



# GLEN EIRA ARTISTS SOCIETY

## NEWSLETTER – Autumn 2021

Glen Eira Artists Society Inc

ABN 72-436-357-743

Registration No. A0053616G

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### From the President – Mary Lewin

Welcome to 2021! The new year started with a lot of promise. But just as we started enjoying the newly restored ‘freedoms’ we were beset by another wave of Covid-19 infections, mostly imported by interstate and overseas arrivals. This time though the authorities were better equipped to respond effectively and brought the pandemic under control.

Eating out and going to the theatre are back in fashion; we can meet in larger numbers indoors and outdoors; galleries are open; and weddings, funerals and other celebrations may proceed with the due ceremonial rites.

Our activities program is now in force: full details are listed in the Art Calendar which was emailed recently to all the members. Some changes have come into place with different dates and/or times for some activities; these are listed under [Activity Reports](#) below.

For GEAS the best is that “Water”, our twice cancelled exhibition, will proceed with an eclectic variety of works from 41 artists.

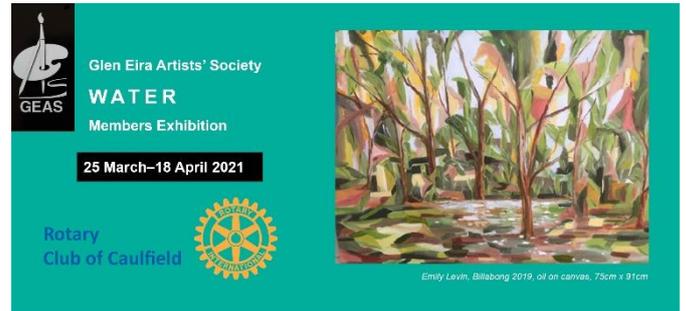
We are almost back to the ‘normal’ setting, but vigilance will be essential until a significant proportion of the population is vaccinated. Until then, we will continue to daydream about overseas holidays.

Looking forward to meeting you all in one of our activities.

### GEAS Annual Exhibition 2021

Convenor – Mary Lewin

“Water” will be our 7<sup>th</sup> annual exhibition. The theme was chosen following the destructive floods and bushfires at the end of 2019. As water is critical to the survival of all life forms, its scarcity or overabundance have immense impact. Artists’ works will depict the various manifestations of water or lack thereof.



Glen Eira Artists' Society  
**W A T E R** - Members Exhibition

EXHIBITION DATES: THURS 25 MARCH – SUN 18 APRIL 2021

GLEN EIRA CITY COUNCIL GALLERY  
Cnr Hawthorn & Glen Eira Roads, Caulfield

GALLERY HOURS:  
Mon-Sat 1-5pm, Sunday 10am-5pm, closed all public holidays  
Free entry

Water – is the Glen Eira Artists Society's seventh major exhibition. Water is an essential part of this world and the survival of all life. Its scarcity or overabundance have immense impact. Tears can express feelings when words often fail. Artists' works will illustrate the many manifestations of water or lack thereof.

[@glenairaartistsociety](https://www.facebook.com/geasartists)

[www.glenairaartistsociety.org](http://www.glenairaartistsociety.org)  
ENQUIRIES: Mary Lewin – 0418 377 985

OFFICIAL OPENING and FLOOR TALK  
To be confirmed subject to Victorian Government  
Covid-19 guidelines and public health directives.  
Further advice will be provided closer to the event.

Sponsored by

Rotary  
Club of Caulfield



Proudly supported by Glen Eira City Council

**NOW THAT I'VE LIVED  
THROUGH AN ACTUAL  
PLAGUE, I TOTALLY  
UNDERSTAND WHY  
ITALIAN RENAISSANCE  
PAINTINGS ARE FULL OF  
NAKED FAT PEOPLE  
LAYING ON COUCHES**

*Anonymous meme (Facebook)*

### Member Profile – John Selan

John joined GEAS in 2014, shortly after attending an art class at the then Breslin Gallery where he picked up a leaflet about the Society's activities.

Born in Germany, he was a baby when his parents (Holocaust survivors) migrated to Australia in 1948. He grew up in Balwyn, and not being academically inclined he left school at the end of Year 10 and took a job in jewellery manufacturing, crafting men's signet rings.



After a year, aged 17, he enrolled in a four-year RMIT dental technician course and apprenticed with a dentist who operated a dental laboratory – working and studying at the same time.

At the end of the course John was drafted (yes, the Vietnam war). Following a ten-week basic training at Puckapunyal and three months core training at the School of Army Health, he was transferred to the

Lavarack Barracks at Townsville. There he practiced dental technology for a period of six months and then was sent to Vietnam as a medic and dental technician.

John shared an anecdote about an event that happened around the end of Australia's engagement in the war. When Australia withdrew its forward firebase of Nui Dat a large convoy was assembled to dismantle everything. The dental unit was all packed into a trailer and they headed to Vung Tau.

Once he arrived at Vung Tau John was informed by his commanding officer that he had to return to Nui Dat to retrieve an air conditioner that was overlooked in the pack up. The unit in question was a huge 6ft air conditioner and needed a tractor to load it onto the trailer. After an extremely long and exhausting day John lined up to check the unit into the service corps storeroom only to find out that they had not transported it correctly and it was fit for the tip! Due to this incident John was one of the last Australian soldiers to leave Nui Dat.

Upon returning home John travelled to London – just like many young Australians in the 1970s – where he found work as a dental technician and where he met his wife Rose. Their first date was at a popular falafel bar. They married and had their first child in England before John brought his family to Australia in 1974. He worked for a few years at a dental laboratory until he opened his own business in 1978, one of the first laboratories to do implant work.

John is quite a prolific artist who is not loathe to experiment with different art genres, moving from landscapes to abstracts and – more recently – to decorative art forms. His work featured mostly in GEAS exhibitions, but he also participated in a group exhibition of GEAS artists as well as at the Kinch Café where he sold his first work just as he was installing his exhibition.

John is a father to two daughters and a son, and has seven grandchildren. He likes to keep active and read and to spend time with his family. You can count on John to arrive with his tool kit on Installation Day of GEAS exhibitions, to assist artists with D-rings and hanging wire.



Jons Selan – *The Lagoon* (recent work)

## Masks & Performance – Andrew Inglis

Masks serve many functions: design statement; disguise creating anonymity; substitution (becoming another person); health or work protection; fulfil religious or political purposes symbolizing a myth or “god”; symbolic (free speech being silenced); theatrical character (Tragic, Romantic, Comedic or Sanguine).

Recently we have seen Cyrano mask of the “Occupy” movement, and variants of multi-layered Covid-19 masks some emblazoned with “Free Julian”, and in Hong Kong protests.



Antoni Gaudí – *Casa Batlló* (Note the balconies shaped as masks)

Masks can be many sizes and shapes; of fur and feathers, leather, beaten gold or precious metals bejewelled, painted papier mâché or of soaked plaster bandages. They can be delicate hand-crafts, 3D printed or latex; repetitious or gloriously unique.

“All the World's a Stage” – Performance is the art of suggestion, illusion and deception of an audience. It is in a created space, controlled by performers, using sound, light, imagery and the powerful suggestibility of the human mind's willingness to be entertained and extended in exploring cultural contradictions.

Theatre may be part of shamanic or religious practice. Other performance can be satiric, perceptively critical or pure political theatre, alive with provocation. Their purpose may be diversion or distraction, for children or to operate simultaneously on many audience levels. Performers may be professional or amateur, itinerant or of a lauded performance troupe.

Masks are an intimate part of performance repertoire. Practice and rehearsal develop mystery, technique and meaning. Sometimes allusion and metaphor “universalize” and/or satirize the experience to protect performers from authoritarian censorship. Thus, a mask is like a blank canvas: it allows projection of character and a back story. It may interchange with other masked characters, an exploration of new possibilities. The make-up on stage actors’ faces is really painted masks to further illusion or effect. These create timeless new realities: psychological spaces for emotion and exploratory thought to occur, just as pictures in a gallery create a reverential bubble for viewers.

Dolls and masks are often used to elicit responses from severely traumatized children and adults in play-actions, and events can be re-enacted that cannot otherwise be addressed.

Masks hide one’s identity, using different colour to gainsay freedom of speech and voice one’s emotions and opinions without judgement or retribution.

## Member Profile – Kate Birrell



Kate first heard of GEAS and its activities through Yvette Wroby in 2012, and joined shortly after she participated in the then *Paint in the Park*, now called *Cityscape*.

She loved art as a child. And although she completed Year 12 Art/HSC, she chose nursing as her career. To obtain a Registered Nurse qualification in the

mid-1980s required an in-hospital training course which included shift work.

Kate married Gary in 1992 and they have five children – four boys and one girl ranging in ages from 27 to 15. Having obtained her nursing qualifications, she worked as a nurse for 25 years, juggling family and work responsibilities until she gave it up in 2008, but she always had a sketch pad within reach. She moved from sketching to painting in 2005, working around the sleeping patterns of her fifth child.

Kate and some members of her family are ‘died in the wool’ Richmond Tigers supporters. Football is central in the family life, dominating all weekend activities, and providing a platform for both physical and social interaction. Naturally, Kate’s first works were of kids playing footy. She then moved on to paint domestic life: working in the kitchen, hanging the washing etc. In fact, her first exhibition was titled “The Good Housewife” (2007, at Chapel off Chapel). She also did a series on horse racing around the Caulfield Racecourse.

Kate is strongly attuned to the human and built environment around her. Her current art is very much suburban-based: the buildings, parks, shops and her observations of people living in contemporary times. Kate now works from her own gallery in 1159 Glen Huntly Road, Glen Huntly.



Kate Birrell – *Hanging the Washing*, 2007

Art plays a major part in her life. Whilst she defines herself as a figurative artist, she is incredibly versatile. Over the years she experimented with various art forms, moving from the traditional to Pop-Art, the latter being influenced by the introduction of colour TV.

As well as participating in GEAS exhibitions and holding three solo exhibitions, Kate was involved in the *Anthony Breslin Murrumbidgee Community Art Garden* (2016), a collaborative art project.

## Activity Reports

Most of our activities resumed in February as planned. The exception was **On-Site Painting** which met in January at Hopetoun Gardens. Regrettably, the planned February gathering was cancelled due to a five day Covid-19 lockdown. This is a very popular activity that attracts many participants who meet at different locations throughout the year.

**Life Drawing** continues with weekly evening sessions on Mondays. Whilst **Studio Art** sessions continue to be held on Tuesdays, they are now shorter sessions running from 12pm to 4pm. At this stage the sessions are not tutored. The Committee examined several options and is considering replacing tutoring with semester-based professional development events.

The first **Portraiture** session of the year was an evening one and was well patronised. Most sessions are held during the day on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of the month. Only two are held in the evenings - in February and in November.

We look forward to **Art and About** outings as the year unrolls.

For full details about the activities, convenor names, dates and times, please refer to the Art Calendar which was circulated by email recently.

## New members

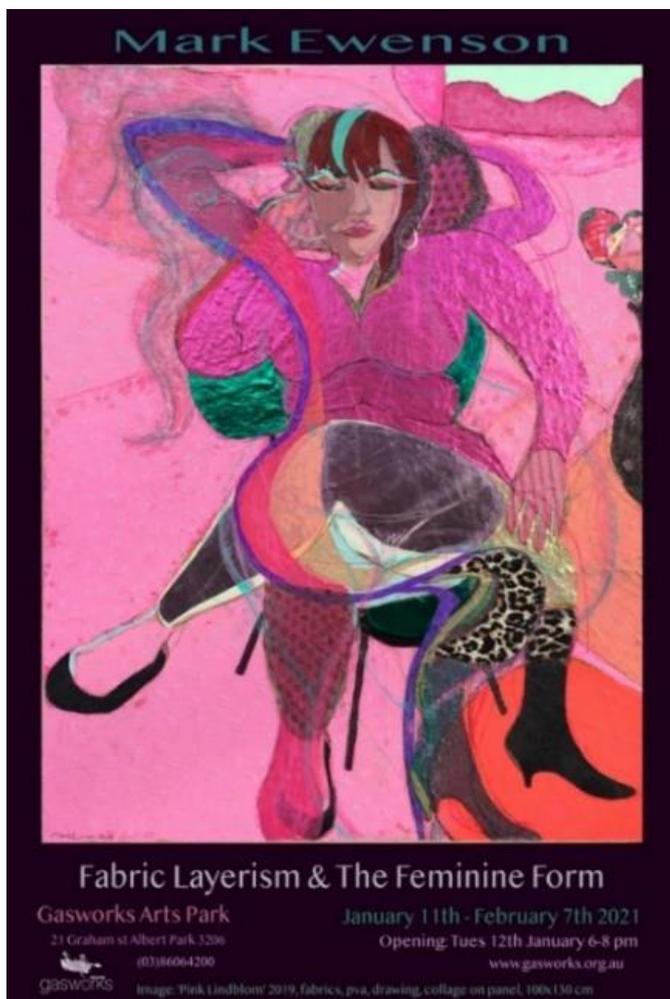
We welcome our new members **Niven Krishna Murdamoothoo** and **Dafna D'vier**. Niven is an abstract artist with a background in architecture and urban planning. Dafna, a former teacher, is a versatile artist and a sculptor.

We are also pleased to welcome **Tony Dickson** back to the fold.

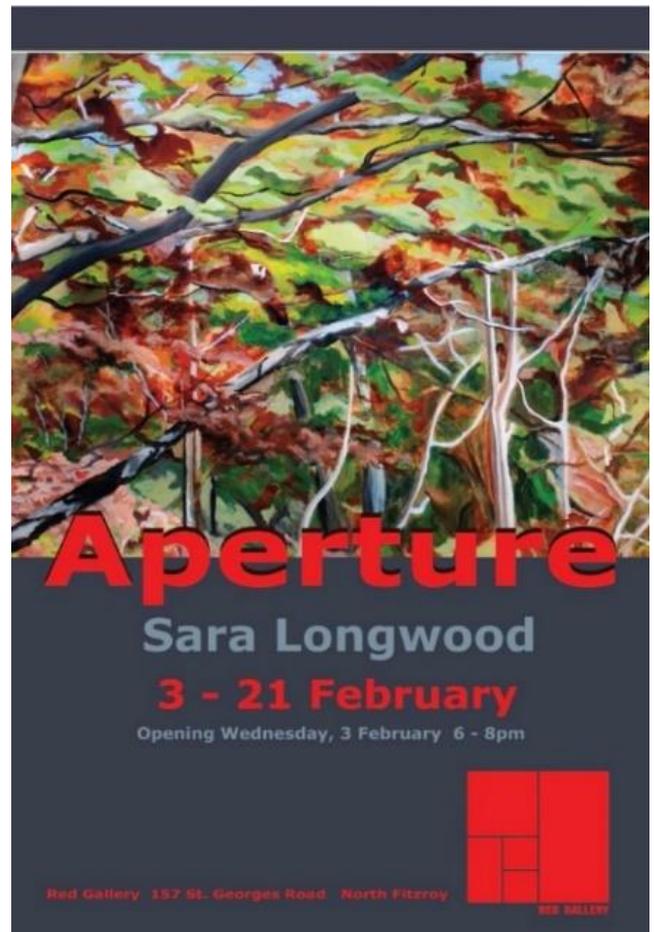
We wish them all a long and happy association with the Society.

## Members' News

Mark Ewenson's latest solo exhibition *Fabric Layerism & The Feminine Form* was held at Gasworks Art Park from 11 January to 7 February 2021.



The long planned "*Aperture*", Sara Longwood's solo exhibition was held at the Red Gallery in Fitzroy North from 3 to 21 February 2021.



Did you know that our member Qing Zhang is a full-time artist, and that she makes a living from the sale of her work as well as running watercolour classes? You will find her at the St Kilda Esplanade every Sunday and at the Rose Street market every Saturday.



Qing with a satisfied buyer at the St Kilda Esplanade

You can also find her works on Instagram <https://www.instagram.com/choosearts/> and on her website <https://www.choosearts.com.au>



## MEMBERS' ARTWORKS



Misha Nathani – *Hopetoun Gardens Rotunda*



Kate Birrell – *Urban Living, Springvale*



John Selan – *Flower Power 2*



Sarah Friedman – *Stormy Seas*



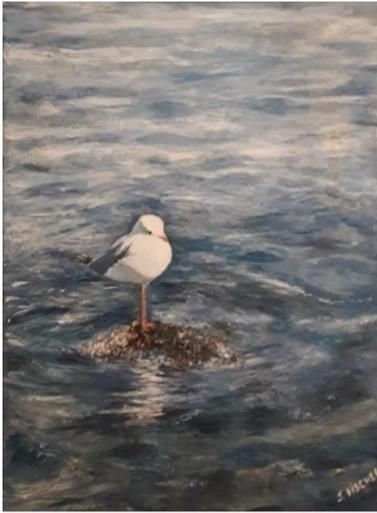
Gemma Louise Pap – *Blue Deep*



Chris Aspland – *Yellow Polka Dot Bikini*



Tamar Dolev – *The Dance*



Judy Fisher – *Bird Serenity*



Rebecca Johnson – *Ground Water*



Mark Ewenson – *Anita Beach*



Jessica Mullen - *A Melbourne Lane*



Merv Ritter – *Lovers at Sunrise*



Ancita Beale – *Remembering*

**All images are published with the artists' permission.**

Inquiries about these works should be directed to the Glen Eira Artists Society [geasartists@gmail.com](mailto:geasartists@gmail.com)