



Maitland Regional Art Gallery Members' (MRAGM) primary role is to promote public awareness of Maitland Regional Art Gallery (MRAG) and its activities. MRAGM is recognised by the art gallery as a vital ingredient to the growth of the Cultural Precinct.

Exhibitions at MRAG

"Heads Up!" showcases the work of prominent Australian artists Vicki Varvaessos and Richard Larter.

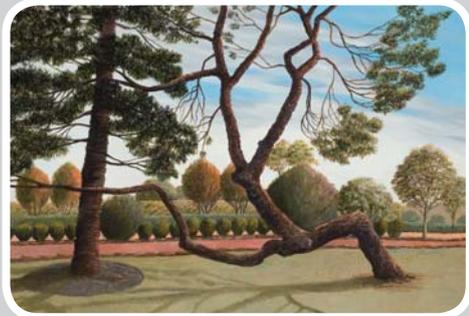
Vicki Varvaessos started exhibiting in 1975. She has held over 28 solo exhibitions and has been included in numerous group shows. Prizes included winning the Portia Geach Memorial Award - winner in 2002. Varvaessos is represented in many important collections in Australia, including the National Gallery of Australia, Art Gallery of New South Wales, National Gallery of Victoria and most Regional Galleries. She is also featured in overseas collections.

Richard Larter came to Australia from London in 1962. He has been in many significant exhibitions and is well represented in the Australian National Gallery, State Galleries and numerous other collections.

"Heads Up!" has been supported by Watters Gallery in Sydney - one of Australia's most successful and longest running commercial art galleries.

To complement this thought provoking exhibition MRAG has curated an exhibition of "Portraiture from the MRAG Collection" featuring unique paintings by Brett Whiteley and Charles Blackman. Other portrait paintings and works on paper by Peter Kingston, Salvatore Zofrea and Newcastle's own Norma Allen are included in this exhibition along with a selection of photographs featuring famous Australian artists in their own homes such as Donald Friend and Margaret Olley.

Over the next few months there will be many events at MRAG including "Regional Landscapes by Leo Robba and Max Watters" and "Operation Art" a traveling children's art exhibition. Both exhibitions will open on Saturday 29th March at 2pm at MRAG. Leo Robba will also be running a master class during the exhibition on landscape painting.



top: richard larter (detail) *julie 143* 2001 oil on canvas 76 x 56cm
middle: Leo Robba *The Bendy Tree, Maitland* 2007 oil on canvas 77.5 x 120.5cm
bottom: Max Watters *Red House - Middlebrook Road* 2006 oil on board 74 x 120cm

The Leo Robba Masterclass will be held Saturday 12th April from 10am - 4pm
members \$50
non members \$60
ph 02 4934 9859 for details

Children: education

In January Lauren Van Katwyk ran a "Claymation Workshop" for children aged 6 – 12 years. Check out these budding animators work on <http://www.mrag.org.au/edgallery.htm>. More workshops and activities will be run over the next few months:

- **Art Tuesdays Term 1** 12th Feb - 1st April 2008
- **Art Tuesdays Term 2** 13th May – 1st July 2008
- **Free Kids activities in The Gallery**
- **Youth Week 14th to 21st April, and more.**

For more information call MRAG on 02 4934 9859.

Gwendoline Lewis will also be running Adult Art Classes for inquiries please call Gwendoline on 02 4960 9193.

In January 2008 MRAGM held "Fluffy! Funky! Fun!" with Olivia Parsonage where the Mum's, Grans, and kids created imaginative soft toys.



scene from claymation by woodbury primary school students



creations from the "Funky, Fluffy, Fun" workshop

2008 A Challenging Year MRAGM Events so far this year:

To raise money for our Gallery and for the Educational programmes to continue, MRAGM are holding:

PLEASE KEEP THESE DAYS
FREE SO YOU CAN COME:

A Trivia Night.....4th April for a 7pm start. All professional, volunteer and support groups and other persons in the community are invited to form teams. It will be an annual event. Your name could be engraved on the MRAGM Trivia Shield for prosperity. The executive of MRAGM wish to throw down the challenge to the rest of the community. Win the night, take home a great prize and know you are supporting education programmes at MRAG.

Christmas in July 26th July at Maddies of Bolwarra. Details next issue.

Mad Hatters Tea Party...November
A Melbourne Cup Day Function.

Coach Trips:

2008 Archibald Prize at AGNSW **10th May**
Sculpture by the Sea at Bondi Beach
Murrurundi Galleries and Studios 9th August.
Details and bookings will be advised in the next issue.

Lake Macquarie Art Gallery Society has invited us to their two wine tasting evenings and a cruise on the "Wangi Queen".

Visit to Lake Macquarie City Art Gallery (LMCAG)

Set on the foreshore of Lake Macquarie, and amongst red flowering gums nestles the LMCAG. Like us they are experiencing extensions, but that in no way detracted from the warm reception and very personable welcome by John Olsen, the President, Jude, his talented wife, and members of the society. On 9th February, fifteen or so members traveled to the opening of the new exhibition, *Who Let the Dogs Out* as guests of the LMCAG Society. Over 90 artists are featured in this art exhibition, and all works have the dog in the work. The many different interpretations of the topic proves the talent and creativity of man. Many of the works were deeply personal. It will be interesting to find the winner of The People's Choice Award, as all persons attending were asked to vote. I met Debbie the Director of LMCAG and Ron Ramsey the new Director of Newcastle Region Art Gallery, a man who has had an incredible life for one so young. Ron has spent time as the Cultural Attache to USA.

Two artists participated in a forum, and the dogs who visit people in

nursing homes, hospitals and institutions attended. A beautifully groomed, well loved and fed Maltese buffy coloured dog really stole everyone's hearts. The official opening was followed by canapés and wine. The society made us very welcome and the exhibition can be recommended to all animal lovers.

Hopefully this is the first of many events with both groups, as John and I are working on reciprocal rights. Please see events in 2008 A Challenging Year. A beautiful afternoon was followed by a visit to the Warners Bay Esplanade and coffee. Thankyou to Ted, Amber and the other travelers who attended. Tremendous thaankyouto LMCAGS who invited and hosted us.

MRAGM Featured Artist Rebecca Rath

".....the sky is brass
and the scrublands glare,
Death and ruin are everywhere;
Thrown high to bleach, or deep in the mud
The bones lie buried by last year's flood
And the Demons dance from the Never Never
To laugh at the rise of the Darling River."
The Song of the Darling River -
Henry Lawson

Having moved to the Hunter Valley in 2005 I immediately found inspiration from our property which is nestled against the Brokenback Ranges and Wollombi Brook. The height and majesty of these ancient mountains is breathtaking. Our small community, Broke/Fordwich, speaks through these mountains and history is contained in them - of the early convicts and colonials working against the land. There is evidence of Blaxland and his convicts on our property and there is also talk of the ghostly presence of Blaxland's horse "Cockfighter" who died in the Wollombi Brook. The majestic ranges also show signs of the original inhabitants - the Aborigines - with caves and paintings. You can imagine the Aborigines loving the land, working with the land and worshipping its beauty. My work seeks to show the majesty of the land. The earth is red clay basalt and it has a volcanic look about it - red ochre. We have been told that a volcano seam was in the area many millions of years ago and its eruption caused the beautiful rich and nutrient abundant earth.

Presently my work demonstrates the drought though colour, tone and working the surface. My works are on hand made Italian rag paper and I often use layers of different techniques. These include clay and gesso, dirt and ink washes, acrylic paint, layers of pastel and fix which are scratched back and re-worked again and again. The work over time has become abstract only to bring to light the surface or texture of the work. I'm not necessarily trying to emulate the environment but to get a sense of what lies beneath; what has been and perhaps question about where it is going. My work often has a sense of fragility and spirituality. Once I read an apt quote by an anonymous person who said: "I believe in God but I spell it N A T U R E."

Words and phrases in my recent series shown at Wollombi Valley Arts Council were appropriated from Sanskrit text and mantras. Meanings of the words were as varied as "Destruction" and "Knowledge" to "Awaken to Coincidence" and "Infinite Organizing Power".

I have always been in awe of Nature's power. Since moving to the Hunter and in light of our recent political/ environmental situations I feel even more compelled or entranced by her beauty. Subsequent work for 2008 is an exploration in repetitive patterns, designs and colours found in nature. I am experimenting with new techniques and compositional elements mixed together with aspects of previous work.



Blaxland's View, 2008 gesso, dirt, acrylic and pastel on Italian rag paper 76 x 51 cm

Events

Hugh Mackay
a look who's talking event
Friday 6pm - 8pm 29th February 2008

HUGH MACKAY SOLD OUT

Hugh Mackay is a psychologist, social researcher and writer who has made a lifelong study of the attitudes and behaviour of Australians. He has written five bestsellers in the field of social analysis and currently contributes columns and articles to a range of newspapers. His latest book, *Advance Australia Where?* was published in 2007. A selection of Hugh Mackay's titles will be available at the event. Drinks and finger food will be served from 6.00 pm to 6.30 pm. Presented by Maitland City Library and Maitland Regional Art Gallery. Entry fee \$5.00 bookings essential please phone the art gallery 02 4934 9859 no later than 25th February 2008.

Harry Manx has been called an "essential link" between the music of East and West, creating musical short stories that wed the tradition of the Blues with the depth of classical Indian ragas. He has created a unique sound that is hard to forget and deliciously addictive to listen to and he is performing on the 4 June MRAG. Keep an eye on the web for details www.mrag.org.au.



Harry Manx will play at MRAG June 4 2008

The Gallery Shop

The Gallery Shop is always full of new and exciting glassware, ceramics, cards, books, jewelry and gifts for everyone. Keep this in mind for a present for someone special or treat yourself. We cater for young and old and there is a 10% discount for Gallery members in the shop all year round. So drop in and check it out.

MRAG Gallery Shop is calling for local artists and craftspeople to present their artwork to the shop committee, with a view to selling their work on consignment in the Gallery Shop.

If you make something that is unique and of high quality and would like to be considered as a new shop artist, please send a copy of your CV and digital examples of your work with prices to artgallery@maitland.nsw.gov.au.



Members' Diary February - March 2008

MRAGM meetings are held monthly on the first Wednesday of the month starting at 4:00pm in the art gallery workshop with afternoon tea at 3.45pm Your input, ideas and suggestions are much appreciated.

President/Secretary:

Louise Middlebrook

Vice President: Bev Tindall

Treasurer: Helen Lowe

Gorgeous Threads

Saturday 23rd February

"Gorgeous Threads" a workshop where a kaleidoscope of colour is stitched over and over with textures of brocades, yarn, thread, that come together to form unique patterns. The work ultimately ends in a beautifully toned and textured wall hanging, bag or gorgeous wrap for evening.

The long awaited second workshop with artists Margaret and Jane will take place in The Gallery Workshop on 23rd February. Margaret and Jane, are two machine motion artists, who machine threads, heavily textured material and other tensile yarns onto backing and with machine motion process, create uniquely beautiful and functional art. Margaret and Jane are to tutor a group of adults, who wish to explore this visually textured and richly ornate art form. The students will learn under the guidance and expertise of our two artists. The process is meticulous, time consuming, and rewarding. If you are proficient in using a sewing machine then you too, can spend the day creating your own "Gorgeous Thread" artistry. To create your functional artwork you will need a plastic grocery bag of threads, yarns, wools, textured brocades in your preferred colour scheme. Those ends of wool, crochet threads, tinsel, feathers, glitter ties, can now, all be used to create your work. Morning tea will be provided by MRAGM and you are asked to bring your own lunch. If you wish to participate in this unique workshop please phone The Gallery Reception on 49349859 to book your place.

**MRAGM t-shirts available in
The Gallery shop!!**

Cost Members \$20.00 (inclusive of 10% discount) Non members \$25.00

Styles

black shirt with silver logo or white shirt with silver logo
available in small, medium, large and x-large

Contests, Art Prizes and Exhibitions in our local area:

FEBRUARY

Now - Artist/Teacher The Songroom are looking for an artist to work in the Scone area one day/wk running creative arts programs in schools. Contact Ilona Rayson 03 9495 6422

Now - Mural Tours of Kurri Kurri – available 7 days. Find out the story behind each of the 45 artworks Call now to book your tour 4936 1909.

Now - Artemis of Aberdeen Summer Series
A cornucopia of art, from the east coast of Australia (Traditional landscapes)

&
Stephenie Bester, David Dolahenty, Jose Zarb and DJ Stief
&
Crafts from Elizabeth Birch and Tony Jones
In the Old Presbyterian Church,
MacQueen St. Singleton. Ph 02 6543 8023

from 8th February- Susan Hodgins
Phenomena - Cultural & Natural Catbird
Gallery Dowling St Dungog

8 February - 23 March
Turrumurra: Baribunma-gudhing
An exhibition of artworks by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander inmates at the St. Heliers Correctional Centre, Muswellbrook.
&
Gilbert Hermon - Journey So Far
Muswellbrook Regional Arts Centre
Contact 02 6549 3880

MARCH**21st - 24th March "Norville" Artists Retreat Arty Farty Event**

Art, life drawing and art instruction available (provided models & tutors available).

Contact peternorvill@bigpond.com or phone Peter on 02 6546 6175
web www.norvilleaustralia.com.au

29th March - Aboriginal Art Talk

Wally Caruana former Senior Curator of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art at the National Gallery of Australia, Canberra (1984 to 2001) is now at the Michael Reid Gallery, Murrurundi.

See www.michaelreid.com.au

29th - 2nd March Woodworking, Hobbies and Craft Expo

Newcastle Entertainment Centre, Broadmeadow.

29th March - NIB Music and Moonlight

King Edward Park, Newcastle.

Report on BABY JUST CARES MRAGM Christmas Party

Baby Just Cares was a concert at MRAG on 7th December 2007 with musicians Francesca Andreoni and Warwick Dunham. The concert was arranged to thank the members and volunteers of MRAG for their ongoing work throughout the year. It was a great concert and party with a lot of support. Thankyou to all who helped in the preparation and to all who attended. The function raised a considerable amount of money for MRAGM. A special thankyou to all people and businesses who supported our Christmas Money Making Appeal.

OTHER**Closing 3 March - The Foundation for Young Australians | Buzz Grants**

Flexible support for young musicians, sound artists and music-related arts workers through grants of up to \$2,500. For individuals aged 12 - 26, or groups with a majority of people aged 12 - 26 involved in a music or sound project. Ph 03 9670 5436
web www.youngaustralians.org

Closing 16 March - The JB Seed Indigenous Recording

Opportunity for an Indigenous musical performer or act in any genre, with original material, to record a 5 track EP in collaboration with with Buchman (AKA Tony Buchen). Details and application

forms online. email grants@thejbseed.com
Webs www.thejbseed.com

Closing 16 March - The JB Seed Professional & Skills Development

Open to musicians and musical technicians who wish to enhance their skill base or career choices by undertaking further study, residencies, mentoring relationships, seminars, or conferences with recognised practitioners of excellence. Grants of up to \$3,000. Details and application forms are online.
email grants@thejbseed.com
website www.thejbseed.com

Closing 16 March - The JB Seed Social Activism Through the Arts

Embraces all art forms and is open to any projects or initiatives that serve to educate and/or create debate and awareness on current, socially relevant issues. Grants of up to \$5,000. Details and application forms are online. email grants@thejbseed.com
web www.thejbseed.com

Closing 26 March - The Foundation for Young Australians | Spark Fund

Financially supports young people aged 12-25 years to 'Ignite an Innovative Idea' which makes a positive contribution to the community and enhances their skills and experiences. Individuals or small groups of young people aged 12-25 may apply.
ph 03 9670 5436
web www.youngaustralians.org

Closing 25 March - The Churchie National Emerging Art Exhibition

Recognises, exposes and promotes emerging artists and their work. Prizes across four categories; paintings, works on paper, object-based sculpture and new technologies. The overall winner rewarded with a \$10,000 cash prize sponsored by Brand & Slater Architects. Apply at
www.churchieemergingart.com

Closing 14 April - NSW FTO Young Filmmakers Fund

For those living in Regional NSW or Western Sydney aged 18-35. Do you have a story to tell? Funding of projects with an exceptional variety of subject matter including short dramas, documentaries, animation, and experimental films. Contact Valerie Allerton, Coordinator YFF & Digital FX.
ph 02 9264 6400
email allertonv@fto.nsw.gov.au
web www.fto.nsw.gov.au

**Closing 15 May, 15 August, 15 November
NAVA | Janet Holmes à Court Artist's
Grants**

Provides assistance towards the costs of public presentation of visual arts, craft and design. Amounts available are:
\$500 for individuals
\$1000 for groups
web www.visualarts.net.au/grantsprizes

New Federal Arts Department

The Federal Arts Portfolio is now part of the Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts, under Minister Garrett. Information about all Federal Government arts and culture programs, including all funding programs offered directly through the Australian Government, has been migrated to new temporary site at www.arts.gov.au.

**Wollombi Valley
Arts Council**

Annual General Meeting

The Wollombi Valley Arts Council will hold its AGM on Sunday 2nd March at 3.30pm. All positions will be declared vacant on the day however only financial members are entitled to vote or to be elected to a position on the committee. 2008 memberships are now due and the \$10 membership fee can be paid on the day. Please feel free to come and share a glass of wine. See you there!

Inside Art Postponed!

The WVAC regrets to announce that the annual *Inside Art* has had to be postponed this year. Cessnock Correctional Centre are currently engaged in a massive renovation and, therefore, its Art Dept has not been able to function as normal. The art teachers are not expecting to get back to normal until, at least, July 2008. Therefore, they have had to make the sad decision to suspend the 2008 show until Easter 2009. Many inmates had works ready for this year's show so these, coupled with another year's efforts in the newly renovated art rooms, should result in a fantastic *Inside Art* 2009.

Julia Francis will open her one woman show at the WCC on Friday 11th April. It will run all through the school holidays until Sunday 27th April. Julia's last exhibition, which was very popular, was in December but, being such a prolific artist, Julia has a whole new batch to exhibit. More details next month.

Sunday Afternoon Poetry

If anyone is interested in reading poetry, of any genre, or just sitting back and listening to poetry, there will be a Poetry Afternoon on Sunday 13th April 2008, from 3pm, at the Wollombi Cultural Centre. Please contact Warwick on 02 4998 3205.

WCC Booking Enquiries. Please phone FiFi (49983339) or Bronnie (49988347) email artscouncil@wollombi.org

MRAG enquiries

Maitland Regional Art Gallery
230 High St Maitland Nsw 2320
Po Box 220 Maitland Nsw 2320

Ph 02 4934 9859

Fax 02 4933 1657

Email Artgallery@maitland.nsw.gov.au

Web www.mrag.org.au

Art Gallery Hours

Tuesday - Sunday 10.00am - 5.00pm

Closed Mondays And Public Holidays

Next Opening

Saturday 29 March 2.00pm

Regional Landscapes

Max Watters and Leo Robba
and Operation Art

all welcome

exhibition dates

21 march - 4 may 2008

Submissions

For submissions to the April / May
MRAGM Newsletter email your
contribution or suggestions to
mmi29959@bigpond.net.au or drop
it into the front office addressed to
MRAGM Newsletter.



MRAGM PATRON - Mr Frank Terenzini
Member for Maitland in the NSW Legislative Assembly