

MRAGM AUTUMN NEWSLETTER 2011



[left] Robert McFarlane, *Charles Perkins going home on bus from Sydney University*, 1963, archival pigment print, 35 x 23cm



THE GALLERY SHOP

Looking for something interesting, unique, beautiful, quirky or locally crafted? We invite you to explore our Gallery Shop where you will find the perfect gift.

The Gallery Shop hours : Tuesday - Sunday 10am - 4:45pm
230 High St Maitland NSW 2320 | 02 4934 9859
artgallery@maitland.nsw.gov.au www.mrag.org.au

[above] Robert Wynne, Art Glass, free formed and hand blown, cold worked > Available in the Gallery shop

Seraphine

Delicious new menu ☕
Divine coffee and sweets

HOURS > TUE - SUN // 9am - 4.30pm

Breakfast > 9 am to 11 am
Lunch > 11.30 am to 2.30 pm
Cakes are served all day

> The Art Gallery > Cafe* <



Gallery Café phone > 02 4934 7264

*Located at Maitland Regional Art Gallery

Art Gallery hours Tue - Sun 10am - 5pm ,
Gallery Shop hours Tue - Sun 10am - 4:45pm
230 High St Maitland NSW 2320 // www.mrag.org.au



A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Hi Everybody,

My name is Jeff Sinclair and I have recently become Chairperson on the Committee of the MRAGM - (At the AGM I was elected Vice C. P. but we had a bit of a shuffle and welcomed Reg O'Brien to the Committee to take that position).

I am delighted to report that our member numbers have grown to almost 600. It is good to know that there is such support and, as you will know from the "mail outs", membership fees are put to good use - in particular for the many classes and programs for children of all ages. Having said that, please make use of these opportunities and if you have a youngster in your close or extended family, bring them along to take part in something. We hope that this will make the next generation regard the Art Gallery as a place to visit regularly. Likewise, try to come along to as many events and openings as you can and if you have visitors from elsewhere, bring them along too and show them, what an amazing asset we have here, in our Art Gallery. Remember that at the openings Tyrells wine is served, along with tasty food items, and with a huge variety of artworks to view, all with no entry fee, it sounds like a good deal to me!

Talking of good deals, the offer of \$100 million for the Newcastle Knights over the next 10 years is in the realm of fantasy when compared to the funding available to run the Art Gallery! As you will know there are a number of generous sponsors, but our funding from Council and State Government is always competing with many other demands. I would ask you, if you ever get an opportunity to state the importance of our Art Gallery to a Councillor or local State Member, PLEASE do so.

Finally, the task of printing all the copies of the newsletter in-house is becoming more difficult. So if any of you members own, or have a connection with, a printing company, would you like to give a quote for the job? If so please give Kim Blunt a call on 4934 9859 for details. That's enough from me for now except to say that I think the Denese Oates exhibition is amazing and well worth a look, so please enjoy your Art Gallery and all it has to offer.

Jeff Sinclair
Chairperson, MRAGM



BECOME A VOLUNTEER

We are still calling for volunteers and would love your help at the gallery regardless of how much or how often you can give of your time. We are planning an exciting fund raising exhibition later in the year and would specifically like some volunteers to come in and gallery sit for an hour or two to chat to viewers about the art and help with sales.

Your MRAGM committee is bursting with ideas to offer members and your guests the opportunity to enhance your enjoyment of the art gallery. HOWEVER, we do need a little hand to get things moving.

We would love to offer; Coffee and Art mornings where you could meet in Seraphine, the Art Gallery

café, for coffee and a bickie and then tour the art gallery with a guest speaker. > A film evening offering an art house movie with a glass of wine and a snack > Sculpture by The Sea bus trip

If you have any other ideas we would love to hear from you as we are here for your benefit. Please drop us a line via email artgallery@maitland.nsw.gov.au , a note in the mail or a phone call to our friendly reception staff on 4934 9859.

Please, please, please do the same if you are able to lend a hand. There are lots of ways you can help and if we all pitch in it lightens the load and is also lots of fun.

FROM THE DIRECTOR



It seems a long time since I last wrote and much has happened in all the passing months. For me it included a trip to the USA - Washington, San Francisco, Chicago, Atlanta and LA. Four weeks of galleries, art, museums, public art, galleries, more art, artists, studios and even more art. I recently gave a talk at MRAG - and if you were not there and so missed out on hearing some of the things I did with Janis..... Walk, Walk, Walk, Look, Look, Look and Look again and Photograph- lots. But all that seems like another life and another time, certainly another part of the world. Just look at the photographs attached to these words penned hurriedly as I write catalogues for The Kingston Siblings, Michael Keighery and Pat Corrigan.

I do like writing and the piece of peace it gives me, but there is so little time and so much to see, not just at MRAG but other galleries in the Hunter and Sydney is only a car trip away. But I am not allowed to complain says Kim and Lauren. So think positive, enjoy and have another latte coffee.

Hey are we lucky or what? Séraphine, the café is now open and the coffee is fantastic and the food well worth waiting for. It has finally happened, and with just a little more work to go on the Art Factory, MRAG will be complete. We may even win more prizes for the architecture, for our programming and even our web site - at last count we had four trophies - but who is counting. MRAG is more about the art than attaining awards. MRAG is truly a

destination in the Hunter Valley. What a café as I already have written, what a shop - where else do you find Chinese antiques and New Guinea bilums in the Hunter Valley; only at our regional art gallery and all of us in Maitland need to be proud of it because it is a success.

Come and see the children having fun in the art factory, the adults wandering and wondering while enjoying and you can spare the odd dollar to play with the donation machines, art created by John Turier. No one is lost as the 'meet and greet' at Maitland in our art gallery is second to none. You do not have to be an art gallery aficionado, just someone who likes art and has half a day to spend and what a day - visitors are joyous when they leave. We have really reached the heights!

Our collection is growing and Cheryl makes sure that our donors whom we collect are happy. The focus on works on paper for our collection was truly the right path to take and we are lucky that artists, commercial galleries and patrons support this. This ever increasing collection, an asset to Maitland City Council, belongs to the people of Maitland.

And let's not forget the exhibitions, hung by PJ, what a selection we have had - a variety that allows us to show all forms of art- there is always something for the public to look at, enjoy and learn. There is so much to do that we should all

be aware of what we offer and you as Members are the glue that holds MRAG together and with our millions of volunteers we are indeed fortunate.

I am a lucky Director, around me are staff, some of whom I have not yet mentioned, like Judy in the shop and Clare doing all the design work and all the staff behind the desk. I truly am lucky and if sometimes I don't show it, it is just that I am old, or tired or a

grumpy person. I love every one of you and what you add to the MRAG mix. Thank you, where would I and the members be without the staff of MRAG.

There is our newsletter..... To the Members, a long thank you and a second one.

Joe Eisenberg
Director

FROM THE COLLECTION ROOM

Nothing is lost in the universe - Buddha



Sitting peacefully, and somewhat incongruously, in a corner of the collection room is a serene Burmese Buddha. Secured in a protective crate and cloaked in not so holy robes of bubble-wrap, he sits patiently, waiting to be carried out into the public spaces of the gallery to be viewed once more by those seeking 'enlightenment'.

This Buddha belongs to the small sub-collection within the MRAG Collection comprising of Asian artworks. Centuries old Chinese scrolls, ceramic funerary urns, terracotta Thai jars and Asian

paintings have all found their way, over time and distance to MRAG - thanks to donations made by one of our generous benefactors.

This Buddha is from Mandalay, Myanmar (Burma) and was created in the late 19th Century. He is made from Mandalay alabaster that has been gilt and lacquered and he is seated on a decorative lacquered wood base inlaid with appliqué glass.

In Buddhist iconography every Buddha imparts a message by the way his hands are placed. Our Buddha has one hand resting gently in his lap, which is to remind us to seek peace within ourselves. His right hand is touching the ground depicting the Buddha calling the earth to witness his good deeds in front of Mara (one of Buddha's demons) and also interpreted as a sign of determination.

As in Buddha's teachings 'Nothing is lost in the universe' and it is wonderful to know that this Buddha has not been lost, but will be seen again, and I look forward to presenting this Buddha to MRAG visitors soon.

Cheryl Farrell
Collection Curator, MRAG

[left] *Burmese Buddha*, (detail) c.1890, alabaster, paint, wood, glass, 78 x 45 x 45cm. Donated through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program by Anthony Renshaw, 2009

Séraphine

So much has been happening at the art gallery since our last newsletter. Of particular interest to so many of our visitors is the opening of our Café, 'Seraphine'. Jenny Benning from The Garden Table at Heritage Gardens is at the helm and visitors have been delighted with the setting, the food and the fact that Maitland has such a beautiful venue to eat, shop and most importantly, appreciate fine art. We truly do have a special place and it is ours to enjoy. Keep it in mind if you need to sing the praises of our area; a day wandering through the art gallery followed by a browse in the shop and a beautiful meal would be hard to beat.



Seraphine takes its name from French artist Séraphine Louis. The story of Seraphine is both tragic and inspiring. Seraphine (b 1864) was from a farming family. Séraphine's mother died on her first birthday and her father died before Seraphine was seven. Séraphine was then cared for by her eldest sister. Seraphine was tolerated as an eccentric and worked as housekeeper for local families of Senlis.

Alongside her day jobs, Séraphine painted at night by candlelight. In 1912, whilst staying in Senlis, German art collector Wilhelm Uhde recognized Séraphine's talent when he saw one of her works at his neighbor's house. He was to learn that Séraphine, his housecleaner, was the artist. Uhde encouraged and supported Seraphine until he was forced to leave France during WW1.

Contact between Seraphine and Uhde was not reestablished until 1927 when Uhde returned to France. Seraphine had continued painting and under Uhde's renewed patronage achieved prominence as a naive painter. Seraphine enjoyed commercial success until the Great Depression affected sales of her work.

In 1932, Séraphine was admitted for chronic psychosis to the psychiatric ward of a geriatric hospital at Clermont where she survived until 1942.

I told you it was tragic!!

If you are interested in the life story or artwork of Seraphine there is a very good Dendy DVD simply titled 'Seraphine'. The movie is beautifully shot and is the recipient of 7 French Academy Awards including Best Picture and Best Actress.

Linda Greedy
Art Gallery Attendant, MRAG



With a coach full of very enthusiastic art lovers we left Maitland on our fifth Sculpture by the Sea trip. Our first stop was a visit to Watters Gallery in Riley Street, Sydney. We were greeted by Frank Watters who generously gave an informative and interesting insight on the artist Tony Tuckson and his work on exhibition at the time.

Neil Evans, Ian Grant and Geoffrey Legge Frank's business partner took us on tour of Watters Gallery. We were then privileged to tour the Frank Watters apartment, and by the way Frank did indeed have paintings hanging off his kitchen cupboard doors. The generosity of Frank, in sharing his private apartment was very overwhelming. A very big thankyou to Geoffrey, Neil, Ian and Frank.

Then it was off to Bondi for some lunch and the walk to Tamarama with umbrellas in hand, ready for the rain. The sculptures were amazing and once again left us in awe of the skill and dedication of the artists.

A thankyou card was sent to Frank Watters for his hospitality, signed by the all on the trip and a big thankyou to Gillian James, Lorraine Tindall and Billabong Restaurant for their donations for our raffles, which raised over \$400.

A very big thankyou to everyone who came on the trip, it wouldn't be possible to raise money for our Art Gallery if it weren't for you all.

A very interesting and successful day raising over \$2,000 for our Gallery.

Judy Henry
Tour coordinator, MRAGM

WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING > ART SPEAK



Since his return from a study trip to the USA, our Cultural Director Joe has given an interesting and informal Saturday afternoon talk on public art. The images of sculptures and paintings in the public domain were a great example of the positive effect art has on a community; a sense of belonging, a sense of place, an improvement in public safety and community spirit to name just a few of the benefits (that's right isn't it Joe?!)

The discussion and images also sparked interest in what public art would be culturally significant to our community – the 55 flood is so deeply ingrained in the psyche of Maitland and its people it would be wonderful to acknowledge and commemorate the event in the form of public art.

On the same weekend a wonderful afternoon was spent by our younger audience with Madeleine Winch, author and illustrator of the beautiful children's book *Come By Chance*. The Art Factory exhibition of *Come By Chance* has been enormously popular as was the afternoon spent with Madeleine.

The afternoons offered by the Art Gallery are very worthwhile and an enjoyable way to spend an hour or two if you are able to set some time aside.

Linda Greedy
Art Gallery Attendant, MRAG

THE ART GALLERY SHOP



Looking for something interesting, unique, beautiful, quirky or locally crafted? We invite you to explore our Art Gallery Shop where you will find the perfect gift.

In the Art Gallery Shop at MRAG you will discover a beautiful range of hand blown glass ware, ceramic

ware and unique antiques. All our jewellery is made by artists (both local and from afar) who have created individual pieces sure to gain admiration. Handmade bags, scarves and accessories are also featured.

The Art Gallery Shop also stocks a wide range of cards that are different from the rest, some handmade by artists, others featuring work by well known artists. You will find a card to suit any occasion.

The Art Gallery Shop not only has books on art, books on artists, books on history, books on food, but also has a wonderful range of children's books that are beautifully illustrated, award winning, funny, sweet and 'different'.

IN GOOD TASTE



This evening event, which in part will go on for three weeks and two weekends, is a fundraiser and an enjoyable experience presented for all Members.

On 3 June from 6:00pm MRAG will be brimming with good taste. There will be a print exhibition with many many affordable prints for sale, a special Tyrrell's wine tasting and an exciting concert of music for those who love Frank Sinatra and others of his ilk.

As there is no commercial art gallery in Maitland and MRAG collects works on paper, I feel it is time that you too can start a collection of your own and what better way to do this than buying a limited edition print by a well known artist or up-and-coming star, and that one day their art will be valued at more than you have paid.

The prints will not be framed. MRAG has the support of two Maitland framers who are prepared to give a discount if you purchase from *In Good Taste*. Artists such as Blackman, Boyd, Kay, Archer and many many more will be available at special reduced prices for MRAG Members. Prices commence at around \$100 and rise into the investment bracket. I will be there to give you advice.

Janie Miller Limited Edition Prints, Whaling Road Studios, Marnling Press and Berkeley Editions have all agreed to support *In Good Taste* and apart from 3 June you will have three weeks to

come and buy. Not only will you be helping yourself but you will also be supporting your very own art gallery. All funds raised will go towards Members' support of the art gallery's activities, particularly in education. Print collecting is a wonderful way of collecting art at a reasonable price, one of the reasons why MRAG does the same.

On 3 June there will also be excellent Tyrrell's wines to taste and one of its main wine makers will be in attendance. Wine not normally available at liquor outlets will not only be available to taste but be available for purchase. *In Good Taste* is about the two most recognised experiences which make us feel good, give us topics to discuss and certainly make us aware of the good taste in our lives.

Tyrrell's wines are renowned in the Hunter for their excellent drop and the family has a long history with Maitland. From the inexpensive to the luxurious, just like the limited edition prints, this family company has been, inextricably linked to the wine story in Australia. Planting grapes and always looking for better ways to make wine. On the night, you MRAG Members can become an active part in this story.

The night will be peppered by music brought to you from the best that performance can produce. Music you will know, enjoy and tap your feet to. The performers are a surprise. But you will not regret the night of *In Good Taste* unless you of course do not attend. This night will be the first of many brought to you by the Members for the Members. Dress up, be ready to be challenged, prepare to enjoy and bring your money with you. To enter costs nothing and canapés will be served from our new café Séraphine. So come and enjoy.

Joe Eisenberg
Director, MRAG

[left] Suzanne Archer, *Flapp*, 2010, silk screen on paper, 57 x 76cm

EXHIBITIONS



[left] Frank Watters' Flat, East Sydney 2011
[right] Michael Keighery, Buddies, 2011, cast and assembled earthenware clay, H: 30 cm photography by Bernie Fisher

WORKS WITH QUIRK:

An Art Factory Exhibition
+ Interactive Project Space
curated By Lauren Van Katwyk
26 MARCH – 17 JULY

ROBERT MCFARLANE:

Received Moments, Photography 1961
- 2009
curated By Sarah Johnson

1 APRIL – 22 MAY

A Manly Art Gallery & Museum Touring Exhibition
Robert McFarlane is represented by Josef Lebovic
Gallery, Sydney



MICHAEL KEIGHERY

China syndrome
6 MAY - 26 JUN

DEPICTING NATURE

from the Scientific illustration to Graphic
Novels > Curated by Trevor Weekes
6 MAY - 26 JUN



FRANK'S FLAT

> Curated by Geoffrey Legge and
Sonia Legge
27 MAY - 17 JUL

MAITLAND AND THE RIVER

From the MRAG Collection
> curated by Cheryl Farrell
6 > 28 MAY

IN GOOD TASTE

MRAGM event
3 > 26 JUNE

LINEAGE

David Fairbairn selected portraits 1998 – 2010
is a Campbelltown Arts Centre travelling exhibition
The tour of this exhibition is made possible by:
1 JUL - 21 AUG



ROBYN STANTON-WERKHOVEN AND ERIC WERKHOVEN

Caprice
1 JUL - 21 AUG

EDUCATION

PIPSQUEAK WITH VANESSA EVANS

> NOW ON WEDNESDAYS AND THURSDAYS!

For toddlers aged 2-5 and their parents or carers
EVERY Wednesday and Thursday
during the school term
10.30am - 11.30am

Cost: \$8 members / \$10 non members / week
MATERIALS INCLUDED

Pipsqueak is a fantastic art program for little ones. Look at art, play games, sing songs, read books and make works of art, all inspired by current exhibitions from across the gallery.

Note: Wednesday and Thursday classes each week will have the same content.



AGED
2-5

ART SUNDAYS

FREE ART FOR KIDS AND
FAMILIES EVERY SUNDAY*

MRAG Art Sundays 11am - 1pm



Excludes long weekends
and public holidays.
Adult supervision is
required.



Inspired by the exhibitions on display,

Art Sundays is a free art activity program
which runs every Sunday from 11am –
1pm in the Art Factory workshop rooms.

No bookings are required. Art Sundays is
a program designed to help parents and
caregivers support their child's visit to the
art gallery with easy hands on activities.



NATIONAL TRUST HERITAGE AWARD



On Monday 4th April 2011 Maitland Regional Art Gallery received the National Trust Heritage Award for Interpretation and Presentation, Corporate/Government, for the Maitland Jewish Cemetery Project (<http://www.nationaltrust.com.au/events/festival/heritageawards/>). This is terrific recognition of the project and of the contributions everyone made to its success. The judges' comments are below.

Judges' Comments – National Trust Heritage Awards: Interpretation and Planning, Corporate/Government Category:

Maitland Jewish Cemetery (I1)

A remarkable and visionary project, which sought to revive interest in the small forgotten 1840s cemetery of some fifty graves. The outcomes have encompassed an exhibition of artworks inspired by the Cemetery, with interpreting catalogues and education program, a wonderful published history, and similar projects that have been initiated within other regional and rural communities. A truly remarkable outcome for the modest resources invested, demonstrating the discoverable relevance and importance of heritage places, and how the celebration can inspire other communities.

As well, in case you haven't heard, earlier in the year Maitland City Council was successful in gaining funding for a heritage conservation study of the cemetery. Again, a reflection of the interest and support from so many different people and organisations.



2011 MRAGM COMMITTEE

CHAIRPERSON > Jeff Sinclair, **VICE CHAIRPERSON** > Reg O'Brien, **SECRETARY** > Kim Blunt,
TREASURER > Jean Paul Ruelle, **NEWSLETTER SECRETARY** > Linda Greedy,
GENERAL COMMITTEE MEMBER > Vicki Woods, **GENERAL COMMITTEE MEMBER** > Helen Sharrock

MRAGM meetings are held bi-monthly, on the third Wednesday of the month at the art gallery at 4.15pm. MRAG members are most welcome. Our meetings are brief and friendly.



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