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OAS COUNCILLORS, 2019-2020

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Allie Simpson, Danielle Munro.

IT'LL TAKE MORE THAN A PANDEMIC TO PUNCTURE OUR POSITIVITY.



News Flash!

**We are delighted to announce
that the Hope and Sons
Art Awards 2020 will be held!**

We don't know when exactly (yet), but sponsorship has been confirmed and planning is in hand.

Receiving and exhibition dates will be announced as soon as we have a green light at the permissible Covid-19 business level.

We'll keep you informed... but in the meantime, finalise your paintings!

'Paintings from my Palette' by Murray Ayson

This newly published book is a selection of 100 of Murray's oil paintings, created between 2001-2019, and compiled by his wife, Joan, during Murray's failing health in late 2019. Murray passed away on 28 February 2020.

The book contains a little introduction on Murray, his early life, and how he began painting. Also in the book are some of his very early Indian ink sketches, drawn in his childhood, which were published in the New Zealand Farmer magazine some 60-65 years ago.

Photographs of Murray and Joan on some of their resource expeditions are also included, as is the painting in the OAS Permanent Collection which Murray donated.

Each A4 size painting is titled, plus the year it was painted.
There is an accompanying text on the facing page.

The full-colour A4 size book has 228 pages.

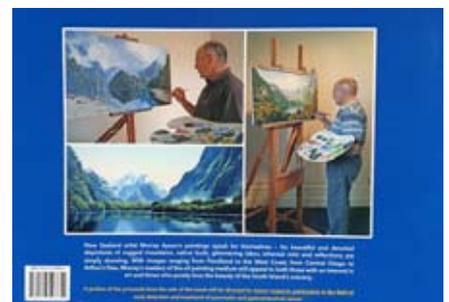
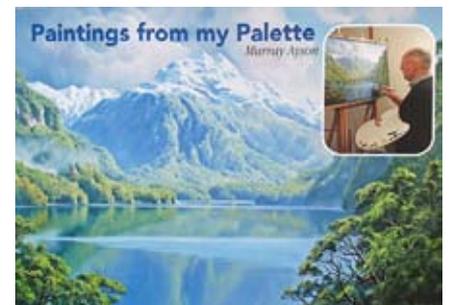
A Hard Cover edition is \$95 retail price.

A Soft Cover edition is \$65 retail price.

All proceeds after printing and retail costs will be directed to cancer research, particularly in the field of early detection and treatment of pancreatic and gastrointestinal cancer. (It is hoped that approx. \$10-15 from the sale of each book will be raised).

**We encourage you to place orders for this keepsake memorial book
through the Otago Art Society.**

During lockdown, pre-orders to secure a copy of 'Paintings from my Palette' can be made through the OAS Administrator,
Ngaire Kitt: otagoartsociety@xtra.co.nz



*Murray Ayson's book has been printed
and is awaiting distribution when
Covid-19 restrictions are lifted.*



President:
Doug Hart

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Facebook:
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www.otagoartsociety.co.nz

Back Issues of the newsletter
are available on the website.

President's Message

Doug Hart

Moving forward

A great welcome to all our members and to prospective artists wishing to join our inclusive and historical society. With the lockdown, we artists have had the time to do things which normally we might not have. We may have found a new style in portraying subjects, tried new materials or even experimented with completely different techniques. Being an artist in any discipline is all about moving your work forward and not producing the same format all the time.

These last few weeks have given us an opportunity to break away from the comfort of the tried and tested and become a little more adventurous in our practice. These new techniques and ideas may ultimately prove to be fruitless, but at least we will have the satisfaction that we have tried. Sometimes the very act of trying something new regenerates our whole thought process and as a consequence leads us down a more rewarding and constructive path.

Whilst living in the UK, I often visited a Saturday market in the town of Lymington. There was a watercolour artist who was very good at portraying local scenes. He could churn them out as quick as anything and the tourists duly bought them by the cartload. Naturally it was his living, but I always wondered if he missed the creativity that he must have had years before he became stuck in a commercial 'rut'. Personally, I feel it is refreshing to be different and diversify into other areas and subjects.

Art. Why do it?

Why is it that so many of us enjoyed art as children, but somehow as adults lost that passion growing up? I don't know the answer, but what I do know is that it's never too late to start learning new techniques and creating art again. There are many health benefits to be gained from artwork. Art is incredibly relaxing and can help reduce your stress levels. While designing a new piece you are able to focus specifically on what you are creating and let everything else go. Many members talk to me about being in 'The Zone' when painting, and are unaware of time passing. This surely must have a similar impact on your body and mind as meditation, resulting in a positive and different perspective on the environment around you.

Believe it or not, we all have a potential creative genius inside us. Unleashing your creativity allows you to expand your abilities and gain self confidence. The joy of art comes less from the quality of the piece and more from the satisfaction of creating something spectacular yourself. After all, art is an expression of your personality and creativity, which is what makes each piece unique.

Creating a piece of artwork from start to finish takes time and dedication. During this process there are mistakes and challenges which can hopefully be overcome. Persevering helps improve your ability to concentrate and push through new challenges.

Many years ago an artist said to me that even if you are making mistakes with a piece, it's important to finish it and realise the shortcomings of the artwork. Taking on a new technique can feel daunting at first, but it's a highly gratifying experience.

Art is one of the most creative ways of expressing a human experience. We use art to tell stories. It may be about a single person, a set of people or of a particular country. Picasso once said *'The purpose of art is washing the dust of daily life off our souls.'*

Recording events or scenes using any medium is of value to the historians of the future. Imagine not being able to



No such thing as 'social distancing' in Breughel's scenes of busy peasant life in the mid-16th century.

view medieval European life through the eyes of Pieter Breughel the Elder's 'Hunters in the Snow' (1565) or 'A Peasant Wedding' (1567). Also Edward Hopper's scene of contemporary America with 'Nighthawks' (1942) and L.S. Lowry's scenes of industrial Salford and Manchester.

What about artists in our own society who have recorded Otago scenes which will undoubtedly be used in the future by fiction and non-fiction writers? David Corballis and Ron Esplin for capturing the cityscapes, Murray Crawford, Murray Ayson and Jenny Longstaff for displaying the natural landscapes through paint and photography, and Emmellee Rose who uses a multi media approach, for example.

In our future newsletters we would really like our members to start contributing stories about what makes them create art and what type of artwork inspires them. If you would like to produce a profile of yourself and your practice, then please send them in to our gifted editor, Jenny Longstaff, for inclusion in the coming months. We'd love to see your work in print.

A brighter horizon

As the shadow of Covid-19 recedes, hopefully never to return, we have to look to the immediate future to forge a new pathway. As soon as we are permitted we shall be opening up the National Pastel Exhibition for a further month. This will run alongside small displays in the remaining two galleries and shop. I'm in contact with Mark Miller from Edinburgh Realty to look at the feasibility of still launching the Edinburgh Realty Exhibition this year. Obviously we will need to rejig the rest of this year and 2021's timetable. Rest assured, everything is being done to try to bring about a bright and positive future. Our team will be working on your behalf, but we will still be relying on the goodness of our volunteers.

The DCC have been supportive of our predicament and we will be grateful for any further assistance they can offer to ensure our viability in this economic climate. We are hoping that renewed advertising etc. plus the support of all our members and friends, will bring life and resources back into this vital part of Dunedin culture.

Finally, I'd like to give thanks to Ngaire, our administrator, for organising the government subsidies for our paid staff and for trying to reduce our out-going costs as much as possible. Also to Ness and Sarah who have been waiting patiently in the wings for the situation to improve.

The closure of Cobb and Co. and the mothballing of Dunedin Railways is a shock, especially as these enterprises contributed to a lively presence in and around the station. It is hoped that new life can be breathed back into this iconic building as soon as possible and to that end the OAS is certainly going to try to make it happen.

Doug Hart



On Anzac Day I came across this photograph on the Internet. It was taken in 1928 at St John's Wood in London at the artist's studio, and shows my grandfather, Captain Will Longstaff, at right, working on a major painting that was destined to be sold to the man on the left, the author and spiritualist, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle.

To make this newsletter interesting in the absence of exhibitions to write about, several members were approached for a contribution to recount what they have been doing during April's Covid-19 lockdown. Thank you for co-operating!

Check our Facebook site where Danielle Munro and Raimo Kuparinen have been posting news and items featuring our members.

Geoff Adams

Helen and self are very well thanks and have not burst out of our bubble. I have been attacking the weeds in the garden while the weather did not furnish an alibi. The battle was much needed and will never be completely won, although I shall soon empty my secret weapon of a weedkiller spray, while being careful not to devastate our roses in the process! When the weather was not so bright I have worked on finishing a small book that is intended for the enlarging number of grandchildren (and one great-granddaughter) which is not an autobiography but a special sort of memoir that I called "Flashbacks" with words and photos. I am quite pleased with it and keen to get it printed when the lockdown finishes.



Geoff Adams has been working on this mixed media work.

I have also been working on newsletters for U3A Dunedin but have not forgotten enjoying playing with some art. I haven't completed anything new, but the pic at left shows one in progress — with the vital parts yet to be added (some snakes!!). It is based on Bowen's Theory, which I found mildly interesting (about groups of three people and how they can break up — see Google!) and is, as usual, "mixed media." It is the manufacturing stages of art that I enjoy most — more than when they are deemed to be finished. I have enjoyed working out the personal meanings of this one so am not worrying about its final stages being very slow in my administering them — also it is hard to find any snakes!



Stay safe – keep your art up, and never stop chasing butterflies.
Moo moo Marie

Detail of a work in progress by Marie Reid-Beadle, featuring Australian and NZ wildflowers.

Marie Reid-Beadle

I feel like I'm stuck in a really long badly written Stephen King novel!!

Like many over the lockdown, I was intending on being very productive with my artwork, but my concentration seems to be rather muddled. I've had quite a few works on the go for various exhibitions/commissions but they are all now non-events.

I've managed to paint a couple of small works for an art swap with another art society member. I painted a sign for Anzac Day (pictured at left) for the Owaka supermarket (where there's no queues). I did some pavement chalk art, and I'm working on a commission for Australia – combining Australian and NZ native flower and birds, and of course a cow.

I've been sleeping on a mattress on the floor of my daughter's bedroom to make room for my bubble family. I've taken photos of an aurora from my backyard. I've started a worm farm, baked too many cakes and started an empty wine bottle installation (ha ha).

My future plans: get my bedroom back, build a veggie garden, and get more computer savvy with promoting my art.

Peter (Francis) Nicholls

It's been so quiet. Walking around Back Beach there were only the sounds of birds chirping and the water. The Port for a time was eerily silent. A ghost town! I must say though that I've enjoyed not having the logging trucks on the road, but I'm now glad to see the logging yards filling up again and signs of activity. The biggest thing I've missed is not being able to get an almond latte! My flower garden had a late showing on account of the low sunshine hours over spring-early summer, but has been glorious this autumn, in particular the dahlias.





Maxine Burney's art: Left, a work in progress featuring Anthuriums. Right: The Magic Brush, completed at last after several years.

Maxine Burney

In lockdown I decided to tackle and finish some 'unresolved' works... (much more of a challenge for me than 'starting new work'!) See *The Magic Brush*, 2013–2020...DONE! (pictured above).

Also excited to be working with my new COBRA brand water soluble oils bought recently while in Singapore visiting The Biennale. YUM!! they are so rich and creamy to paint with; my *Anthuriums* (60 x 60cm) are fittingly of photos I took while there.

(Maxine has written an article about the Biennale which will appear in next month's newsletter.)

Joan Hardey

We have all been setting new rhythms in our lives and I have found pleasure from several activities after the usual start with ODT paper and puzzles. Work in the garden on these calm Autumn days and a daily walk to St Clair beach are literally a breath of fresh air. The weekend screenings of Andrew Lloyd Webber musicals have showcased wonderful productions ("The Shows Must Go On – YouTube channel). But my favourite pastime is books and reuniting with old friends on my shelves. The dedications remind me of when and why I purchased precious volumes, including Quentin Bell's *Bloomsbury*, which was an appreciation from our OAS colleague Reg Wattam (artist and President 1990-92). I have been engrossed in the third and final volume of the Charles Brasch journals and am currently joining Frances Hodgkins on her "European Journeys". Recorded are quotes from her letters, including this one: "My Muse has returned to me – I found her waiting on the door step, faithful wench, which goes to show how futile it is to travel in search of material when it lies on your own pavement, for the seeing."

With the city being so peaceful during lockdown, birdlife has been more noticeable, leading to pictorial attention by some of our artists:

POETRY PIECE

by Jenny Longstaff

A haiku poem:

iridescence shines
paua purple and sea-green:
kereru colours



Julia McNaughton

On going in to lockdown, I made three resolutions: to tidy my bookcases, clear out my studio/workspace, and finish a painting of the view outside my kitchen window. The first two projects went well – resulting in a large box of books labelled Regent, and a lightbox looking for a good home. But the painting is stuck. And I've found that one of the things I miss the most when trying to paint in lockdown is the friendly and always constructive criticism from my weekly art group. Online friends have made helpful suggestions – emphasise the light direction, increase the foreground contrast to make the hills recede, paint the houses in more detail. But nothing seems to work. So the painting has gone back into the attic (until we meet again), and I'm doing printmaking instead.

Artwork by
Julia McNaughton:

Unfinished view
from Forbury Head.



'Tuis at St Clair'



Gillian Pope

With things on the art scene gone quiet, I've been spending more time in the garden. Two pairs of fantails have kept me company, flitting around and about while I worked.

A wet day or two and the fantails become a new, small limited edition screen print, pictured below:

"Piwakawaka-Fantails"





Jude Ansbacher

I have finished the Aran cardigan I started knitting two-and-a-half years ago, complete with rustic buttons hewn from a hawthorn branch, drilled and varnished (see photo).

It has been good to cycle round town without risking life and limb. Art materials have had to be conserved e.g. using the reverse side of previous watercolours. Amassing work with little prospect of giving it an airing in the near future is daunting. Going out painting has been just the same, so perhaps I have been in a bubble for some time! Hoping the best for the Art Society.

David Corballis

Our lockdown days haven't quite morphed into lockup yet, partly because the government has been handling it so well, and with a centralised plan.

Thank goodness we've had lovely weather in the near-final stages which has helped. Our beech tree in the garden has covered the whole lawn with a flimsy carpet of gold. It's also spawned a lot of very beautiful toadstools or fungi.

A walk every day has been important. With minimal traffic, the roads have been claimed by pedestrians – almost. I talked with one of our neighbours in the middle of the street a short while ago. We forgot it was a road. We kept our distancing!

We've watched CNN quite a bit and it's interesting how often NZ comes up. Jacinda Ardern has become an example of decisive and positive leadership. One of the side issues on CNN was watching one of the presenters, Chris Cuomo in Prime Time, track his progress through the Covid virus. He caught it but didn't give up his programme, operating from his basement. He was very open about it and made no attempt to conceal his fear and sense of panic. We also came to appreciate what a mysterious, many-faceted and unpredictable beast the virus is. Covid has been a ruthless reminder that we can't control nature. In the silence of lockdown, even the birds are telling us that.

We've sat in the sun, tinkered in the garden, listened to the Tuis. I'm at present making an Adirondack chair, but I must wait for more timber. The "click and collect" is taking time. I think newly opened stores are rushed off their feet.

We've also watched a number of films, including Anthony Hopkins' interpretation of King Lear. Hopkins is a terrific actor, but too much warfare got in the way. We also watched *The Happy Prince*, about Oscar Wilde, *The Good Liar*, *Apocalypse Now*, and several other films. I've read Barbara Kingsolver's *Lacuna*, which includes, among others, Frida Kahlo and Trotsky, and several other books, easy to do as I have a kindle and can whisk up new books in the blink of an eye.

I have done some painting, a couple of which I've included here. I've wanted to paint the Bullock Track for a while and have now done a couple. The Bullock Track goes from Prospect Park down to the Woodhaugh Gardens, a nice walk, though the bullocks seem to be on lockdown at the moment. When they return I'll let Marie Reid-Beadle know – her brilliance will bring them to life.

The best paintings seem to me to unify form and substance, with its main details suggested, into a unity. We are all aware of that, though we probably all tackle the challenge differently, according to medium, and our own predilections. How to do it in watercolour is for me a captivating challenge. Success is always relative, and probably personal.

Irina Schreiber

In the last month I didn't start any new painting, I just decided to finish what I already started and on the other side, wanted to do more "playing with the colours" and get new ideas for my next abstract. So I had 3 paintings to finish, which I've pretty much done. (One of them is pictured at right). As well as painting, I revisited my old woodcut blocks and changed them to the way I want now – I never had time before. I also made a couple of new images.

I've been happy to have more time for reading as well. My book at the moment is about Russian history; it's in English for a change, so I can recommend it. It's called *Russka* by Edward Rutherford.

On nice sunny days I had been gardening also, as we have a glasshouse and are growing tomatoes, cucumbers and eggplants, and a few herbs and little things outside.

I'm really looking forward to going back to normal life; hopefully everything will be sorted fast and successfully for New Zealand. And our OAS will be back to life again with new, exciting exhibitions and meetings, in which we'll be happy to participate!



Bullock Track in Autumn, watercolour by David Corballis.



An autumn view of Careys Bay. I drew that up just before lockdown started and have since painted it – twice, each rather differently.

So far I've painted only in watercolour during this period; perhaps because oil seems to give me too many opportunities to correct things, which I usually make a mess of. What I'm attempting to do is celebrate the effect of sunlight and shadow. Without one we don't get the other, and without the first, autumn leaves turn dull and rusty. Sunlight gives them life and breath. Also water with its reflections, a mysterious wavy upside world, without a trace of Covid.



Still Life with Lemons, by Irina Schreiber.

Events Calendar

Exhibitions

Works from the **PANZ Pastel Association of New Zealand National Awards** have been patiently awaiting public viewing during lockdown. As soon as we are permitted to open, they will be on display for a month.

Our exhibition schedule will need to be re-evaluated for the remainder of the year.

We have been reassured that the **Hope and Sons Art Awards 2020** can be put back on our calendar, at a date to be confirmed once we are out of Covid-19 restrictions. Receiving and Exhibition dates will be notified.

How can you help?

If you are a **Facebook** user, check out the postings on the Otago Art Society page, then LIKE them, but more importantly, SHARE them, as this will spread the awareness through other connections.

Because several of our dedicated regular **volunteers** are in the vulnerable age-group, we will need other members to step up once we are open for business once more.

OAS FUNDRAISER

OAS Tee Shirts Available

Black with White OAS Logo: \$30
All profits go to the OAS
If every member bought one
we would raise over \$10K!



To Order, simply do the following:

- 1) email otagoartsociety@xtra.co.nz and let us know size & quantity.
(We will email you when your order is ready)
- 2) Then pay \$30 via direct credit
(We will let you know when to collect your OAS Tee Shirt)

If you are local we may be able to arrange delivery to your letterbox.

If you are not local we may be able to post it to you.

Thanks so much for your support!

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POETRY PIECE

by Danielle Munro

Pushing pencils:

A pleasant way
To pass the time
Pristine pages
Provoke our passions,
Pushing pencils
Pulling life
From blank white pages

"The whole visible universe is but a storehouse of images and signs to which the imagination will give a relative place and value; it is a sort of pasture which the imagination must digest and transform." Charles Baudelaire

HOPE AND SONS

ART AWARDS
2020

HOPE & SONS
FUNERAL DIRECTORS

2020 ART AWARDS

POSTPONED

Still Here,
STILL SUPPORTING

NEW DATES TO BE CONFIRMED

Editorial comment: Unless otherwise attributed, all items in the OAS monthly newsletters are compiled by the editor, Jenny Longstaff (past President 2013–16). The newsletter is approved by OAS Council before printing and distribution. **Contributions are welcome:** stories, photos, news, exhibitions, tuition etc. Please email Jenny to discuss: j.a.longstaff@gmail.com or phone her on 021 1326 053. **Deadline:** information must arrive a week before end of month to appear in following month's issue. *The OAS Newsletter is printed by Hope and Sons.*