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# ArtsNational Hobart

## Newsletter

### Spring 2025

## CHAIR'S MESSAGE



Dear Friends,

There was a real buzz at the AGM last week and the last lecture for the year which followed. People were excited about our program for year ahead as well as basking in the success of ArtsNational Hobart in 2025. It's been a good year indeed. The introduction of live streaming in May provided members with the option of watching the lecture online at home or wherever they are on holidays. Around 30 to 40 members each lecture have been live streaming. In the last few days, two members who are temporarily not mobile, let me know how much they enjoyed the lecture online and how easy it was to access. They poured a glass of wine, found a comfortable chair, clicked the link, and settled in.

As well as the regular lectures, the special events last year were popular with members including the exhibition "Puncturing the Mask of Civility" at Runnymede, Marc Allum's "Bring an Object" lecture, the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra's open rehearsal of "Peer Gynt", and Terrapin's rehearsal of "Feathers" at the Theatre

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In 2026 we celebrate 20 years since the founding of ArtsNational in Hobart with at least one party, an award and some special memorabilia. All the more reason for you to register now to ensure your place at the celebrations.

Lectures in 2026 are a great mix: from Dutch painter Vermeer to contemporary sculptor Constantin Brancusi; the impact of art on medicine and Homer's influence on the history of western art; Peggy Guggenheim's life of collecting; finding the Cullinan Diamond – the largest diamond ever; the story of the “Willow Pattern Plate” – is it English or Chinese?; and the how film editors shape images and sound to create stories on film.

I look forward to seeing you again in March. In the meantime, warmest best wishes to you and your special people for a happy, safe and magical holiday season.

Jandy Godfrey  
Chair  
ArtsNational Hobart

## HARRY VENNING

### *THE ART OF THE CARTOONIST*

Monday 8 September

The September lecture was given by Harry Venning and was an enjoyable hour on the “Art of the Cartoonist”. While he started out as an actor, Harry had been drawing cartoons from an early age. When the only job on offer was as a strip cartoonist, Harry taught himself to draw strip cartoons and his character Dogzilla was born. Harry went on to create Hamlet the Pig, a perennially out of work stage actor. Audience members were invited to guess the ‘**punch**’ line of various cartoons as each example was a riff on ‘to be or not to be’. Hamlet popped up throughout the evening to keep everyone alert. Harry's best known cartoon is “Clare in the Community”, about a social worker without empathy. This ran in the Guardian for twenty five years.

Harry also entertained us with his live cartoon drawing which illustrated the importance of eyes and eyebrows to cartoons. Just as important are movement and speed lines known in cartooning variously as hites, vites, dites, quimps, plewds and grawlixes.

the Pig, Harry left us laughing at the end of a very entertaining evening.

Sally Avery  
Committee Member

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Beverley Richardson, John Hunter,  
Harry Venning, Kathy Rundle



Sue Clennett, Ally Pickering



Ken Campbell, Karen Campbell, Juliet Stephens, Caroline Knipe

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## *"MY SCRAMBLING AFFAIR": HOW CONSTABLE'S LATE PAINTINGS CHANGED THE FACE OF MODERN ART*

**Monday 13 October, 2025**

Who would have thought that John Constable's large rural landscape oil paintings of his mid-late life's work, dating from approx 1819, would be considered the forerunners of French Impressionism, and of post-modern artists such as Jackson Pollock in the 1950's. We were most fortunate to hear Sarah Cove's fascinating insights about this aspect of Constable's later works. Sarah, as the leading authority on Constable's materials and techniques, has spent close to 40 years extensively researching his work in over 300 paintings including historic records, forensic scientific analyses, pigment analyses and his studio materials.

It is Sarah's view that the artist's later paintings, changed the face of Modern Art. This was especially the case in France, where he is considered the Father of the 1829 Barbizon school of landscape painting, and the forerunner of Impressionist art by over 50 years. There, Constable was influential with his radical technique of abstract broad-brush strokes and palette-knife work, evoking an overall impression, but with little recognisable detail in many scenes. The artist also transformed the appreciation of landscape art from a secondary genre, through his reverence for expressive, realistic landscapes.

We learned that Constable prepared his canvas using stipling – a technique which he described as providing “tooth” - instead of a conventional smooth, light, even cover. Then, to provide a more immediate sense of place, his initial sketches were undertaken outside in the landscape to be painted, unlike most of his contemporaries who worked almost entirely in their studios. Also, his sketches were full-sized and in oil, not the usual pencil and/or chalk: there was no under-drawing. His ‘painting’ was carried out with a palette knife, and the end of paint brushes, applying dollops of a personally formulated course paint to create a very thick, textured surface. Some scenes lacked so much detail that close-up examinations are unable to identify anything recognisable. This is exemplified in his major oil works dating after 1819. In his 1832 work “Opening of Waterloo Bridge” which Constable described as his ‘scrambling affair’, it contained a ‘bobbly’ surface, and a mish-mash of abstract colour.

At the time, the UK public were appalled - Constable's works were considered rough and unfinished, lacking detail - and he sold very few. The French however, were greatly impressed, and in 1824, Charles X awarded Constable a Gold Medal, at the Paris Salon for his 1821 work ‘The Haywain’. Constable is considered the Father of French landscapes of the era, especially for artists in the Barbizon School, Jean-François Millet,

Constable's legacy was still an inspiration some 120 years later, as seen in Jackson Pollock's 1950s works in the USA.

Despite being a full Member of the Royal Academy, Constable who died in 1837 aged 61, was never a commercial success: during his life he sold only 20 paintings in the UK. However, he left a profound legacy and his painting, *The Haywain*, remains one of the most popular in the UK.

Kim Dudson

Committee member



Helen Yeoland, Caroline Knipe, Jill Bennett, Cheryl Pfister

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Jandy Godfrey, Mary Louise Brammer, Sarah Cove

## LEIGH CAPEL

### *ART CRIMES AND HEISTS*

17 NOVEMBER 2025

Leigh Capel is the Director of Belle Epoque Fine Art and he specializes in valuing, buying and auctioning Australian and International Art works. He has also lectured on many topics including this one - an examination of some of the most audacious fine art thefts in recent times.

The first heist that Leigh examined was that by Napoleon Bonaparte who, in 1798, embarked with an expeditionary force to Egypt. There he ransacked the greatness of Egypt and brought home a vast array of treasures. The French tried to justify this with the idea that the spoils of war belonged to the victor, and also with the notion that the artefacts would be better cared for in France. The French collected or stole a number of precious objects, including the Rosetta Stone.

In 1911 an Italian tradesman, Vincenzo Peruggia entered the Louvre in Paris and stole the renaissance painting, *Mona Lis*. Taking the painting off the wall, he hid it under his coat and ran out into rue de Rivoli. His motive, suggested Leigh, was nationalism. He wanted the painting to return to his home country. Two years later while trying to negotiate the transfer of 'La Gioconda' to Italian authorities he was arrested and the artwork was returned to the Louvre – more famous and valuable than ever.

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controlled territories during World War II. Adolf Hitler was born in the Austrian city of Linz and his goal was to make that city into the new Florence of Europe. Hence most of the art works stolen by the Nazis were bound for the gallery in Linz. But senior Nazi leaders such as Reich Marshal Goering were just as avaricious for these symbols of culture; he too had many art works stolen for his own collection. In the final year of World War II, the Allies organised a team of art experts to travel into formerly occupied areas and search for the stolen art. This group were called the Monuments Men. They found thousands of works stashed in salt mines in Austria and hidden in castles such as Neuschwanstein Castle.

One of the most costly art thefts that Leigh discussed, was in 1990 from the Isabella Stewart Gardner Gallery, Boston. In this heist men dressed as policemen bound and gagged the nightwatchmen and spent more than an hour moving from room to room cutting paintings from their frame. They took away art works worth more than US\$500 million!

Leigh also gave us the background to the recent theft of a series of priceless jewels, including pieces once belonging to Emperor Napoleon III and Empress Eugénie. This theft was carried out by three masked professional thieves who smashed into the first-floor gallery of the Louvre in Paris.

Art thefts have occurred throughout history, and in part this is due to the value of the art works. In some cases, stolen art is resold, used by criminals as collateral to secure loans or to reduce their sentence should they be caught. Leigh's store of information was deep and his delivery enthusiastic. This was a fitting final lecture of the year.

John Williamson

Committee member

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Graeme King, Jenny Miller, Geoff Dannock



Helen Howrah, Jill Finch

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Jill Ireland, Rosanna Cameron

## AT THE GUGGENHEIM, BILBAO

On a recent visit to the Guggenheim in Bilbao we were lucky enough to view the exhibition 'Painting without Rules' by Helen Frankenthaler (1928-2011), the major American abstract painter known for her contributions to Colour Field painting & Abstract expressionism.

She adopted a 'soak-stain' technique where she poured thinned oil or acrylic paint onto unprimed canvas, allowing the pigment to seep into the fabric, creating luminous, fluid and often large-scale works that felt spontaneous yet deeply composed. On first seeing her work I immediately thought of Pro Hart's famous carpet 'paintings' minus the spaghetti & cream cakes.

Some of her contemporaries, Jackson Pollock, Mark Rothko and Robert Motherwell were also featured in this exhibition highlighting the synergy between these artists. Her paintings covered the early period of her career in the 50's up to 2002, along with some of her sculptures.

She was certainly a pioneering artist who never stopped exploring new ways to make abstract art on a large scale. Living a Bohemian life in downtown New York she was a prodigious talent, her paintings although unstructured carried some kind of message. Her rule was "no rules" meaning never being complacent about how your art was made, materials used or what it might look like. Her colours were magnificent & the landscape of her painting was unpredictable, exactly as she wanted.

Coincidentally on our return to Hobart there was an article in *The Arts Society* magazine on this exhibition. Unfortunately it has now closed but if you get the chance to see it anywhere else I would highly recommend it.

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Committee Member

Helen Frankenthaler



*Drawing from nature: paintings from the 1990s,*  
Gagosian Gallery, New York

## YOUNG ARTISTS PHOTOGRAPHIC COMPETITION

For the last five years ArtsNational Hobart has been proud to offer a Photographic competition as part of our support for Young Artists. This provides the opportunity for photographers, aged 16-24, to digitally submit their work that creatively responds to our selected theme, with an accompanying artist's statement. We are constantly amazed with the creativity, inventiveness and technical expertise of the entries. All photographs are

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Our judges have the difficult task of choosing ten finalists from all the entries and these are showcased on our ArtsNational Hobart website. From the finalists, our ArtsNational members are invited to vote for the Members Choice Prize and the judges select a First Prize and Three Honourable Mentions. It is wonderful to meet the Prize Winners and present their award cheques and certificates, at our October lecture. This year, for the first time, the Hobart Photographic Society generously offered a special prize for the five winning entrants. This was a day-long workshop with one of our judges in his studio with all of its modern photographic and videographic equipment. This was a wonderful learning experience for our young prize-winning artists.

The competition attracts many young artists from a wide range of locations and educational institutions in Southern Tasmania. This year entries came from UTAS, the Tasmanian School of Art, TAFE, Independent and Catholic Schools, 11/12 State Colleges and we were delighted to receive an entry from Queenstown. Our heartfelt thanks to Deb Simmons and John Williamson (Young Arts Committee), the Hobart Photographic Society, Deborah and Mia Williamson and of course our wonderful judges, Alice Gray and Matt Scott, for their support and hard work in making this competition such a success.

The theme for this year was 'Pattern' and the 2025 winners are:

**First Prize**

Ella Stops, *Ripples*

**Members Choice**

Sasha Kiaophan, *Aquamarine*

**Honourable Mentions**

Freya Boundey, *Lost in Translation*

George Burnett, *Louvre Pattern*

Lucinda Verne, *Frozen Sunrise*

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**FIRST PRIZE**

**Ella Stops, *Ripples*, September, 2025**

## 2026 LECTURES

**ALBERT GODETSKY**

**JOHANNES VERMEER AND THE ABSENT SUBJECT**

**Monday 2 March, 2026**

Johannes Vermeer (1632-1675) painted during the 'Dutch Golden Age' and yet his work is quite different from that of his peers. This lecture will examine the various interpretations of Vermeer's painting and show the circumstances that led to his influence ever since.

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**The Art of Painting (1666-1668)**

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**DAVID WORTHINGTON**  
**CONSTANTIN BRANCUSI AND 20TH CENTURY SCULPTURE**

**Monday 11 May, 2026**

The Romanian sculptor, Constantin Brancusi (1876-1957), is one of the most influential artists of the 20th century. David Worthington - himself a sculptor - examines the way that Brancusi combined modern engineering principles, belle epoque training and Romanian, wood working traditions.



**Portrait of Mlle. Pogany, (1912), Philadelphia Museum of Modern Art**

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## CHARLIE HALL PEGGY GUGGENHEIM - A LIFE OF COLLECTING

Monday 22 June, 2026

In 1948 the American art collector and socialite, Peggy Guggenheim (1898-1979), bought an unfinished palazzo in Venice - the Palazzo Venier dei Leoni - on the Grand Canal and it was here that she exhibited her vast collection of artworks. This remains one of the greatest collections of European and American art of the first half of the 20th century.



<https://www.visititaly.eu/art-and-culture/peggy-guggenheim-collection-venice-how-to-visit-it>

## WHAT'S ON IN HOBART

Here is a list of art events in Hobart that are currently showing or are planned for the near future. There may be some that you would enjoy visiting.

Location	Exhibition/Event
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>MONA</b></p>	<p><b>Arcangelo Sassolino: in the end, the beginning</b>  <b>7 June 2025 to 6 April 2026</b></p> <p>Italian sculptor Arcangelo Sassolino uses technology and mechanics to reveal the inner life of his raw materials. Arcangelo's experiments with physics bring with them a reminder of our own impermanence. His art is a metaphor, perhaps, for our own flash in the dark—for change that is as inevitable as our end; but where even destruction can bring forth further transformation and renewal</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Allport Library and Museum of Fine Arts</b></p>	<p><b>The History of Bees</b>  <b>11 October 2025 to 8 February 2026</b></p> <p>This summer, <i>The History of Bees</i> exhibition invites you to explore a rare and remarkable treasure from our collection: a book</p>

published in 1634 titled 'The  
Bees' written by Englishman  
Charles Butler (1560–1647).

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#### Handmark Gallery

**Michael McWilliams**

**21 November 2025–8 December 2025**

**Sebastian Galloway**

**12 December 2025–12 January 2025**

#### Colville Gallery

**View exhibitions online** - <https://www.colvillegallery.com.au/>

**Current-Jerzy Michalski**

#### Bett Gallery

**The Ancients–Lynne Uptin**

**21 November 2025 to 13 December 2025**

Palaeoendemics are ancient survivors, once widespread, but changing environments now restrict their geographic survival and now occupy a climate space that is globally rare. High levels of palaeoendemism occur widely in western Tasmania, particularly at or slightly above the treeline in relatively undisturbed vegetation, constantly moist climates lacking extreme temperatures, and in open vegetation with rare or no fire.

**Summer Exhibition**

**19 December 2025 to 31 January 2026**

Exhibition marking 40 years

#### TMAG

**Hobart: Current**

**14 November to 26 April 2026**

The third iteration of biennial contemporary art program Hobart Current explores the theme 'Here'. Artists will create works responding to the theme across a range of creative practices and media. This year there are ten participating artists - Marion Abraham, Jodi Haines, Andy Hutson, Jade Irvine, Jenni Large, Sara Morawetz, Jonny Scholes, Mary Scott, Dylan Sheridan, Peter Waller – are all based in Lutruwita/Tasmania.

**The World of Butterflies**

**8 August 2025 to 26 January 2026**

This is a special exhibition celebrating the diversity and beauty of butterflies on our planet. Featuring stunning displays of rare and exotic specimens, this exhibition is a must-see for nature lovers and curious minds alike.

**Compiled by Mary Collins**  
Editor and Committee Member

Editors: Mary Collins, Juliet Stephens, John Williamson



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