%80%93931950s/>
 PLEASE NOTE THE EXHIBITION IS NOT AT GOMA BUT IS AT THE QUEENSLAND ART GALLERY.

Gordon Wright

DAZZLING COLOUR in TINY PACKAGES

Paintings conservator-restorer and technical art historian, Sarah Cove's fascinating lecture "All that glisters", gave us a glimpse of the Elizabethan world of dressing to impress and the splendour of colour in minute detail. But instead of gleaming fabrics skilfully embroidered with colourful needlework and then sumptuously decorated with gold and silver threadwork, pearls and diamonds, nature presents us with splendour and breath-taking colour in tiny packages. Consider hummingbirds, native to the Americas, especially Central America.

From <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hummingbird>



Hummingbirds are the smallest mature birds, generally measuring 7.5–13 cm in length but the smallest is the 5 cm bee hummingbird weighing less than 2.0 g, and the largest is the 23 cm giant hummingbird weighing 18–24 grams. Noted for long beaks, hummingbirds are specialised for feeding on flower nectar, but all species consume small insects.

But why are they so colourful? The theory is that the eye-catching plumage of many male birds is a result of millions of years of evolution where brighter individuals competed more successfully for mates, and over time, traits for brightness were passed down and amplified.

From [What Is the Essence of Iridescence? Ask a Hummingbird | Living Bird | All About Birds](#): *Hummingbird feathers manipulate light to give these tiny birds—the most colourful birds on Earth—the power to dazzle on command. Feathers create magical effects by capturing, bending, and reflecting beams of sunlight using tiny structures built into them.* Click on the link above for more detailed information about the physics of refracted light in hummingbird feathers.

Right above: *Velvet-purple Coronet*, photo by Glenn Bartley. The crowns and gorgets (throats) are often the most colourful areas on hummingbirds, and also the parts of their bodies most likely to be used in displays.

Lower right: *Fiery-throated Hummingbird*, photo by Glenn Bartley. The rainbow spectrum of colours displayed by some hummingbirds comes not from feather pigments, but from nanoscopic structures inside their feathers.



Hummingbirds in myth and culture... The Aztec god of war, Huitzilopochtli, is often depicted in art as a hummingbird. Aztecs believed that fallen warriors would be reincarnated as hummingbirds.

One of the [Nazca Lines](#) (left) created between 500 BC and 500 AD in southern Peru depicts a hummingbird.

Known as "The land of the hummingbird", Trinidad and Tobago, displays a hummingbird on its coat of arms, the one cent coin and on its national airline, Caribbean Airlines (right). The *Hummingbird Medal* is awarded to individuals for significant contributions to their country. For more information about hummingbirds, click on these links:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uh5XHE318w> 2:36 min Hummingbirds: The Unique Colourful Birds Which Can Fly backwards

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dVvkWl3wDjI> 10:38 min See the size of a hummingbird compared to a human finger

David Attenborough <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lbmy4TLkVFU> 52:52 min





If you thought America's hummingbirds were small bundles of dazzling colour, you need look no further afield than Australia to find even tinier creatures of dazzling splendour – Peacock Spiders – and like their avian peacock namesakes, colour and display are essential for survival. However, one courtship mistake by the male could prove fatal for him.

Left: A pair of Australian *Maratus sarahae* peacock spiders on a human finger to illustrate their tiny size. Photo/Jurgen Otto

From Wikipedia: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maratus_volans Right: Male *Maratus volans*, a species found in specific parts of Qld, NSW, ACT, WA and Tasmania

Maratus volans is a species in the jumping spider family (Salticidae), belonging to the genus *Maratus* (peacock spiders). These spiders are native to certain areas in Australia and occupy a wide distribution of habitats. They have a specialized visual system that allows them to see the full visible spectrum as well as in the



ultraviolet-range; which helps them detect and pursue prey. Males of this species are characterized by their colourful abdomen flaps that are used to attract females during courtship rather like the display of tail feathers in peacocks.

Left – from Peacock Spiderman https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d_vYC5r8xMI: - the male *Maratus speciosus* (Coastal peacock spider), which inhabits coastal dunes near Perth



Getting back to the Elizabethan costuming mentioned in Sarah's lecture...

Our attention was drawn to men's fashion with its decorative clothing – right down to the legs. Men's legs were another thing – long, slender and deliberately left exposed in stockings to create an elegant appearance.

Image right from Wikipedia: Charles IX of France wears an embroidered black jerkin with long bases or skirts over a white satin doublet and matching padded hose, 1566.

Image right: By François Clouet - 1. The Yorck Project (2002) 10.000 Meisterwerke der Malerei (DVD-ROM), distributed by DIRECTMEDIA Publishing GmbH. ISBN: 3936122202.2. Bilddatenbank KHM, Public Domain, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=149356>

Male peacock spiders are masters of elegant legs and show them off to perfection in their courting dances. Click on the link below to see this: (You can skip the ad)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HPh_Gi7PCqs 1:54 min

Other videos showing the size of peacock spiders, their courtship colours and dances:

*<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AQAFXUshpVY> 2:33 min Peacock Spider 10 (*Maratus avibus*)

**Peacock spiders, dance for your life!* - BBC 4:48 min

*From Gardening Australia: <https://www.abc.net.au/gardening/how-to/jumping-for-joy/105629764> 9:46 min

In a recent episode, presenter Costa Georgiadis meets photographer and citizen scientist Michael Lun who is fascinated with Australia's peacock jumping spiders. Michael is only 17 but already he's become quite an expert in finding and identifying the tiny, colourful spiders found in a wide range of habitats across Australia. The video also shows cameras Michael uses to capture images of creatures that are only a few millimetres long – about the size of a grain of rice. To catch the females' attention the male 'dances' and displays elegant legwork in sync with the flapping of his spectacularly coloured abdomen.



In the world of tiny creatures, it's not size that matters – it's colour and technique...

Val Shooter

THE ART OF NAMING: WHAT'S IN A NAME?



The universally appealing 'zipper' is a remarkable invention but it took some 70 years for the device to be perfected and to have a fitting name to boost its reputation.

In 1851 the 'automatic continuous clothing closure' was developed but disappeared until 1890 when an upgraded device, the 'chain lock fastener' was followed by the reworked 'clasp locker' in 1893. It wasn't until 1923 when BF Goodrich observed and particularly liked the noise the invention made. He used these on rubber boots and decided to call the fastener a 'zipper', a name which has stuck.

Image left from Wikipedia <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zipper>

'Zipper' had all the elements of excellence as compelling names have the

following criteria: they are evocative, unique, memorable and simple and our brains store new information onto something that already exists in our memory. The word zipper evoked the speed of the connection which had a memorable sound when zipped up and down. It was simple, fast and fun.

Names which fully explain an invention or an organization are not efficient and use up extra brain energy as we humans remember things that are different from expected patterns; exceptional names and images are recalled. A moniker such as 'Amazon' does not describe the service provided but evokes the benefit of customer experience, a vast selection of products, plus convenience and trust.

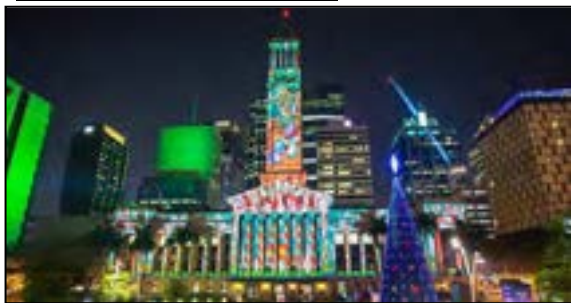
Non-profit organisations frequently made the mistake of giving themselves long descriptive names in their first iteration. Think of the name change from Australian Decorative and Fine Arts Society to Arts National, this signified a new identity and a modern focus for the association. The name better reflects the organisation and addresses the Arts National mission as an inclusive and influential supporter of the arts.

Carole Byron

WHAT'S ON IN BRISBANE?

Cultural events in Brisbane are conveniently close to either Central Station or South Brisbane train station. In the run up to Christmas, the city is lit up with festive lighting and interesting events and celebrations are family oriented.

***BRISBANE CITY HALL** from the **Brisbane City Council website:**



Join us for an evening of live performances and Christmas cheer as the festive season kicks off with the Lord Mayor's iconic Lighting of the Christmas Tree in King George Square. It all starts at 6.30pm on Friday 28 November. More events:

https://www.brisbane.qld.gov.au/events-arts-and-culture/what-s-on-in-brisbane/christmas-in-brisbane?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Brisbane-City-Council--November-2025-EXT&utm_content=Plan+your+Christmas+fun&utm_source=news.mailer.brisbane.qld.gov.au



*** QUEENSLAND MUSEUM KURILPA**

A NIGHT at the MUSEUM: Croc! Edition

A family-friendly takeover, with a night of croc activities across the whole museum!

SUPER-CROC SARCOSUCHUS

This 10-metre prehistoric super-croc is waiting to meet you inside the world premiere exhibition, *Croc! Lost Giants to Living Legends*. Packed with jaw-dropping fossils, lifelike models, and interactive experiences, this blockbuster exhibition is perfect for all ages.

Open daily 9:30am – 5pm More events at the Museum:

<https://www.museum.qld.gov.au/kurilpa/whats-on>



*** QUEENSLAND SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA**

Don't miss our closing gala of the 2025 season where QSO's Chief Conductor Umberto Clerici explores the raw power and technical mastery of Mahler's Symphony No.9 with Queensland Symphony Orchestra.



In a season where we've explored the depths of spirituality, this at times otherworldly work sits at the pinnacle of discovery, dancing between turbulence and joy; grief and acceptance.

FRI 28 NOV 7.30PM with pre-concert talk at 6.30pm SAT 29 NOV 7.30PM with pre-concert talk at 6.30pm

CONCERT HALL, QPAC <https://www.qpac.com.au/whats-on/queensland-symphony-orchestra>

*** QPAC PLAYHOUSE: A CHRISTMAS CAROL** Dec 12-24

<https://www.qpac.com.au/whats-on/2025/shakestir-a-christmas-carol>



***BRISBANE CHRISTMAS MARKETS**

Here's *Must Do Brisbane's* guide to some of the best Christmas markets happening in and around Brisbane this 2025 festive season.

<https://www.mustdobrisbane.com/features/best-christmas-markets-and-around-brisbane>

NEWS FROM HOTA GALLERY



As 2025 draws to a close, I am filled with pride for all we've achieved at HOTA Gallery and across the wider Precinct. This has been a year defined by artistic ambition, collaboration, and deep community connection. Through major international exhibitions and dynamic creative programs, we've continued to shape a place where art inspires, provokes, and unites.

Rounding out the year is *Ken Done: No Rules*, a joyful and vibrant exhibition that embodies the energy and colour synonymous with both Done's art and the HOTA spirit. It's the perfect way to conclude 2025—bold, expressive, and unapologetically Australian. I hope you've been in to experience this immersive exhibition, and will bring along any visitors

to the Gold Coast over the Christmas season. Above: Image credit: David Don (left) with Ken Done and members of the HOTA Gallery team

A highlight of our current program is *Metamorphosis*, part of our ongoing HOTA Collects series. Featuring works by more than thirty Australian artists, this exhibition explores transformation through collage and assemblage, delving into ideas of identity, memory, and perception.

We are honoured to currently present two exceptional Henri Matisse works on loan from the National Gallery of Australia through the Sharing the National Collection initiative. These can be seen in *A Bigger View* (right) until July 2026.

Right: William Robinson Springbrook dawn 1999, Collection, HOTA Gallery. Donated through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program by William Robinson 2002



This year also marks our 50th exhibition in the new gallery, celebrated with *Cloudy with a Chance of Art* in the Children's Gallery, opening in November and continuing over summer. Drawing from the HOTA Collection and major institutional loans, the exhibition invites children and families to look to the skies for inspiration — encouraging creativity, imagination, and play.



Looking ahead, 2026 will be a moment of celebration for the Gold Coast arts community. In May, we mark the fifth anniversary of our gallery building, followed in December by the fortieth anniversary of the Keith Hunt Memorial Community Arts Centre (later the Gold Coast Arts Centre). These milestones reflect the vision and commitment of generations of artists, arts workers, and supporters who have built and sustained our vibrant creative culture. We look forward to sharing our plans for commemorating these significant occasions soon.

HOTA stands proudly as one of the largest public galleries and collections outside an Australian capital city. This remarkable achievement has only been possible through the enduring generosity of donors, benefactors, volunteers, and community partners. Over many decades, their contributions—through prizes, bequests, and gifts—have grown the HOTA Collection to more than 4,500 works, valued at over \$33 million, and continuing to expand each year.

Finally, I extend sincere thanks to ArtsNational Gold Coast for your steadfast support. We're delighted to continue as the home for your 2026 lecture series, and to provide a place where art, conversation, and connection flourish—enriching the cultural life of our city and everyone who calls it home.

David Don, General Manager, HOTA Gallery

• More information about HOTA and what's on at HOTA: <https://hota.com.au/>

Right: HOTA Gallery image from HOTA website Image credit: https://lh3.googleusercontent.com/gps-cs-s/AC0HISyg_I1t1jPIHmR4pS66M_1Tn1jVLw3dpdw1QQ1ng3G137VnZCMB4MLeB1oLr-2zAJpZbjfP4fe4PpBOLdYlzhSXEZLJGiC8VhBOL_W6T6P_NqslpbO2TQsnclsvURPH=w243-h406-n-k-no-nu

Right: HOTA Gallery image from HOTA website Image credit: https://lh3.googleusercontent.com/gps-cs-s/AC0HISyg_I1t1jPIHmR4pS66M_1Tn1jVLw3dpdw1QQ1ng3G137VnZCMB4MLeB1oLr-2zAJpZbjfP4fe4PpBOLdYlzhSXEZLJGiC8VhBOL_W6T6P_NqslpbO2TQsnclsvURPH=w243-h406-n-k-no-nu



MINACK THEATRE, Porthcurno, Lands End, Cornwall. UK

This remarkable performance space, an amphitheatre, was envisaged, shaped and built by Rowena Cade and her gardeners, Billy Rawlings and Charles Angove, after the First World War. Named for 'meynak', meaning 'rocky place' in Cornish, Rowena bought the granite headland for £100 on which to build a house beside the sea with its dramatic backdrop. Images of the theatre (left) and Rowena Cade (right) from <https://minack.com/>



Being a fan of Shakespeare and fully involved in a local production of *The Tempest*, Rowena offered her garden as a suitable location for the performance. The play was a great success and Rowena decided to create a theatre on the headland. Initially the theatre consisted of a small terraced stage and some rough seating. Rocks were carried from the top of the cliff and sand and wooden beams from a wrecked Spanish freighter were carried from the beach. With her vision, grit and determination, further

terraces were created. Handheld tools and the occasional stick of dynamite were used and concrete was moulded to look like stone, providing further seating. Performances were lit by car lights and batteries. The headland was damaged during the Second World War when it was taken over by the army to serve as part of the coastline defence. By the end of the war, the theatre had disappeared into the undergrowth.

Rowena and Billy Rawlings renovated and rebuilt the theatre. The tip of a screwdriver was used to decorate surfaces with lettering and designs before the concrete hardened. They added ninety steps, a carpark and restored the road. The original Army gun post was converted into a box office.

Rowena Cade continued over the following years to improve and refine the theatre. Dressing rooms and other extensions were added and by 1976 the theatre was registered as a Charitable Trust. Rowena Cade died in 1983 at the age of 90.

Minack theatre is used for a variety of annual performances and events from April to September by companies from the UK and the US. The 75th anniversary of the theatre in 2007 was celebrated with a production of *The Tempest*. Minack theatre provides seating for some 750 people and today is listed as one of the most famous theatres in the world.

Carole Byron



VALE WILLIAM ROBINSON (1936-2025)

– from our *ADFAS GC Winter 2019 Newsletter's William Robinson Vignette* written by **Di Morris**



Born in Brisbane in 1936, William Robinson demonstrated artistic talent early on, being the best in his class at drawing and also taking piano lessons. His accountant father died when he was only seven. Subsequently his paternal grandparents came to live with them, and his mother went to work. Young William did his part using winnings from piano competitions to pay for his ongoing lessons. He gave up musical ambition in 1957 after playing what he called 'Wreckedmaninoff' with the Queensland Symphony Orchestra. Thereafter he turned his artistic focus to visual art but still played piano and listened to classical music as a means of entering that zone where the mind came to the canvas uncluttered.

Primary school teacher training in 1954 was re-directed towards art teaching after he gained a two year scholarship. Study was now focused on technique – geometrical drawing and perspective. During this period he met commercial art student Shirley Rees and they married in 1958; thus to begin the supportive partnership that shaped the steady growth and maturation of William's artistic path in life.

Art lecturing in teachers' colleges between 1963 and 1989 provided financially for his steadily growing family, both human and animal, but despite sometimes long drives from work to home, he still produced a steady output of art.

Seeing a Pierre Bonnard exhibition in 1971 brought on a flirtation with domestic interiors for the next decade but after 1979 the family's increasing menagerie of farm animals impinged on his artistic consciousness.

Right: William Robinson, *Interior with Black Dog*, 1970, oil on canvas, QUT Art Collection Purchased through the William Robinson Art Collection Fund, 2013

His affection for cows expressed itself first in 1980 with *Family Portrait (formal)*.



Left: William Robinson, *Family Portrait (formal)*, 1980, oil on linen, QUT Art Collection Purchased 1980

Indeed, at his 1980 Ray Hughes Gallery exhibition entitled *William Robinson (cows)* people would 'pull up in their cars outside and look in for a laugh'. The cows might have caused amusement, but few people bought those works. He gave most of them away but

gained something more important, for his cow pictures marked a definite change of direction.

Robinson developed a way of seeing chaos and painting it into his own way of order. This becomes evident on seeing the farmyard animal paintings, where the junk and the animals each have their relative positions which draw the chaotic parts into a whole.

In 1983 he began the quest for the lucrative and popular Archibald Prize. His first win came in 1987 with the parodying *Equestrian self portrait*.

Right: William Robinson, *Equestrian self portrait*, 1987, oil on linen, QUT Art Collection Donated through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program by William Robinson, 2011

But when the news came by phone at 10.00am, saying he was required to be in Sydney that night, his first confused response was ' – but I've got the goats to milk'. The newspapers had a field day with this, and Robinson's somewhat divisive fame was sealed.

In 1984 the family moved to a run-down farm in Beechmont. It was here that he would find a lasting spiritual connection to landscape, moving as it did through forest, granite outcrops, soaring cliffs, streams and waterfalls, breath-taking viewpoints of sky to sea and a wonderland



of native flora and fauna. Chasing maverick cows through scrub or taking long walks with Shirley in that hinterland created an eye that saw landscape from every angle and moved him to transfigure this holistic vision onto the one plane of his canvas. Robinson took sketches and notes in the field, then carried, not just the vision, but the *emotion* back to his studio. By 1989 he had retired from teaching and become a full-time artist.

Tragedy has a way of hurtling us back into the deep things of the spirit. After the death of two of his children during 1991-2, William Robinson entered what he terms 'his dark period'. The human figures are gone, dark mountains lead the eye on to contemplate infinity.

Left: William Robinson, *Green Mountains*, 1992, oil on linen, QUT Art Collection Donated through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program by William Robinson, 2017.

A devout Catholic, he saw man as eternally trying to reach and define God, although he concedes that aboriginal art, being so closely related to nature, is the nearest thing to religious art in our time.

In his eighties Robinson was still painting, living back in Brisbane, much awarded, and recognised as one of the most important of Australia's landscape artists. In 2009, The William Robinson Gallery opened in Old Government House at the QUT Gardens Point campus.

Though much erudition surrounds the art of William Robinson, he answered questions simply. One might take along his quiet comment when visiting his Gallery:

'My landscapes are not a reflection of the natural world, but a search for what lies beyond. My pictures require quiet contemplation where the observer can bring something of themselves to allow the work to completely resolve.'

Right: William Robinson, *Eagle Landscape*, 1987, oil on linen, QUT Art Collection Purchased through the Vice-Chancellor's Special Initiatives Fund, 1990



Di Morris

* 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: Helen O'Reilly, Dianne Cecil, Di Morris, Gordon Wright, Val Shooter

PHOTO GALLERY

From June, July, August, September and October lectures Photos: Helen O'Reilly



