



GLEN EIRA ARTISTS SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER – Winter 2021

Glen Eira Artists Society Inc

ABN 72-436-357-743

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From the President – Mary Lewin

Just when we thought we were almost Covid free and were looking forward to the return to normality, a new outbreak in the northern suburbs resulted with the reintroduction of some restrictions. It seems that, with the stalled vaccination roll-out, vigilance will be essential for the foreseeable future.

As well as a successful exhibition, this year also marks the broadening of our activities program. Responding to demand, we introduced watercolour tutorials led by Qing Zhang. Check for more details below.

A *Message from Abroad* is a new column which we hope will gain traction with the members. Our first entry is from Wade Clark who currently lives in the US. Once international travel resumes, we hope that more members will share their travel escapades with us.

Significantly, our membership has continued to grow since the last newsletter. Details are included in the [New Members](#) section.

Member Profile – Misha Nathani

Born in England, Misha arrived in Australia in 1963, after spending time in Egypt, Switzerland and Israel.

Professionally, he has veered from computer programming to psychiatric social work.



He began painting after seeing an exhibition of French Impressionists in London in his mid-teens. The Vorticist artist Wyndham Lewis remarked on Misha's drawing in a school exhibition: "It's refreshing to see someone who works with his head." Despite this oblique compliment Misha continued painting and enrolled in life-drawing classes.

Strangely, Misha did no art in his university or army days until his arrival in Israel, aged 24. Even in Israel he did only one drawing – an urban landscape of local housing blocks.

Misha came to Australia for a family visit, and soon succumbed to a life so easy after the austerities of early Israel. He took a number of art classes over the years at the Council of Adult Education and has fond memories of the Ola Cohn Centre in East Melbourne.

He loved the 'business' surrounding oil painting: the smells of oil, turpentine and varnish, and the cleaning of brushes. Eventually, he started drawing outdoors at Mt. Buffalo, Wilsons Prom, Northern Queensland and the Kimberleys, accumulating many half-filled sketchbooks of various sizes.

He joined GEAS in March 2013, after finding it in the Glen Eira News, and has participated in Studio Art and Life Drawing classes. He has attended Botanical Drawing classes at the Melbourne Botanical Gardens, and also at the Botanical Gardens in Cairns.



Misha Nathani – *Botanical drawing*

On a holiday up North, Misha read Jean Auel's "Clan of the Cave Bear," a novel set in the Stone Age. Curiosity about the technology of primitive societies led circuitously to a fascination with looms and then to enrolment in the South West TAFE (Warrnambool) Diploma course in tapestry. Tapestry is a meticulous art form. Unlike painting or embroidery which is worked on a pre-existing backing of canvas, cloth or paper, tapestry weavers actually create that backing as they work. Tapestry can be based on a prepared image (called a 'cartoon') or completely freeform.

While he finds weaving a very absorbing, even meditative process, Misha's favourite art form still is *en plein air* drawing. He is quite prolific but tends to view his work as pedestrian. According to Sandra, his wife, he is dedicated to and totally immersed in his art to the point where communication with him is limited. "He doesn't talk," she said.

“Water” Exhibition Wrap Up

By any indicator, our long planned and awaited exhibition was a resounding success: 39 participating artists, 71 works displayed and ten works sold, the highest record to date. Feedback from visitors was unparalleled with many commenting on the diverse and creative responses to the water theme.

The afterparty was attended by many artists and their spouses during which Peter Roccella was presented with a two year NGV membership and a GEAS *Life Honorary Membership* in recognition of the time and effort invested in upgrading and populating our new website.

The winners of the Caulfield Rotary Club People’s Choice awards this year were:

- 1st prize: Susan Fajkind, *Victoria*
- 2nd prize: Amanda Wyness, *Waterfall in Winter*
- 3rd prize: Nita Jawary, *Ghosts*

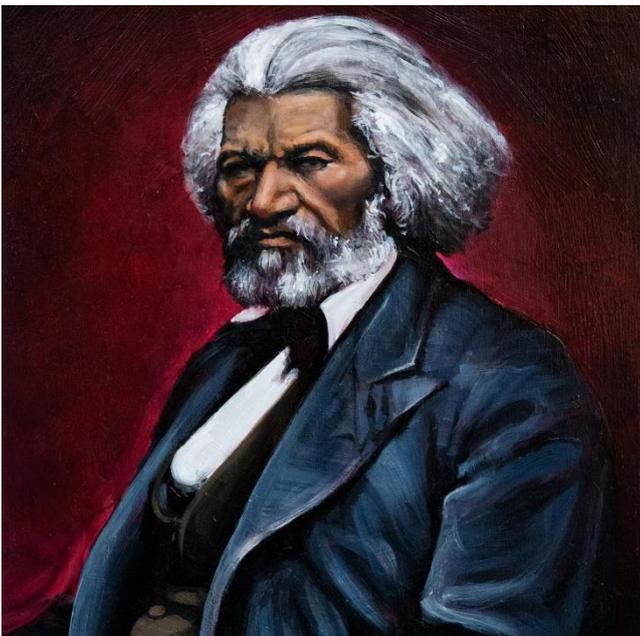
Interestingly, a limerick entered on 4 April in the rostered-on artists’ *Doodle Book* predicted the winner of the 1st Prize. It read:

There once was a dress called Victoria
That visitors to the Gallery pronounced “I Love Ya!”
They voted for her as Best and Fairest
But now we must await for the count
To find out if indeed she is First.

Mary Lewin

A Message from Abroad

Our member Wade Gregory Clark has been living in the USA with his family for the past couple of years. He is a prolific artist with a strong preference for portraits, especially of notable people. The following is what Wade wrote about his portrait of Frederick Douglas.



As Black History Month comes to a close, I leave you tonight with this oil sketch painting I did of Frederick Douglas. Frederick Douglas never smiled in his photographs (all 160 of them) as doing so was an expression he viewed as too ‘amiable’ and he never wanted to come across as a happy slave!

So what can we all learn from Frederick today? I would say everything; go read his autobiographies. But for today I leave you to ponder these two quotes that I feel are just as relevant today as they were over 170 years ago.

“Where justice is denied, where poverty is enforced, where ignorance prevails, and where any one class is made to feel that society is an organized conspiracy to oppress, rob and degrade them, neither persons nor property will be safe”; and “America is false to the past, false to the present, and solemnly binds herself to be false to the future”.

Member Profile – Qing Zhang

Qing was drawn to art from early childhood and remembers drawing with chalk on walls, doors and any other surface, to the chagrin of her parents.

She was born in China where art was not a dedicated subject in either primary or high school; a reflection of the society’s culture where both parents and school authorities placed a high level of importance on academic achievements.



However, this did not deter Qing even though access to art supplies was very limited. She used pencils and pens, drawing on paper, notebooks and – quoting her – “everything that had a flat surface, I drew on it”.

Academically oriented and a high achiever, Qing enrolled in the prestigious and hard to get in Fudan University (Shanghai) and obtained a BA in Environmental Science, excelling in all her subjects. At university she also worked part time and was able for the first time to buy art supplies, attend watercolour classes and paint.

Qing migrated to Australia nine years ago, and started working a month later as a Procurement Analyst and a Procurement Specialist at a large manufacturing company. Not wanting to live in a cultural/ethnic silo, Qing deliberately chose to integrate into the wider Australian society.

On arrival to Australia Qing lived in a room she rented from a marvelous woman. Based on the exchange of information between the two prior to arrival to Australia, the prospective landlady deemed Qing to be “a decent girl”. To Qing’s surprise, upon arriving to her new “home” she found two canvases in her room; a gift from

the landlady who was impressed by the watercolour works Qing sent to her as part of the exchanges. The landlady had an abiding interest in art and encouraged Qing to become involved in the art community.

Whilst working Qing took a year-long course at the Victoria College of Art where she learnt to paint with other media, and participated in the school's end of year exhibition. Around that time, she was encouraged to participate in the Bright Autumn Festival where she sold her first painting.

Eventually, she decided to study full time to gain her Visual Arts Diploma (RMIT) – a daytime course – which meant living on her meagre savings. One of her teachers inspired her to enroll in a business training program to gain needed skills for running her own business. He further encouraged her to join community art groups which led her to searching online and discovering GEAS.

Activity Reports

Watercolour Tutorials is a new activity introduced recently in response to a perceived demand for such classes. Led by Qing Zhang the classes are held on Mondays from 10am to 12pm.

Watercolour Classes – a new GEAS activity

Tutor: Qing Zhang, a GEAS member and experienced tutor

Focus: Understanding the unique characteristics of this medium.
Learning to handle paint and water on paper.
Building your confidence using this medium.

Key elements: introduction to watercolour, painting techniques, drawing and painting demonstrations.

Weekly sessions held on Mondays during school semesters.

Venue: Scout Hall, Birch Street, Caulfield South

Time: 10am to 12pm

Cost per session: \$20 for Members; \$25 for non-members



To register interest contact geasartists@gmail.com

Attendance levels to date validate the Committee's decision to introduce this activity. The current Semester is booked out, and more members have indicated their interest to attend the Third Semester tutorials.

Our activities program is back to the 'normal' setting. Whilst attendance at **Life drawing** fell slightly, the number of participants in **Studio Art** is growing again. Led by Martin Bruckard, the first semester-based Professional Development session was held on 4 May. Members will be notified of future events in due course.

Since the last bulletin **On-Site Painting** outings were held at Braeside Park, the National Australian Aviation Museum at Moorabbin Airport and Kamesburgh Gardens and Historic Mansion in Brighton. These are followed by online displays in the GEAS Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/GlenEiraArtistsSociety>

Portraiture sessions continue to attract strong attendance. A big 'thank you' to Odile Ellison and Emily Levin who hosted the last two sessions. Please contact us geasartists@gmail.com if you would like to participate in this activity, or host a future session.

Two **Art and About** visits were conducted since the last Newsletter: an online event in March, 'View the Collection' about fabric artist Tammy Kanat; and a recent visit to the *She-Oak and Sunlight: Australian Impressionism* exhibition at the NGV Australia, Federation Square. These events provide GEAS artists with the opportunity to pursue artistic interests and socialising at the same time.

Community Connections: The GEAS *Local Talent* exhibition which was cancelled last year due to Covid is now listed in the Glen Eira City Council's exhibition program for July 2021.

Members' News

Qing Zhang's first ever entry into any art competition won the "Highly Commended" award at the 2021 AGRA Art Challenge for her work *Brolgas*.

Niven Krishna Murdamoothoo was one of the entrants to the *2021 Geelong contemporary art prize*, a signature event that fosters Australian artists and contemporary painting practices.



The Interchange

New members

We welcome our new members Hillary Ash, Corinne Renshaw, Louise Chen and Gemma Chandan, and wish them a long and happy association with the Society.

We also welcome Kylie Castan who resumed her membership after a few years sabbatical.

Rosie Pritchett has left GEAS as she moved to the Sunshine Coast. We wish her the best and lots of creative feats in her new Sunny North home.



Rosie Pritchett – *Going Troppo* (sold at the Water exhibition)

The Murrumbeena 'Big Frog' Mural

The story of 'Big Frog' will be celebrated at the official opening on Saturday 5 June. The opening will commence at 11am, corner of Murrumbeena Road and Railway Parade. With the Festivities going through to 1pm, there will be something for all the family. So come and join the 'froggy' inspired colour and fun!



Governance and administration

Website

Our new website will be activated next month. As well as a fresh and contemporary look, it boasts a members' gallery through which artworks may be sold.

Facebook

Visit our Facebook page for regular GEAS updates.

 www.facebook.com/GlenEiraArtistsSociety

We need your contributions by way of stories, artworks, and suggestions for new columns and improvements.

Please send these to geasartists@gmail.com.

VIEW MEMBERS' ARTWORKS IN THE FOLLOWING PAGES

Rotary
Club of Caulfield



 Bendigo Bank

Community Bank
Caulfield Park

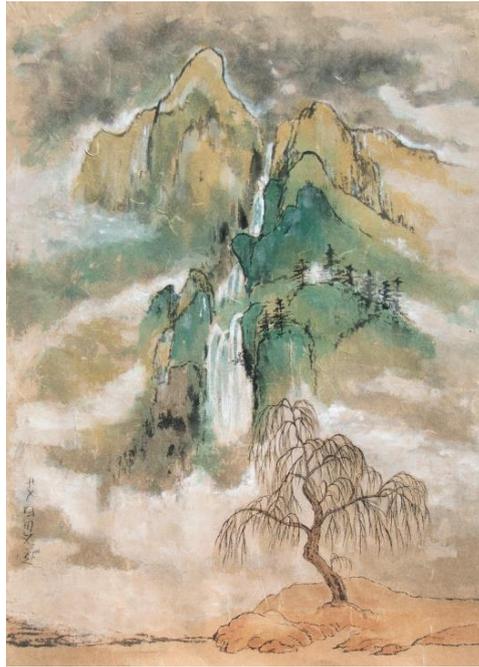
Proudly supported
by the Glen Eira City
Council

 Bendigo Bank
Murrumbeena

Members' Artworks



Susan Fajnkind – *Victoria* (Winner of the 1st prize People's Choice Award)



Amanda Wyness – *Waterfall in Winter* (Winner of the 2nd prize People's Choice Award)



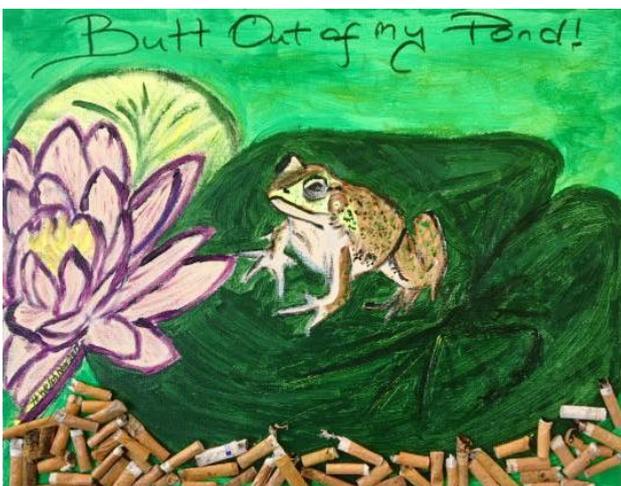
Merv Ritter – *Looking Out the Window on a Rainy Day*



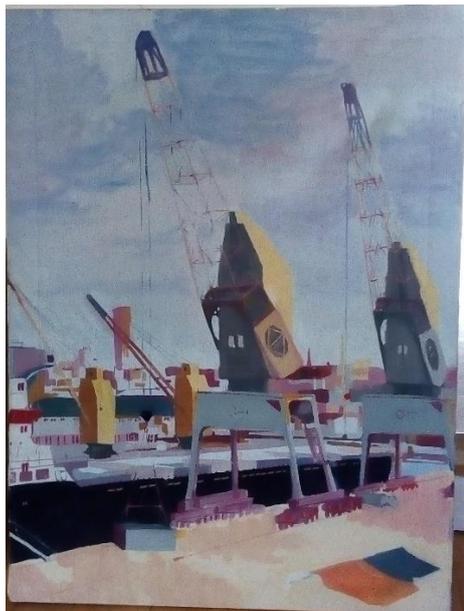
Nita Jawary – *Ghosts* (winner of the 3rd prize People's Choice Award)



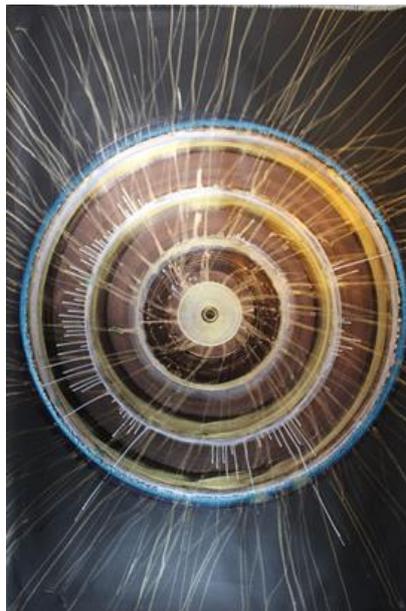
Christine Lewin – *Feeding Time*



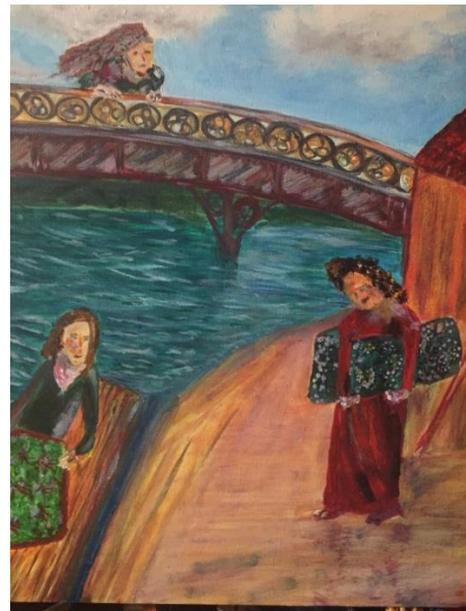
Heather Welsh – *Butt Out of My Pond*



Andrew Inglis – *Your Jib or Mine*



Rebecca Johnson – *Water Planet*



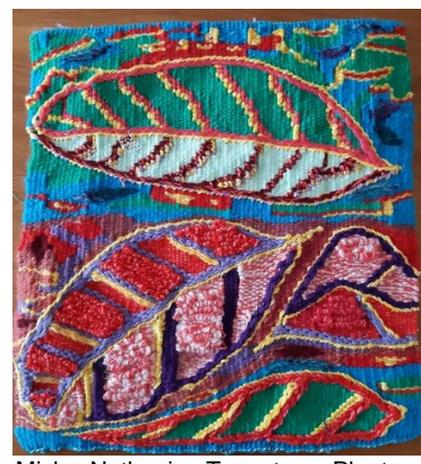
Michaela Hill – *Water under the Bridge*



Mary Lewin – *Somewhere in the Galaxy*



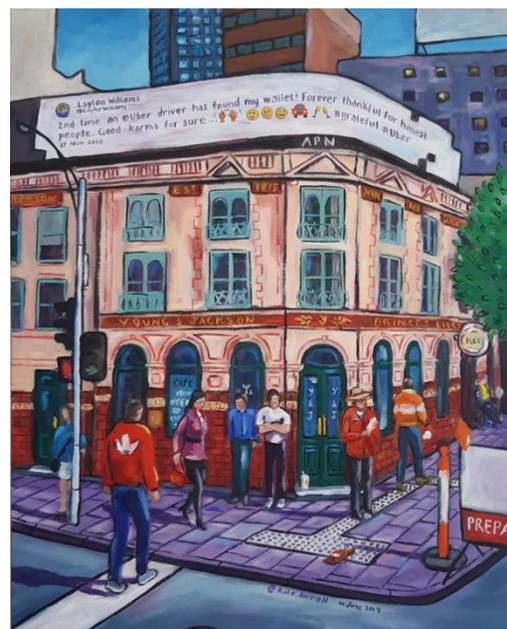
Susan Fajnkind – *Nona*



Misha Nathani – *Tapestry – Plants on Steroids*



Elizabeth Volpato-Coyle – *Inequalidade*



Kate Birrell – *City Corner with Young and Jackson Hotel*