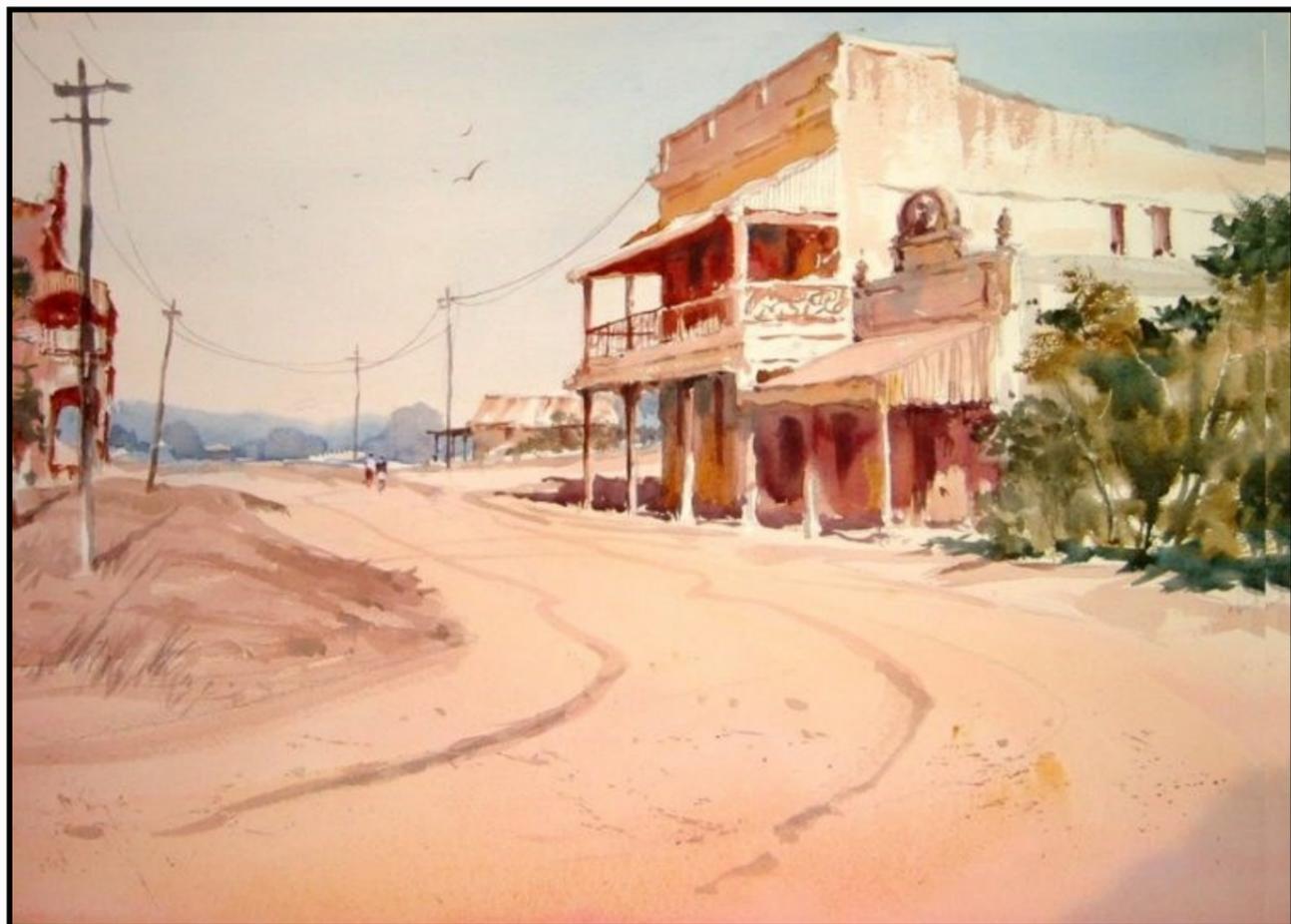


WATERMARK

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"Ravenswood Summer" by Robert Wade OAM AWI FVAS

Patron of The Watercolour Society of Victoria

*QUARTERLY JOURNAL OF
THE WATERCOLOUR SOCIETY OF VICTORIA Inc.*

January—March 2024



"Robert Wade OAM AWI FVAS" by Lisa Wang

1930—30th January 2024

Patron of The Watercolour Society of Victoria

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YOUR CONTRIBUTION

Watermark is the members' journal and we attempt to provide articles that reflect the members' interest. This is best achieved when members contribute. You too can become a contributor to the Watermark Journal. Forward your text and images to:
brendainnesart@gmail.com

Disclaimer: The opinions, comments and information contained in the Watermark journal are not necessarily those of the Watercolour Society of Victoria, its members or advertisers and are provided by way of casual information only. Accordingly those opinions, comments and information should not be relied upon and the Watercolour Society of Victoria makes no representation as to the accuracy and reliability of the information, data or other content of the Watermark Journal.



WATERMARK

From the Editor's Desk

Hello Members,

What a busy start to the year the WSV has had and it's only going to become busier with the excitement of the Luminous Exhibition in May followed by the **Marc Folly** workshops for the lucky attendees, his demonstration at the May monthly meeting—standing room only, plus **Eudes Correia's** workshops and demonstration in July! You will note that our 2 International members are represented in this issue with **Woruwuth Sraeko** from Thailand and **Mircea Corcodel** from Romania—your contributions are welcomed!

As a lead in to the 50th Anniversary show Watermark featured founding member **Ken Jack AM** in the last issue and in this issue the distinguished founding member, **Kath Ballard OAM** is recognised in the History of Watercolour.

On a more sombre note immediate past president **Rob Candy** and I had the privilege of curating a Retrospective Exhibition of our Patron, **Bob Wade's** stunning art. As editor, a year or so ago I wrote about Bob's studio for this magazine and it was very much a working studio with the artist knowing where everything was in the apparent chaos. After his death, Rob and I went to his studio again to collect artworks and the atmosphere was totally different, his carer had 'tidied up' and there was no presence of the artist at all.... Past president, **Wayne Degenhardt** spoke eloquently at Bob's memorial service at Vicarts and an edited version is included on page 5. Another thoughtful article included in this issue is Yackandandah member **Gordon Dickson's** transformative experience as an artist as he walked the Camino Di Santiago. Thanks also to the other contributors: **Vicki and Ralph Ballard, David Dickason, Annee Kelly, Marg Keogh, Julie Morgan, Maxine Wade and the members who had news to share on page 4.**

I look forward to including your images and articles in the next issue of WatermarkI hope you enjoy reading your magazine.

Brenda Innes, Editor

A warm welcome to our new WSV members:

The WSV is being very successful at the moment with 30 new members joining since the last issue of your magazine—a record breaking number! See the full list in the next e-newsletter.

Meanwhile, we look forward to seeing you at our monthly meetings

VALE

*It's with great sadness the WSV acknowledges the passing of our Patron and Life Member,
Robert Wade OAM AWI FVAS
And member
Gerry Howell*

Sincere condolences on their loss to their families & friends

From the President's Brush



WSV President: Ev Hales

Dear Members, I thank the retiring committee members for their unstinting support over the past 12 months and for some much longer than that. **Brenda Innes, Louise Edgoose, Lyn Morgan, Jan Martin and Brendan Lovelock.** Thank you each for your contributions. I welcome **Martina Quirk, Neville Penny, Carmen Ayers, and Myriam Ash** to the group and look forward to working with each of you. I thank the committee members who are continuing for their on-going commitment - **Jane Elliston, Janit Gardner, Sue Crosbie, Alison Fincher, and Wilma Green.** This society would not be where it is without your contributions.

I am looking forward to seeing you all at the May Exhibition 17th – 27th at VAS.

Please take the time to join us in celebrating our 50th Anniversary. We are planning a special time so do not miss out.

President's AGM Report for 2023

While writing my report for 2023 I received the news of **Robert Wade's** death, and this really does put everything into perspective. Bob Wade was intricately woven into the fabric of the WSV almost from the beginning. His influence on everyone he touched, across the globe, was a sensitively delivered message never forgotten. His life and words powerfully touched some of today's master artists during their formative years.

It is a benchmark for personal influence and as such puts the past year of WSV into a different perspective.

What has happened this past year?

- The statistics of our group over this year are impressive. We have reached 286 Members and have reduced unpaid members to 3 (42 in 2022). We are better placed than we were last year, and we appear to be moving in the right direction.
- While we are adding to the membership, we are also moving out into the wider community trying to be conspicuous in a good way. Part of this is Facebook presence with 1916 members of which 1201 are active members and covers a worldwide network.
- The revised website, now just over 12 months old, continues to evolve and members are beginning to see it as a resource for their use.
- In June we introduced a public You Tube channel which has 251 subscribers and 7400 views in just six months from 11 short 3 – 5-minute video clips. This gives the group access to a completely different audience.
- The Monthly Meetings at VAS during 2023 continued to draw members in good numbers. These meetings are valued for their presentations but also the opportunity to get together and talk in person with colleagues. We started with the AGM In February with a record crowd close to 100. I thank Nina Volk for her assistance with the tech side of things at the meetings. We do not always get it right and it seems like there is always some new little glitch to challenge us. The supper is a favourite part of the meeting for all except the committee. If you would like to assist with this catering, please talk to anyone on committee.

We have had a successful paint way at Bellarine Peninsula, many interesting paint outs from the Blue Lotus Garden, the museum and Ardency place and we watched how that space evolved. We visited the back rooms at the Library catching a glimpse of rare books in these secluded places. There were also several painting

challenges that continued to push artists to explore different themes.

- One of our aims over the past 2 years was to really give our members some special experiences. Workshops included Stefan Gevers a local contemporary watercolourist as well as the two international visitors coming specifically because we asked them to. These international stars Fabio Cembranelli and Thomas Schaller demonstrated for all at a meeting as well as offering workshops for those who want to work a little more closely with them.
- Attempts to be more inclusive and to add value for those members not Melbourne based has been seen in the video footage of the meetings being available online for viewing after the meeting. This allows distant members and those who cannot attend an opportunity to see what is going on without having to be there in person.
- The Withers Emerging Artists Grant, under the watchful eye of Louise Edgoose, has given us four artists interested in developing their watercolour skills and we have been endeavouring to assist as they expand their horizons, add to their skill base, and involve them in our network.
- The Wednesday Wanderers once thought as just an event for Lock downs has become a family of a steady 20 - 25 people out of a pool of 75 who meet every second Wednesday morning for a zoom paint in hosted by Jane Elliston. This is important for those who are too far away to meet regularly at the meetings. It also allows members to get to know one another by 'seeing' one another and working together regularly.
- This year has been huge for your committee because we are going out on a limb and organizing the 50th exhibition. As anyone running events knows there is a lot of work behind the scenes and as we are not an exhibiting Society, we have no processes in place, and we have literally started from scratch. You are not seeing any of the results of that work yet, but I know how hard the committee has been contributing above and beyond all the things they usually do, and I thank them for that extra effort. You as a member, will have a chance to be involved.
- 2023 was an exciting, challenging, exhausting year but one that epitomises what this Watercolour Society is about. Bringing watercolour artists together, celebrating the watercolour medium, adding to the skill base, and generally enjoying what this medium means to us all.

Sometimes it is easy to sit back and take everything that is offered, but just remember if others were not giving back then the richness of the group would be diminished.

**LUMINOUS:
A FESTIVAL OF WATERCOLOUR**

Watercolour Society of Victoria
Celebrates 50 years

MAY 17 - 27 2024

Victorian Artists Society
430 Albert Street
East Melbourne

Joseph Zbukvic

How can you support Luminous?

Bring family and friends to the Gala Opening, volunteer your time during the exhibition, buy one of the quality artworks or a silent auction item.

Be there or be square!

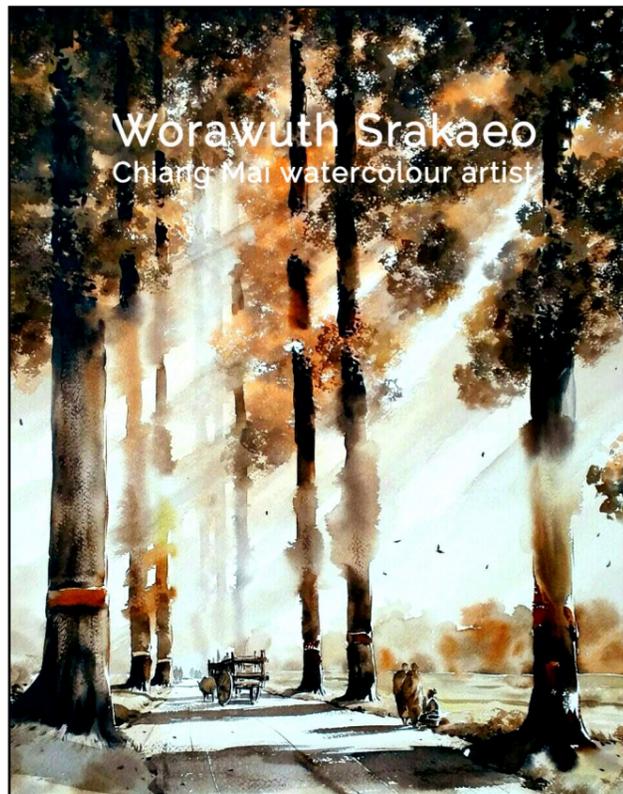
Members' News



Above: Member Joy Brentwood with her husband and fellow artist, Ian Pascoe accepting her prize of an exhibition at Clay & Co Art Gallery from the gallery owner, Karen Morton.

Congratulations to the following WSV members for being finalists in the international watercolour exhibition held annually in Fabriano Italy:
Alison Fincher, Annee Kelly, Julie Goldspink and Yesim Gozukara

Greetings from **Worawuth Srakeo**, a new member from Thailand



Worawuth Srakeo
Chiang Mai watercolour artist

Above: "Chiang Mai Lamphun Road, Summer's End"



Above: "The Other Side Of St. Mark's Basilica" by It Hao Pheh Winner Vicarts Summer Show

Below: "Tumut River" by Nina Volk, Best in Show Tumut Art Show . See more winning work from Nina on pages 8 & 9—Editor



L to R:
WSV members Julie Morgan, Jenny Mountford, Diane Moore & Lyn Morgan enjoying Grampians Summer Brushes at Longerenong

Arty Quote

"Painting is easy when you don't know how, but difficult when you do"
Edgar Degas

Robert Wade's Sentimental Favourite

By Wayne Degenhardt

Since the sad passing of Robert Wade in late January, much has been said and written about the great man -both as an outstanding artist and also as one of nature's fine gentlemen.

So much so, that when I was asked to speak at his memorial service, held at the Victorian Artists Society a few weeks later, I found it difficult not to simply regurgitate what had already been aired about Bob, not just by others but by Bob himself in the semi-biographical pages of his three best selling books. Hence, I decided to focus on aspects of Bob's life that were less known to most of us. Whilst my delivery was perhaps somewhat unconventional for a eulogy, I believe everyone enjoyed hearing these interesting facets of Bob's life.

So when Brenda Innes, editor of the Watermark journal, phoned recently to ask me to write a brief piece about Robert Wade, I somehow felt I was again faced with the same predicament of possibly repeating what people already well knew. What more can be said? Nevertheless, I was pleased to have yet another opportunity to share my thoughts about a dear friend and gladly accepted the task. I just needed to find the right inspiration. It came unexpectedly just a few days later.

Early on Sunday morning, I had ventured into the city. Casually strolling down Little Collins Street, I happened to chance upon a sight that would have easily elicited a "Wow, wow!" from Bob. There before me was a scene highly reminiscent of Bob's iconic painting, "The Painters" (aka Ship's Painters), depicting a gang of workers busily painting the side of a cargo ship. So excited was Bob when he first spotted this extraordinary subject at the Container Terminal at Sydney Harbour, he



claims he "almost fell out of the ferry." Of course, for me, being in the heart of Melbourne, I was not awestruck by the side of a ship. Instead, my view was a team of painters dangling over the side of a city building.

For a brief moment though, I could readily comprehend Bob's excitement at seeing the ship that day and the possibilities it presented to him as an artist. Indeed, so intimidated by the subject matter, it took Bob six months before he felt game enough to tackle it. Even then, he had already spent months doing the painting many times over in his head.

I once asked Bob, "Do you ever form an emotional attachment to your paintings, in the sense that you'll never part with it?" Pointing to a painting on his lounge room wall, he replied "There it is!" The painting was "The Painters". Aside from being a masterful piece of art, the painting represented Bob's first foray onto the international art scene.

Not long after completing the painting, Bob decided to enter the annual exhibition of the American Watercolor Society (AWS) in New York. The year was 1981. After submitting his entry, along with a 35mm slide of the work, and being accepted, he had little more than a week to get it framed, dispatched and delivered to the AWS in the USA. However, his plans almost went awry when the pilots of Qantas Airways decided to strike indefinitely. Determined to have his painting hang in the National Academy, Bob managed to convince an executive at Pan Am airline to help him get his special consignment to JFK airport on time. With the painting making it safely to the New York airport, with time to spare, Bob duly notified those responsible at the AWS and was informed it would be collected in time for the judging. Suffice to say, it wasn't picked up as promised. Naturally, Bob was crestfallen with the news but was pleased to learn it would still be hung as part of the exhibition.

"When they told me, I said put a red sticker on it and I'll pay you the royalty, whatever you would have made on the sale." Bob did that for most of his paintings that were exhibited or won awards, so that they stayed with him for his family. "I virtually bought my own painting back and I reckon it was well and truly worth it."

Continued page 18



Left: The Painters (76cm x 100cm 1981). Robert A Wade's first entry into the American Watercolor Society's annual art exhibition.

Below left: A scene in Little Collins Street evokes fond memories of Robert Wade's "The Painters".

Above Right: An extremely proud artist, Robert A Wade stands next to his entry in the annual art exhibition of the American Watercolor Society in 1981.

Below Left: Almost 20 years after "The Painters", a variation on the theme, "QE 2's New Coat" (36cm x 53cm 1999)



Getting to Know:

Stefan Gevers *By Julie Morgan*

Stefan Gevers was born in the Netherlands, leaving in 1993 to travel 'as far away as possible'. He fell in love with Australia, and over the last twenty years has toured extensively, the main inspiration for his work being nature and the Australian landscape.

Raised in a small rural town in the East of the Netherlands with his parents and brother, Stefan explains:

'Everyone knew each other and traditions and events were an important part of the towns culture. My father had been a merchant sailor and was keen to explore the world outside and (when he was home) he took us sailing or camping nearly each weekend. Maybe this is where I got my urge to travel as far away as possible.

He continues: 'In Year 12, because I was extremely bored at school I started drawing to get through class. I really enjoyed it and so at 19 I started my Bachelor of Arts at the AKI Art Académie, Enschede and absolutely loved it. The first day at the Academie someone started dancing naked on the canteen table during lunch and I felt right at home. There were no rules in terms of creativity, and we were encouraged to explore all avenues of art.

When I turned 18, my first overseas trip was to Australia for a short holiday and it set the precedence for coming travels. I subsequently hitch hiked through Northern Europe and after working in the same job for 5 years as a textile designer in Enschede I found a job as a designer/artist at a textile company in Auckland, New Zealand for two years. I then moved to Australia to work in the same field until 10 or so years ago and was offered permanent



Above: Stefan "getting the feel in the field" on a misty morning

residency and later citizenship.

My career in art could best be described as collaborating with the landscape. This literally means that I hang up my work in a tree and let the tree make the marks, or roll the paper in the wind. Often being in nature triggers visions or words which can be the start of a new painting. I feel very comfortable working with watercolour and see no limitations working on large paper. I love its transparency and unpredictable nature especially when it picks up fine details and marks on paper which I can't achieve with oil on canvas.

What stimulates me most about the Australian landscape is the space we have here, but also the smaller things like microclimates, the forming mist over the land, the sound of wind moving through trees and what is underneath the soil. Textures, patterns, movement of light and, most importantly, colour. It is about experiencing the landscape and all these elements.

Below: "Cultural Fields"



Above: "Morning Dew"

I do my most important work outdoors in country Victoria, that's when the ideas, experimentation and exploration start. I tend to work on projects, usually an exhibition, and never paint en plein air, never paint what I see, but more what I experience. What is important to me is where the landscape can take me creatively. Works can vary from taking a couple of hours to weeks or months or years.

In terms of being an artist I find it really rewarding to be able to make a living from my work and sharing my knowledge as a teacher. I am very lucky in that I do exactly what I love to do and that is an achievement.



Above: "Through Time"

Artists that I have been influenced by or admire who work in landscape and for whom walking through the landscape is part of their art practice (as it is for me), are Andy Goldsworthy and Richard Long. Eduardo Chillida, a Spanish artist was a huge influence from the early 2000's and extended my painting practice to include sculpture. I am very lucky to have a number of those sculptures in National Collections such as Art Bank, National Australia Bank Collection and Peter MacCallum. Recently I have come to really enjoy and appreciate the work of Elizabeth Cummings and find her approach to painting the Australian landscape really inspiring.

Teaching and mentoring are part of my art practice and my focus for students is to find their own visual language. I emphasize that there are 'no rules'.

No one can tell us how to paint or what to paint, it is for us to find out so we can be as authentic as possible and create unique works. My advice is to collaborate with your medium, other artists, and follow your heart and no one else's. Find your passion, the process and medium that works for you and the subjects that give you the drive to keep making art'.

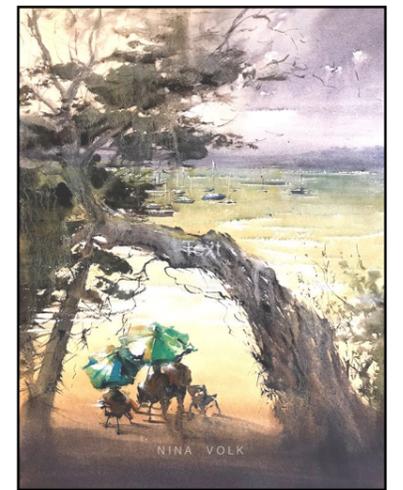
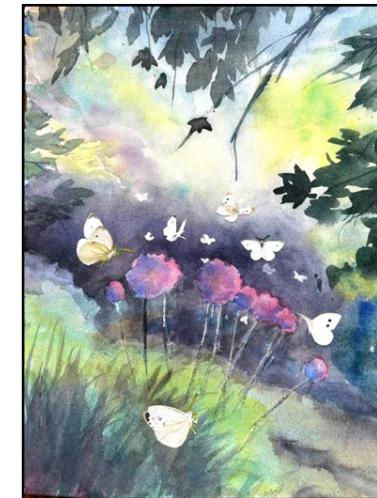
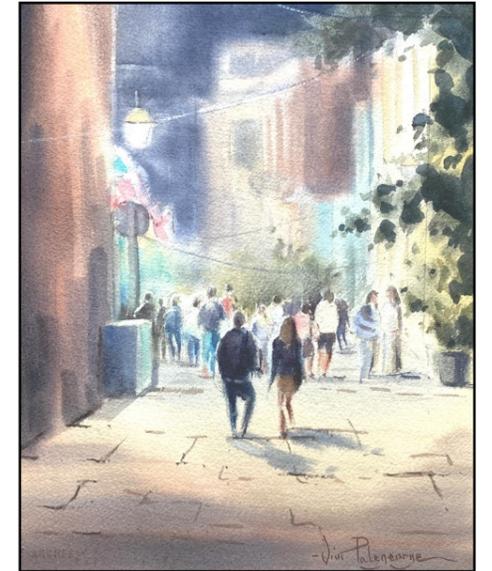
For Stefan, travel is a huge part of his practice as well as travel with his family. Nearly every weekend you will find him on the water sailing and or cycling and spending time with his wife and two daughters as well as walking the doggies daily.

Stefan is working on a documentary based on his work in country Victoria and has a solo exhibition coming up in June near Canberra at Suki and Hugh. For further information visit www.studiostefangevers.com.au



Paintings from WSV Members:

WSV members present current paintings for screen display on the WSV Facebook page, at the monthly meetings and publication in Watermark. Below is a selection from those presented. Don't forget to give your image a title if you don't want the editor to name the artwork! Also bear in mind that the printing process also creates a challenge to the accurate replication of your artwork's tonal value.



Clockwise from top left: "Textural Landscape with Man and Dog" by Julian Bruere 2nd Prize George Hicks Contemporary Exhibition at VAS, "Colourful Crowd" by Sonia Camm, "Arcade in Spain" by Mircea Crocodel, "Field Of Poppies" by Priscilla Fenton, "The Last Noodle Bowl at the Restaurant" by Chris Kelly, "Loading in Port Botany" by Louise Miller Best Watercolour Merimbula Art Show.

Clockwise from Top Left: "Silhouettes" by Alison Fincher, "Evening Stroll, Athens " by Vivi Palegeorge, "Mother's Beach" by Nina Volk Best WC at Mornington Art Show, "Sunrise From Sorrento Ferry" by Peter Porteous, "Dawn In Bendigo" by Terry Jarvis, "His Majesty's Theatre, Perth" by Nina Volk, Finalist International WC Exhibition W.A., "White Butterflies" by Prue Clark.



History of Watercolour:

Kath Ballard *OAM* 15/11/1929—4/12/2013

By Ralph Ballard



Kath was born in Melbourne, 1929, to His Honour Judge James Henry Moore and Elsie Rebecca Hopeton Simpson. Judge Moore was distinguished in the legal community and was appointed as the first Chairman of the County Court of Victoria.

Kath was educated at St. Catherine's College in Melbourne.

During WWII she and her classmates were evacuated to Marylands guest house in Marysville for several years. Later she attended the Art And Design Course at Swinburne Technical School while it was in its infancy. Kath became one of the first student representatives at

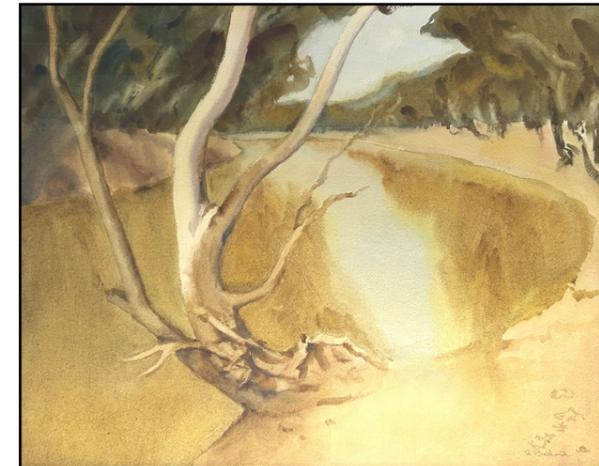
Swinburne. She subsequently continued her association with Swinburne throughout her life.

Kath later worked in several graphic art studios where she met Stan Ballard, her future husband. Subsequently she had a very active career as a watercolour painter, art teacher and in art politics. Kath became well-known as an "artist's artist" and was reckoned to be in the same league as the great watercolourist of the 1930's, J.J. Hilder. This recognition by her peers gave her much satisfaction in later life.

Always one to get her teeth into things, Kath had a strong sharp mind and very definite opinions. You might not always have agreed with her, but her opinions were always worthy of respect.

Truth and integrity mattered deeply to her. This was reflected in the simple mastery of her painting which got to the very essence of the subject.

Always a rebel and a feminist activist long before the concept was even born, Kath was known to say that she did not need religion because she found God in nature all around her. In her youth she rode horses at fox hunts and in show jumping. Famously she was photographed falling off a horse at the Royal Melbourne Show Jumps - this made the front page of the Herald Sun newspaper.



Above: Murrumbidgee Gum at Carrathool



Above: Early Morning Metung

Kath married Stan Ballard in 1956 in Melbourne. They led a passionate life together as fellow artists, until Stan's passing in 1997. Kath was the watercolourist and Stan was the oil painter – especially portraits. Occasionally one dared to cross into the other's turf, and then sparks really flew!

Career Highlights:

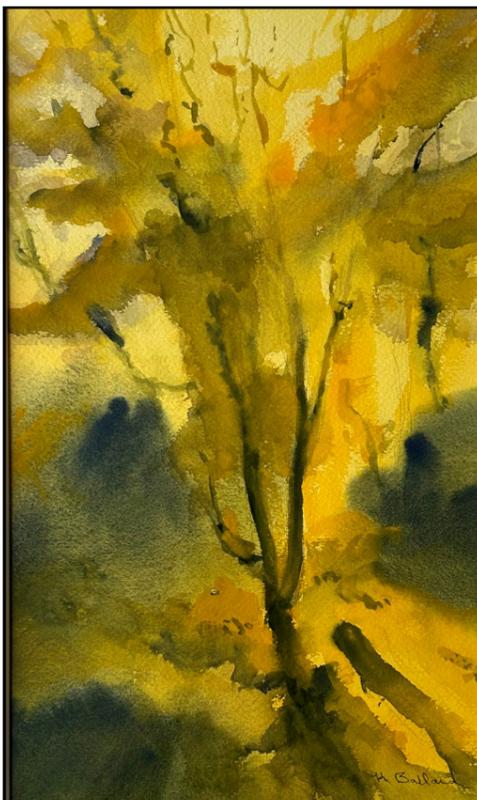
Highly successful watercolour painter. Many major exhibitions – 42 individual shows. Arts advisor to the Victorian Government (under Premier John Cain). Arts advisor to the Caulfield City Council. Member of the founding body to set up Rippon Lea House, Elsternwick, as a public art gallery. President of the Victorian Artists Society. Foundation member of the Australian Guild of Realist Artists, and of the Old Watercolour Society (Victorian branch). Awarded the OAM (Member of the Order of Australia) for services to the arts in 1998. Appointed Patron of the Watercolour Society of Victoria in 2008.

Kath finished her long and successful life in typical fashion. Her passion and dedication to art were exemplified by the energy and enthusiasm she put into her last show at Cotham Gallery 101 in October 2013. She was painting just as well as ever in this her last and 42nd individual art show. In fact 2 days after the show closed, she was taken to hospital. Kath had achieved everything she wanted to in life.

After a short illness Kath died peacefully in her sleep early on the morning of 4 December – actually during the very night after the paintings remaining from the show were returned to her house. Her paintings were safe and home.

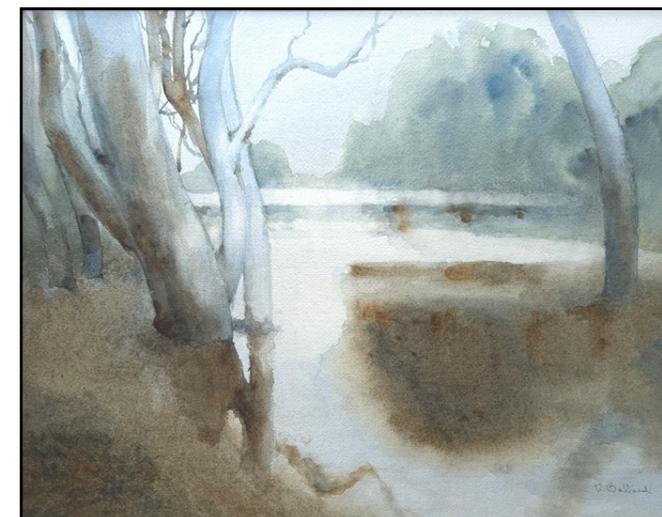
It seems to shout loud and clear – "Job done; I'm gone!" Surely a true "Artist's Artist" indeed!

*Thank you to **Ralph and Vicki Ballard** for their contributions in keeping their mother's art legacy alive for other artists to admire, aspire to, and learn from—Editor.*



Right: Jamieson Path

Left: Tree Glow



Above: Water Shimmer, Broken River

But in the end it always came back to the proven formula – Kath with watercolours and Stan with oils.

Even though Stan was an oil painter, like Kath he was a foundation WSV member.

Key themes in Kath's life were: Integrity, Ethics, Dignity, Grace and Respect

These honourable themes were passed to her by her father Judge James Moore. Kath lived by these principles all her life. She in turn passed these values on to her children.



February Demo: Yesim Gozukara

Report by Margaret Keogh

Following a busy AGM, noted artist, Yesim Gozukara presented an interesting and challenging demonstration. A master of the art of granulation, Yesim, a senior scientist with the CSIRO, has combined her knowledge of science with her love of art to produce a unique style of painting.

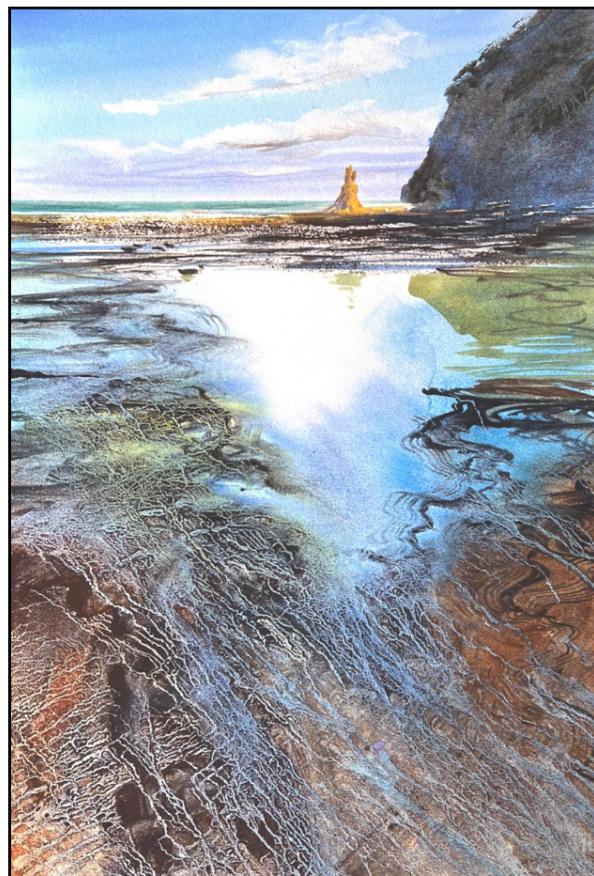
Tonight, the subject of Yesim's painting was Eagles Nest at Inverloch, a craggy scene she had painted before. Before commencing, Yesim showed the small dishes she used for her paints, and combined granulation medium. She spoke of the colours she used, such as Windsor and Newton Cobalt, Cerulean, and Ultramarine blues, while choosing Daniel Smith Lunar Earth, Bloodstone Genuine, Blue Apatite, Myan Blue and Lunar Blue, amongst other colours, like Lavender, and Undersea Green. Yesim had her granulation medium in bottle and a spray ready for use, and she explained she always had another bottle of the medium as it can go off!

After putting some paint into the dishes with granulating medium, Yesim wet the back and front of a 300gsm sheet of Canson paper, in preparation for a wet into wet painting. Yesim spoke of **Bob Wade**, whom she credited with introducing her to wet into wet painting, mainly through his books, but also of having had the pleasure of meeting him. One of her favourite brushes was the Robert Wade Signature brush. Yesim also spoke of other artists who had helped her along the way, in particular **Anthony Sum** and **Tony Smibert**.

To start the painting Yesim first placed the sky with Cobalt, using tissue to assist with the clouds, adding and lifting as needed. The next step was to lay the first wash starting with broad strokes of blue applied with a hake brush and adding in a cooler blue. The colours used were non-staining, so could be easily lifted. Using a cheap bristle brush, Yesim then applied some Lunar Earth and Bloodstone in a creamy consistency, and with the basic wash established, the board was tilted to begin the process of granulation, with an added spray of the fluid and some water to assist the movement.

Bringing in some Lavender, Yesim painted across a large part of the lower section of the painting and followed this with dark splatter generously applied. Working with the side of a fan brush strokes were placed across the horizon for the rocks and more woven down the sides of the design, dry brush combining with soft edges. Depths of Cerulean mixed with earth colours were used for rocks, and greens were brought into play. Yesim continued to tilt and rotate the board to achieve the diagonal lines that create movement. She explained that when she looked at a landscape, she saw

texture and design, stating also that paint, gravity and granulation are the most important aspects of her paintings.



Above: Yesim's completed demonstration painting of Eagle's Nest, Inverloch

Using the Robert Wade brush, Yesim painted the hill in a medium tone, and added darks to merge. The reflection was then painted using a Manganese Blue and Raw Siena. To complete the painting, sand was placed across the horizon, with more darks added. With time constraints, Yesim had managed to produce an excellent demonstration of her method of design, the wet into wet application of different pigments and the use of granulation medium, and, as she said, with her work commitments, she had learnt to paint fast!

Thank you, Yesim.

IMPORTANT ADVICE TO MEMBERS:

Don't forget to tell all your arty friends to come along to the Luminous exhibition which celebrates the 50th Anniversary of the WSV with stunning artworks that display all the variety of styles and techniques of this most challenging but rewarding medium. See our website for the demonstrations being conducted during the show.

In The Footsteps of Matisse and Renoir

by Annee Kelly

This sums up what I endeavoured to do on my 2023 tour to the South of France, a sort of pilgrimage honouring two amazing artists, Matisse and Renoir. In this workshop, we were also able to glimpse the presence of many other artists of note who came from neighbouring countries such as Gustav Klimt or Chagall. During a scheduled excursion to the medieval hilltop village of Haut-de-Cagnes, I brought to the attention of my group Klimt's unpretentious and unusual house.

On another occasion, during a visit to Saint Paul de Vence, I directed the group to Chagall's tombstone, where he rests in one of the most picturesque cemeteries of the South of France. This beautiful cemetery overlooks a spectacular valley where on a clear day, you can see the distant blue of the Mediterranean. It was in this gem of a village that Chagall chose to live for nineteen years, finding inspiration for so many of his magical paintings.

The South of France was, and still is, a Mecca to innumerable artists, as understandably, they are all drawn to its quality of light, its most picturesque landscapes and of course its ideal weather conditions. For these very reasons, I never tire of revisiting this beautiful region and feel compelled to share it with my fellow painters.

Vence was our first base for six days. It is a medieval city with impressive ramparts and five arched gateways. It has retained its authenticity with its narrow cobbled thoroughfares, ancient tall stone houses, its many historic fountains and the smallest cathedral in France, which makes Vence a haven for painters such as ourselves.

In Provençal tradition, twice a week a market takes place in the main square, in addition to a daily produce market which is set up just outside the walls of the medieval city. Many artisans and artists have made their homes in Vence. It is here that Matisse rented during the war a charming two storey villa. This is also where he found inspiration, painting some of his most famous still life works.

It is in Vence that he carried out the building of a chapel, the stunning, albeit small "Chapelle du Rosaire", considered by him as his masterpiece. It is beautiful not only for its glorious stained glass windows reflecting their vivid colours of blue, yellow and green on the white tiles of the chapel, but also for the simplicity and elegance of its golden accessories.

We were inspired to paint and sketch in many neighbouring medieval villages, each one more beautiful than the next.

We were fortunate to visit Renoir's impressive house in Cagnes-sur-Mer, where he resided during the last 11 years of his life. It is now a museum, enabling us to view his studio with many of his sculptures and art works, in addition to works of other artists who painted in the grounds of the property when they were his guests. We spent some time in its surrounding extensive garden planted with century-old gnarled olive trees. The second part of our workshop was to take place in Villefranche-sur-Mer, on the Côte d'Azur.

This coastal town gave us the opportunity to sample different painting subjects. Its little port with fishermen mending their nets and cool vaulted passages, seaside bistros and cafes on the water's edge were all inspiring painting or sketching material.

We travelled a short distance from Villefranche-sur-Mer to spend a day in old Nice, famous for its flower and produce market, its dazzling baroque churches and its wonderful cafes, bistros and restaurants. Our local guide made sure to book a restaurant she recommended where we were able to sample delightful and authentic Provençal cuisine. We travelled on that day to an outer suburb of Nice called Cimiez, where some of us decided to visit Matisse's grand museum, while others chose to spend some quieter time painting in the nearby beautiful gardens of the Dominican monastery. It was also within its grounds that Matisse was laid to rest.

We had the opportunity to visit another beautiful seaside town, Antibes, where painters such as Monet, Boudin and others had painted. A scheduled informative and enjoyable visit to Picasso's museum was another highlight of this tour. This small museum housed in one of the ancient Garibaldi castles, showcased forty or more of Picasso's art works. He had executed them during his stay in Antibes and had donated them to the city when he departed to go to Paris.

We spent another wonderful day in Eze, a small village perched between sky and water, 459 meters above sea level, the highest on the coast, and classified as one of "the most beautiful villages of France". We chose to meander in its narrow thoroughfares, where every corner beckoned once again to be painted or sketched.

Gathering every night around the dinner table was something everyone looked forward to, as it gave us the opportunity to talk about the days experiences in a most convivial atmosphere. It also enabled us to sample the many delectable dishes and wines particular to the South of France. Furthermore, the very mild nights were perfect for outdoor dining.

By the conclusion of the tour we had forged new friendships, accumulated an armful of paintings and sketches achieved en plein air and of course we were leaving with many memorable moments that had enriched our lives.

I am looking forward now to my next adventure in the South West of France, the Dordogne and Aix en Provence, home of Cezanne, and I invite you to join me if you are able to.



Becoming a

Pilgrim Artist

by Gordon Dickson



Above: Gordon painting at Zubiro Bridge Camino France



Above: Approaching Ermita San Nicolas, Camino France

Between mid-August and early November 2022, I walked three Caminos de Santiago consecutively - the Camino Frances, Portugües and Inglés - as well as the prolongación to Muxia on the Atlantic coast. A little over 1300 kms. I carried my easel and watercolour painting materials in my pack and painted *en plein air* along the way. What follows is a taste of my experience of these Caminos as a pilgrim artist - an *artista peregrino* - and of how these experiences shaped my walk and my paintings.

The Camino fascinated me when I first learned of it as a teenager. I doubt that back then I considered the spiritual aspects of the pilgrimage; rather, its potential for adventure. Fast forward a few decades, and from some dim recess in the mind the pilgrimage resurfaces. I'm a full-time painter, love to paint *en plein air*, and I immediately see the prospect of the happy combination of painting the Camino whilst walking it.

The idea excited me. I like to combine painting with personal interests. A couple of such projects have been: ten days at sea at the invitation of the Royal Australian Navy (RAN) to paint life at sea on a warship; a week at HMAS Cerberus painting Navy life ashore (I was a sailor in a previous life); painting life in Hong Kong for solo exhibitions there as an artist-in-residence over a number of years (I was also a Chinese interpreter/translator in a previous life).

I researched the Camino and saw that people walked it for a multitude of reasons and motives. Now, I wasn't in search of answers to imponderable questions nor for relief from a heavy burden, nor for absolution or redemption or forgiveness or peace. Nor for exercise. I lacked faith but not a sense of the spiritual, so doubted I'd have a religious experience, but hoped for a spiritual one - one that touches something inside. From what I'd learned, this was definitely a possibility. I was curious. I wanted to discover what might be waiting for me and decided to give myself the best chance by choosing the harder road and a fairly ascetic approach - be pilgrim-like, as it were.

It's true that it's more metaphorical, rather than literal, sacrifice, and hardship, but nevertheless, I felt it was in keeping with the spirit of a pilgrimage. I would walk alone, carry my possessions, stay in humble communal accommodations (donativos, parroquials, municipales, monasterios, seminarios), not book nor plan ahead, try to live in the moment and go

with the flow, and shut out news from the world outside. Whilst painting was an integral part of the plan, it would be of secondary importance to the pilgrimage itself.

I anticipated that my Camino would find its way into my work. This sounds metaphysical, but pilgrims will be aware of what an emotional ride the Camino can be. And artists will recognise how important emotion is to expression in painting. A Camino of 800 kms has a huge potential to transform and effect personal changes. I could imagine that whatever potential transformative experiences it might offer, they would inform my painting in some way. I share the view of many painters that the process is far more about feeling than seeing; that a painting can be more an emotional, poetic response to the subject than a prosaic or literal one. A painting is simply not a photograph. Watercolour lends itself so beautifully to an honest, immediate, direct translation of perceptions onto paper, and when painting on location, and in a flow state, the surrounds and all the senses contribute to the outcome. The choices we make interpret the literal into something personal. I wondered how and to what degree my own Camino would inform my painting. I was expectant and open, brushes in hand, hopeful and optimistic.

At home I prepared. I cut legs off my easel and substituted trekking poles and organised my materials. Then, in early 2020 covid-19 visited us all and borders were slammed shut. I cancelled flights, found more Spanish courses, and put the backpack away. In mid-August 2022, with borders open again, I found myself walking through the Spanish Gate in St Jean Pied de Port, France, heading to the top of the Pyrenees and on into Spain. Only 900 kms to go to Muxia on the Atlantic coast via Santiago de Compostela.

My plan was to walk the Camino Frances and on to Muxia. Not being a walker, I'd figured 10 km per day was sufficient, and I'd allowed three months. This was a naive misjudgment. It turns out living in dormitories means early to rise, and often a departure in the dark. I'd typically find myself walking with the sun rising at my back.

By the time I'd walked 10 kms it's only 9.30 am or so. Even with a halt to paint, it's only going to be 10.30 or 11.00. The albergue I'm to stay at won't open until 1.00 pm or later. It's early and I'm finished for the day, and the entire time I can feel Santiago tugging at me. It's a powerful pull and I'm feeling it. Everyone else is moving on and I'm just not doing enough to find my place in the current, afloat on the pilgrim stream. I've painted, which is good, but I'm anxious to keep moving.

These short stages just weren't going to work for an immersion in the Camino experience that I could feel was there, but out of reach. To compound matters I soon discovered that there's not a lot of shade on much of the Way before Galicia, which is a hassle when painting in a heatwave in watercolour. I needed to rethink and reset. I had to strike a balance between leaving the pilgrimage and painting in the spaces in-between - wherever they may be found.

Despite painting and pilgrimage seeming to be comfortable companions - simply walk, pause, paint and repeat - it was disconcerting to discover how they did not sit together easily at all at first. I had to learn how to manage two competing priorities to become a more effective *artista peregrino*. The painting was driving the pilgrimage, but I needed the pilgrimage and the painting to work together.

I soon found my sweet spot. It meant walking 20 - 25 kms each morning - a typical Camino stage. I'd fetch up at my overnight stop around midday or a bit later. If I'd stopped to paint earlier, it might be early afternoon. I'd check-in and do my housekeeping, shop for groceries, etc and then find my subject later in the day, when the shadows are longer, and it's cooled off a bit. Now I'd found my groove, in sync with the pull of the Way. I was making progress, connecting with fellow pilgrims, getting some painting, and feeling much happier with how things were working out.

Of course, with the increase in daily distances, I arrived in Santiago and then on to my dip in the Atlantic at Muxia (90 kms) earlier than planned. I had some weeks to spare before my flight home.

Below: Brush with the law, Alto De Perdon Camino France



Above: In the Dunes, Senda Littoral Camino Portuguese

I was feeling strong and fit, and, well, whilst I was there and had the time, why not train down to Porto, Portugal, and walk back to Santiago on the Camino Portugües? Just another 270 kms - 12 days or so.

I rested up and painted in Porto for three days and then set off on the *Senda Littoral*, a Camino path that hugs the Portuguese coast for the next few days. A spectacular route, walking amongst giant sand dunes at times, with the crashing Atlantic surf just there on the left. It was solitary walking, but beautiful, and a very different experience and landscape to those of Camino Frances. On this walk I was gifted with yet another hassle for outdoor painters - seriously inclement weather. I managed less painting on the Portugües. It rained on most days over two weeks, and very heavily for the last week.

Back in Santiago again, and with time to spare. The Camino Inglés is a short one - 120 kms and six days. I caught a train to Ferrol on the north coast of Spain and started back to Santiago the following morning. Sadly, Hurricane Beatriz was hanging about in the Atlantic just off the west coast, so my week on the Inglés was more poor weather, with horizontal rain and strong winds a real test of fortitude. This was a very solitary walk, with just a few paintings and sketches possible on this final Camino.

I was unprepared for much of what I saw and felt along the Way. So many special moments, bonds formed with special people, and surprising moments of self-discovery. As an example - It was the morning after a night in a donative Albergue (donativo) in Viana where French author Pierre shared his beautiful, incredibly sad after-dinner story with the dozen of us staying there. **Cont'd over the page** 15



Becoming a Pilgrim artist cont'd.....

Everyone listening ended up in tears. Next day dawn was breaking, I was walking alone and only a short way out of town when I suddenly broke down on the path, crying. I don't know why; I wasn't unhappy or in pain. But the story was so sad, and its recollection triggered something that must have been trapped inside for years. It felt like that. Something had opened inside me. The tears came unbidden at several other surprising emotional moments along the way, too. I felt like I'd had one layer after another peeled away the further I walked and was somehow someone else. There were times I found strength when I thought I had none; I saw how my fellow pilgrims accepted me, and one other, without judgment or bias. It was a reminder of how we could be outside of the Camino. I found I'd been stripped back, just as my pack contained only the barest necessities, and was afloat on a stream of some alternate reality. It was marvellous. I wondered how I was going to transition to life back home away from this.

Another word on painting. Locals generally seem to perceive an artist painting their corner of the world as someone who is honouring it, celebrating it. There's respect for the work, which forges a connection and mutual respect between the participants - the artist and the observers. Those shared moments at the easel in Pamplona, Leon, Burgos, Astorga, Santiago and so many other towns and villages across Spain were all memorable pages of the journey, and the work brings it all back at a glance.

Santiago de Compostela beckons from the first footstep on the path. Every morning as I set out just before dawn I imagined it far ahead in the west, sitting underneath Venus, which shone brightly high in the pre-dawn sky every morning directly above the westward path ahead. My Sunday School teacher might have seen this as a pretty biblical sign. Ironically, the closer I approached Santiago the more conflicted I felt about the impending arrival. The excitement of getting closer to the finish was offset by a sadness, a sense of impending loss. I didn't want my camino to end. Not wanting it to end, and having the time to do more was certainly the main motivation to keep going and do another two.

At the end of the journey, you make your way into the old city centre, down past the Seminario Mayor, through a massive arch and onto the Plaza Obredeiro - the Cathedral Square. It's a sea of pilgrims ebbing and flowing from all four corners throughout the day. I immediately see people I know, whom I'd walked and bunked and broken bread with. People are crying and laughing and so very joyful. It's relief and it's ecstasy. We've come so far, and now here we all are! We catch sight of each other and wave and call out. There are embraces, kisses and laughter and we marvel at our reunion here and how fortunate and grateful we are. I hover nearby all day, anxious to reacquaint myself with people I've walked miles with. I'm delighted to see them again.



Left:
La Calle Mayor, Puenta La Reine, Camino France

Below:
Arrival, Santiago Di Compostela

It's a beautiful state of grace where you might even catch a glimpse of your higher self.

It was a time of beautiful reunions. I was swept up in a wave of powerful emotion, and the dawning realisation that

our destination wasn't so much this physical place, Santiago, but more an emotional and mental awakening which we all shared, connected by our common humanity, and full of positive energy and love. And then another realisation dawns - that this may be a destination in one sense, but in another it's a place of beginnings. The challenge is to take all this away and still be in this space, in this place, at home, in my daily life.

Back home, and I'm aware I fail this challenge daily. It's hard, but so worth the effort to keep on trying. I look at my photos and sketches and paintings, read my Camino journal, and remember and work at it. I'm returning to walk the Frances again in April this year - this time with my daughter, whom I seem to have inspired. I hope it gives her as much as it's given me. I can't wait to immerse myself in the pilgrimage once more, and perhaps bring a bit more of it home. Of course, I'll take my paints and brushes again and look to capture more of those special moments along the Way.



Thank you, Gordon for giving your fellow WSV members the privilege of sharing your amazing journey—Editor

Inside The Artist's Studio: David Dickason

by Brenda Innes

As you know it's always a treat to visit a member's studio particularly when I surprise the artist with another reason to visit—in this instance it was to collect long time WSV member and former president **David Dickason's** painting for the Luminous Exhibition. I thought with a surprise I could capture a working space that had not been 'tidied up' for me. But I was the one who was surprised—as you can see by the images, David's downsized space was as neat as pin! It's always a challenge when moving from a large home to a smaller apartment to be able to maintain a workable studio but David was up to the challenge and has everything he needs at his fingertips.



Top right: David at his unframed painting storage rack.

Right: his work space with all his painting materials at hand.

Above: one of David's excellent en plein air unframed works.

Left: A cupboard for storing some of his 'arty stuff' that is conveniently just behind his painting desk

David's studio is another fine example of where there's a will there's a way; despite no longer having the luxury of a large studio, like other member's art spaces I've seen whether it's a tabletop or in this instance a multi-purpose room, the determined artist is still able to practise his craft.

Thank you for permitting me to photograph your studio even though it was a surprise!—Editor

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Sentimental Favourite cont'd

He said, "It can be quite hard to part with them (paintings). Especially when you're in your infancy with painting and you produce something that makes you think, "Wow, look at that, do I want to put that in the show? Do I really want to sell that?"

One particular artist Bob admired and truly respected was Ernest Vogel. In 1977, Bob won the watercolour award at the art show held by the Rotary Club of Bayswater and Vogel was the runner up. Bob said to him, "One of the things I have difficulty with is parting with a painting." Vogel replied, "I've got hundreds of them, I've got to stack them under the bed. You've got to get rid of them, you've got to make some money out of it. It's just another piece of paper."

To Bob, each painting was never *just another piece of paper*.

"There's always some sentimental attachment, some romantic attachment or something like that which links me to a painting. When I see any of my paintings, I can remember where I was when I painted it, how I painted it, how it smelt and how it felt, even the sounds like feet walking on the cobblestones, all that sort of stuff."

It's easy to understand why Bob had such an attachment to "The Painters". Although, rather interestingly, much like John Constable's famous painting of Salisbury Cathedral, there's not just one. In the same way Constable was captivated with his beloved cathedral, leading to several painted versions of it, each with different compositional nuances, so too was Bob enthralled with the ship and its painters, resulting in him painting it more than just once. Years later, in 1999, he also created a variation on the theme, when he painted "QE2's New Coat", featuring painters working on the red funnel of the majestic ship. Whilst Bob was quick to single out that one painting, the day he pointed to his framed masterpiece on the wall, I'm still not convinced it was necessarily the favourite. I think Robert A Wade had many favourites because, just like "The Painters", every one of Bob's paintings, not only tells a story but to him they each have their own story.

Wayne Degenhardt

March Demo: Passion To Play



Above: This year's volunteers who entered into the spirit of experimentation with unseen materials generously provided by The Art Shop and a subject chosen for them, are introduced by WSV President Ev Hales.

L to R: **Ben Winspear, Antoinette Blyth and Neil Mc Irvine.**

Below: **Kath McCann and Maxine Wade** chatting with Neil as he worked on the floral subject painted by each volunteer while **Kelly Grace** watched and listened.



Members' Activities

Margaret Edwards Exhibition



Margaret has painted for the last 4 - 5 years inspired by a visit to Greenland and has produced a series of watercolours to be exhibited in the Cato Gallery of the Victorian Artist Society. The exhibition 'Disappearing Landscapes-Greenland' will be held 5 - 18 June



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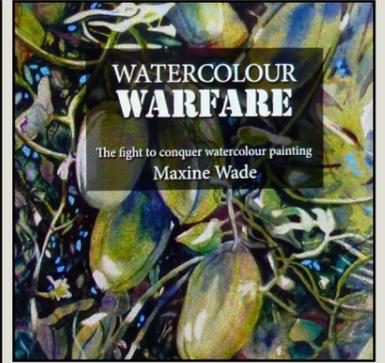
Oct 26 - Nov 2, 2024 at Daku Resort, Vanua Levu. Further info -

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Tour price incl accommodation, tuition, meals & excursions. **\$2650** Twin share.

Paint in the Kimberley August 2024 + Exhibition of Selected Works from the Kimberley in Cairns September 2025 Our Australian Watercolour Muster 'Remote and Rural Painting Trip' 2024 - in this interim year between our Australian Watercolour Muster Biennale is heading to the remote Kimberley Station, Diggers Rest from the 7 to 13th August 2024. This is where the film 'Australia' was shot, and this is an iconic part of the Kimberley! Curator of the Australian Watercolour Muster & WSV Member, Wyn Vogel will be the tutor and lead for the trip to the Kimberley in August 2024 - the details for the trip are posted now, you can link through to the daily program from the blog on Wyn's Website, with a list of materials and some samples of Wyn's style of painting for you to see

>>> <https://www.fishlanestudios.com/join-artist-wyn-vogel-in-the-kimberley-august-2024-remote-and-rural-painting-trip/>



I have **only 50 copies remaining** of my watercolour book, published late 2021. Available for purchase at \$45 per copy. Suits all skill levels, from beginners to advanced. 14 chapters, soft cover. I will bring copies to our April meeting or you can order direct from me at: maxinerwade@gmail.com (plus postage)

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