



# WATERCOLOUR NEW ZEALAND Inc.



Winner of the Winsor & Newton NZ Summer Watercolour Competition 2021

## *A Pastel Afternoon in the Capital*

by Kit Ong

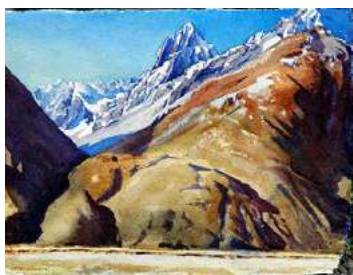
## Newsletter 183 March – May 2021

In this issue:



Go Figure

4



Establishment vs Popular

7



NZ Summer watercolours

8



Using Facebook

11



## From the President

Happy New Year! It has been a full summer with great events and lots of painting! Charlotte Hird hosted a memorable four-day Paintaway on Ruapehu in December, which was attended by members from all over New Zealand; you can find the details in a wonderful article by Pete and Maryann James on page 13. We also ran our annual Winsor & Newton NZ Summer Competition and had a record number of 58 entries! I expect this is a good reflection of a busy summer of painting; congratulations to all who entered and those who won. You can see all the entries on the Watercolour NZ website and the winning entries are profiled on pages 8–10 of this newsletter.

We are steaming full ahead with watercolour activities into late summer and autumn. We have an exciting outdoor painting week planned for 1–5 March around the Wellington area, and Jacky Pearson's beginner workshop at the end of March is already fully booked.

Finally, our AGM is coming up on Sunday, 7th March in Karori, Wellington. This year, for those based in other regions that would like to attend our AGM, we are offering a remote connection via Zoom. If you are interested in attending the AGM remotely, please email [bookings@watercolournewzealand.co.nz](mailto:bookings@watercolournewzealand.co.nz) with the subject line "AGM Online," by 10am on Sunday 7th March.

As a society we are definitely seeing that it is an exciting time for watercolour; we have experienced record numbers of participation and sales over the last six months and it's not stopping. Janine Gallizia (editor of *The Art of Watercolour* magazine) proposes we are on the cusp of a cyclic watercolour boom and encourages us to take advantage of this opportunity to reposition watercolour in the art world; have a read of Sue's article in this newsletter - will you join the Watercolour Renaissance?

Hannah Martis  
President, Watercolour New Zealand Inc.

## Introducing our Treasurer, Jill Hartstonge

Most members will have had contact with Jill and will know her patience and kindness. She works long hours for us, especially around Splash exhibition time.

Jill Hartstonge has been treasurer of Watercolour New Zealand since January 2014. She always loved to paint portraits, even as a child, but found little time for that during the busy years of small children and career. She worked only in oils until she joined Watercolour New Zealand. It was at the Wellington Portrait Club that she learned that Watercolour New Zealand needed a treasurer. Although now retired, Jill ran her own business for over 20 years installing and training in the use of accounting software. Jill has always been grateful for her success and wanted to give back to the community. What better way than to combine her love of painting with her love of accounting. Jill admires the work of Brazilian artist Eudes Correia who is based in Lisbon, Portugal. He paints figures and faces with a vigour and liveliness that is compelling, yet catches the moment with a tender sensitivity that is brilliant. Jill has filled her house with the work of other artists, mainly landscapes, and she greatly admires the talent of others, within Watercolour New Zealand, and beyond. She would like to paint more often, but finds that difficult with her treasurer jobs, her garden and thirteen grandchildren, including one-year-old twins.

Chriss-Ann Menzies  
Vice President, Watercolour New Zealand Inc.

# W WATERCOLOUR NEW ZEALAND

National society for watercolour artists

**President:** Hannah Martis

**Vice President:** Chriss-Ann Menzies

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**Treasurer:** Jill Hartstonge [jillhartstonge@extra.co.nz](mailto:jillhartstonge@extra.co.nz) 04 5676938

## We welcome new members

**Annual subscription: Member: \$40 Couple: \$50 Student (enrolled): \$15**

Membership includes our quarterly newsletter, workshops, social activities, exhibition, discounts at art stores.

To join please go to [www.watercolournewzealand.nz](http://www.watercolournewzealand.nz) – Membership page. Complete the online form. Alternatively, post your cheque with name, address, phone numbers and email on the reverse side to: Membership, Watercolour New Zealand, PO Box 33088, Petone, Lower Hutt 5046.

Watercolour New Zealand Bank Account: 01-0607-0026637-00

To be listed in the Artist Directory on our website: go to [www.watercolournewzealand.nz](http://www.watercolournewzealand.nz) – Membership – Join Directory – select a profile type. Set-up cost is \$10, \$25 or \$50. Then contact the Treasurer (above).

## Your newsletter contribution is welcome

This newsletter aims to inform and encourage members by including articles on all facets of the art of watercolour. Your contributions and suggestions will be welcomed.

Please email the editor – see above.



Jill Hartstonge

## Making Watercolour Boom

Inviting our members to help make it happen

by SUE WILD

The New Zealand art world is in good health. I was first alerted to this when I took paintings for framing after lock-down eased. My framer is always very busy, but he was stretched to capacity. Customers were bringing paintings, prints, photos and embroidery stitched by a great aunt. People had time to "get around to it." Homes have received unusual attention. Walls that were blank now feature art works. Galleries are reporting a lovely positive season. Alfred reports that his gallery, Memelink Artspace, is experiencing the busiest summer since opening. His classes are brimming. "People are feeling creative and keen to learn to paint." Art societies and tutors around the country tell of a buzz of interest and the need to add more classes to programmes.

Watercolour New Zealand's membership continues to increase, as the "Welcome to new members" panel shows. *Splash 2020* represented 100 artists, attracted 3320 visitors and had record sales of 81 paintings – 27.5%. The *Southern Splash* exhibition in the Akaroa Gallery in February had the highest number of sales at opening on record (see Page 14). Our classes are filling. Around 40 people plan to attend our Paintaway in Methven. Members are enjoying the sense of community that Paintaways, outdoor painting sessions, exhibition openings and classes offer. All is humming.

BUT – there is a glitch:

- Few major galleries display many watercolours. (Memelink Artspace is one that always has an impressive display.)
- The national collection of New Zealand has purchased few, if any, watercolours in years.
- The medium is not regarded as an investment opportunity.

New Zealand is not alone. These 'failings' exist across the watercolour world.

The revered international magazine, *The Art of Watercolour*, 40th issue, published in December 2020, includes a stirring article by editor Janine Gallizia. Janine has 25 years of global experience of the watercolour world. In a fascinating summary, she lists a sixty-year history of ten-year cycles in the watercolour field, each one fed and led by an individual country. In 2015, she says, the scene changed. "The watercolour cycle was no longer national, it became international. International exhibitions and competitions became the norm. Every corner of the globe saw events taking place, flooding social media and discovering new artists. The sheer number of exhibitions, competitions, artists, paintings multiplied by ten in just 2-3 years." In response to this change we need to develop international systems and structures for watercolour. We are beginning a new cycle. Janine perceives that NOW is a moment that we must grab and use.

## "The greatest watercolour BOOM is on the horizon."

Janine believes this will happen around the end of 2021 – beginning of 2022. We need to prepare now.

She has created a global project, the Watercolour Renaissance, a 100% free initiative. "I am offering to train participants ... with the goal of creating a new, stronger structure that will allow us all to prosper. Everyone is welcome, whatever their age, style or level."

Janine:

"The Watercolour Renaissance is my present to you and to the watercolour that I love."

If you wish to take part, please contact me:  
[janinegallizia@gmail.com](mailto:janinegallizia@gmail.com)

To join Watercolour Renaissance and get the free training:  
<https://www.janinegallizia.com/newsletter>

I suggest you – our Watercolour New Zealand member artists - think of inscribing in the project. An inscription includes free training to increase the level of paintings, but also competition, exhibition results and increased visibility for artists and Art Societies. People inscribed in WR will also have access to events and activities that aim at expanding the watercolour market locally.

## References:

Magazine: *The Art of Watercolour*, 40th issue.

3 x Watercolour Renaissance (WR) videos which explain the project:

<https://www.janinegallizia.com/watercolour-renaissance>  
(bottom of page)

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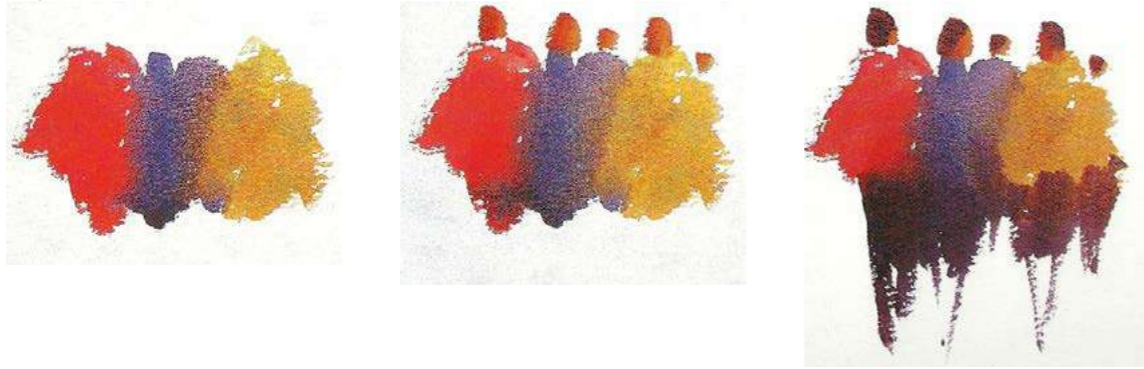
# Go Figure

by SUE WILD et al

Are you new to the watercolour world and feeling diffident about including figures in your paintings? This article is a step-by-step guide towards populating landscapes and townscapes with figures. It is not about painting a figure as the main focus. We have gathered advice, tips and clips from a number of artists.

## Getting started

Australian watercolour artist, Robert Wade, reached 90 years of age in 2020. He is known as Australia's Unofficial Ambassador of Watercolour because he has spread the watercolour word in many countries including New Zealand. It is fitting to start with advice from this expert. In his book *Robert Wade's Watercolor Workshop Handbook* is a page of "Bob's Blobs" illustrating a simple way to kick off and to lose your 'figure fear'.



Start with rough shapes, working quickly ... add blobs to suggest heads but no round balloons! ... angle the legs, vary the brush-pressure. Start with stationary figures – individuals, couples, groups. Focus on the process, not the result. Don't aim for perfection or complication. Practise the brush movements, getting the ratio of water to pigment right. Paint a hundred figures, fill a sketchbook. Paint from your experience and your imagination, paint from life outdoors. Using photos as a reference can restrict your freedom.

## Adding action

When you're happy with your stationary figures, get them moving. Here are tips gleaned from another Australian artist, Joseph Zbukvic, in 2009:

- Omit feet and hands
- Lift one shoulder
- Tip the head to one side
- Use a good brushful of pigment, not a weak mix
- Leave one leg shorter than the other, one darker than the other
- Connect the figure to its shadow to ground it – a horizontal or diagonal stroke
- Use a touch of white gouache on a shoulder or head as a highlight



These clips from Joseph's paintings show just how loose and characterful his minor figures can be.

However, your figures should suit your style. If your painting is realistic in style, then your figures need to be portrayed in a realistic and believable way. Similarly, a loose abstract painting requires loose, abstract figures.

## Measurements and balance

It's useful to have a guide on proportions:

- The average male figure is roughly 8 heads tall; the average female is 7 ½ heads tall
- The shoulders are 3 heads wide
- The hips (top of the legs) are approximately midway
- A loosely hanging arm reaches to about mid-thigh



Robert Wade illustrates proportions

Malcolm Beattie emphasises balance

In a stationary figure the weight is evenly distributed each side of a vertical line from the nape of the neck to the point of balance. In action, the weight is unevenly distributed around the vertical line from the neck.

## The brush strokes

Hazel Soan gives these pointers:

- Use both the tip and the body of the brush to forge the shapes
- Paint swiftly to enhance movement
- Paint with as few brush strokes as possible
- Guide the brush to leave slivers of paper untouched for highlights



## Working along with watercolour

Practise painting from the head down, wet-in-wet. Try skipping the pencil work and drawing your figures with the brush only. Let the paint flow, then leave it alone. No fiddly-diddling!



As Hazel Soan says, "Many of the delightful effects of watercolour occur after the brush has left the paper."



Play with light figures against a dark background. There's much to learn about this – Google "chiaroscuro". In this sketch by member Ali Hehir, the people interact, a story plays out and the viewer is given the right to invent the script. Paint your own couples and groups with character and action.



sketch by Ali Hehir



a group by Joseph Zbukvic

## Placing figures

The next step will be putting figures in a painting. People can add to the narrative, the story your painting tells. Each figure needs a role to play, a purpose. A useful trick is to use cut out figures and move them around to see what they add (or take away) from the scene.

## Scale

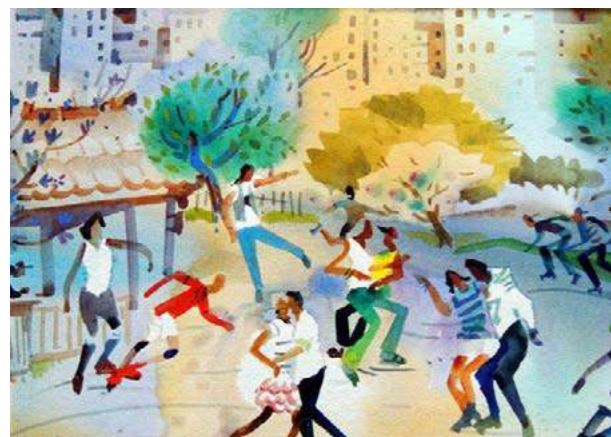
When setting a figure in a scene, ensure that heights make sense in relation to doorways, vehicles, lamp-posts, furniture and other figures. Figures can add emphasis to features in the picture eg. small figures against a tall building, a little mountaineer in an alpine scene. Watercolour New Zealand member and tutor Ted Sherwen uses figures here to give the viewer a sense of the quarry space and the size of the machinery.



Stevensons Quarry, Kaiaua by Ted Sherwen

## Using figures for design

Ted Sherwen says "People in a landscape or townscape are peripheral. Use them for design, decoration, to carry colour." In this painting no single figure is the focus; together the group of figures express the exuberance and movement on the rink.



Skaters in Central Park, New York by Ted Sherwen

## Locations to capture live action

Practising by observation and sketching is paramount. There are plenty of locations: the beach, airport lounge, shopping mall, street, bus stop, café. An obvious handy spot is the supermarket carpark. Locate your car with a view of the entry door, move to the passenger seat and capture shoppers coming and going. Stare at the figure, taking in an eyeful of shape, balance, tones and when it disappears, record in pencil or paint from your mind's eye. Tuck a sketchpad and pencil into the pocket behind the car seat, so you can reach for it whenever you're waiting. There'll always be something to sketch and very often it will be people.



Painting trip to Flinders 2007 by Adrienne Pavelka

And - from Alison Hehir - just for fun, you can do what half the population is doing at the moment and photoshop a figure into your picture! As reference, the world craze to insert Bernie Sanders with mittens (from Biden Inauguration Day) into every situation conceivable! Here's one from Instagram, where watercolourist Kaite Ewing places Bernie into her painting of a bird. LOL!



## References

[Robert Wade's Watercolor Workshop Handbook by Robert Wade, published 2002](#)

[Simplifying Complex Scenes in Watercolour by Malcolm Beattie, published 2003](#)

[Hazel Soan: The Essence of Watercolour, published 2011.](#)

[Hazelsoan.com](#) [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#). A free youtube link to an interview with Hazel Soan on painting figures: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3Hq\\_SRtRgV0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3Hq_SRtRgV0)

[Kateri \(Kaite\) Ewing Instagram @kateriewing](#)

[Alison Hehir Instagram @watercolourhare](#)

## The Art Establishment and Popular Taste

by JOHN TOFT

I recently bought a copy of the book *Australian Impressionist & Realist Artists*. It includes work by Greg Allen, Herman Pekel, David Taylor, Robert Wade and Joseph Zbukvic, artists whose names are familiar to many New Zealand watercolourists. Equally interesting, however, was the thought-provoking introduction, written by the compiler, Melbourne gallery director and art dealer Tom Roberts, namesake and great nephew of one of Australia's most famous artists. In it he explains what motivated him to produce the book.

Roberts gives what he believes to be the best definition of art:

"A communication of feeling through some medium, executed with skill". Skill is included in the definition of art in all dictionaries and indeed heads the definition in most; but art includes another factor, namely, it must communicate a feeling. Artists are moved by some object, scene, person, issue or situation with a feeling of beauty, peace, exhilaration, anger, joy or sorrow. They use their skill to communicate that same feeling through the painting to the viewer. If they succeed they produce a work of art. There are therefore two facets to an art work, the feeling which it communicates and the technique employed in doing so.

He points out that technique can, to a certain degree, be judged objectively, particularly by practising artists, whereas the feeling a painting conveys to the viewer is entirely personal and subjective.

Roberts argues that a vital art world should entertain or encompass a wide variety of schools and styles. However, as he points out,

'Almost exclusively, the art publications of the last two decades [the book was published in 1990] which illustrate the development of art in Australia, start with the early artists such as Martens and Glover. They progress to Buvelot, to the impressionists, then to the era of Hans Heysen. From there they proceed through the abstract, radical and experimental movements. The impression is made that, from the time of Heysen, all Australian artists of any worth ceased painting in a traditional representational manner. This is far from the truth.'

Moreover, it is contrary to what the majority of art lovers prefer. Roberts cites a 1959 Morgan Gallup Poll which asked Australians whether they preferred representational or abstract art. The results: 79% preferred representational art and 9% preferred abstract. The remainder had no interest in art. At the time, the director of the Melbourne National Gallery suggested these results were quite understandable because most people had not been educated to appreciate avant-garde painting. He explained that matters were in hand to rectify the situation and predicted that in twenty-five years time the figures would be reversed. 'They were in hand indeed', writes Roberts.

'For more than thirty-five years the art establishment in Australia has been completely controlled by the practitioners, advocates and sympathisers of abstract or experimental art. All of the art critics in the leading newspapers, the gallery directors, art educators in the universities, art schools and, with few exceptions, in the secondary and primary schools, have taught and promoted the more abstract and experimental schools of painting. For the most part they have totally denigrated or ignored the more traditional or figurative artists. It is significant that although the Camberwell Rotary Annual Exhibition of Traditional Art is the largest indoor art exhibition in Australia – this year 3330 paintings were submitted from all over the country and about 1700 of these were hung – it never rates a mention in any of the art columns in any leading newspaper. A small exhibition of thirty or so pictures in the more radical vein will often score a substantial review. The education in the abstract and experimental art in the years following the 1959 Morgan Poll was spirited, thorough and comprehensive, but in spite of that it had no effect what-so-ever on the Australian public's acceptance and appreciation of art.

Another Morgan Poll taken in 1975 revealed that 78% of people still preferred representational painting and a further Morgan Poll in 1987 produced the identical figure, 79% still preferred the representational as against 8% who favoured the abstract.

It is evident that no amount of education, promotion and publicity will alter the fact that the vast majority of people prefer an art form to which they can relate.'

It's interesting that the Australian surveys consistently showed around

[www.watercolournewzealand.nz](http://www.watercolournewzealand.nz)

12 to 13 percent - approximately one eighth of those surveyed - weren't interested in art. Here, the number appears to be higher - nearly twice as high, in fact. An article in the New Zealand *Listener* in March, 2018 entitled *Art & Soul*, on the opening of Toi Art, Te Papa's dedicated art space, outlined the success of the museum in attracting high visitor numbers but went on to say, 'But art is a harder sell. A survey of 2000 New Zealanders shows a fifth of Te Papa's visitors have no interest in visiting an art gallery. Nearly a third of that group say they "wouldn't understand the art"; another 28% believe art galleries are boring.' Te Papa head of audience insights, Clint Elsom, commented 'We are never going to change that.' When around 60% of those who weren't interested in visiting the museum's art exhibitions said they wouldn't understand the art or that it was boring, perhaps it has to do with the nature of at least some of what's on show. How difficult is it to understand a representational painting?

Why is it that the styles of painting preferred by the overwhelming majority of art lovers find so little favour with most of the art establishment? American art critic Theodore F. Wolff examined this question in an essay on Andrew Wyeth in his book, *The Many Masks of Modern Art*:

'Many of his critics are so caught up with the notion of "mainstream" art, with the idea that an artist, in order to be taken seriously, must paint in a manner that reflects the current art world consensus of what constitutes relevancy or significance, that they have lost the ability to look beyond a work's style to what it represents or communicates.

It seems never to occur to them that a deeply committed artist of genuine talent and substance could turn his or her back on any or all modernist or postmodernist approaches without batting an eyelash. And yet it happens all the time, whether the art establishment cares to admit it or not.

Wyeth, of course, is the outstanding American example of someone who has done just that – and has achieved an extraordinary amount of popular success in the process.

That, above all, is Wyeth's unforgiveable crime. If there is one thing the elite of the art world cannot abide, it is the realization that an artist they admire is also a particular favourite of plumbers and farmers. They find that intolerable, for it threatens their claim to be "special," to have insights and sensitivities beyond those of "ordinary" human beings.

It's ironic that art, the great humanizer, should also be the refuge of individuals whose only claim to fame is that they are "better" than others by virtue of their exquisite sensibilities and commitment to advanced ideas.

Not surprisingly, it is important to these people that art be perceived in the most precious and progressive of terms, as something so subtle and innovative that only persons of unusual refinement and imagination could possibly understand and appreciate it.'

A number of well known, highly accomplished New Zealand painters have been virtually ignored in histories of New Zealand art. In *An Introduction to New Zealand Painting 1839-1967* by Gordon H. Brown and Hamish Keith, neither Austen Deans nor Peter McIntyre are deemed worthy of mention. *Two Hundred and Forty Years of New Zealand Painting* by Gil Docking, Michael Dunn and Edward Hanfling includes a brief section on Peter McIntyre, notable for its patronising and condescending tone: 'Peter McIntyre (1910-1995) is a name known throughout the land, probably because his work epitomises, in the popular mind, what painting should be about and what paintings should look like ... In terms of success his achievements were impressive, and a number of painters emulate his style.'

A chapter in this book, *Painting since 1990*, briefly mentions three of the country's best known landscape painters, and concedes that they suffered critical neglect because they preferred to paint in a traditional style:

'Other painters have maintained attachments to a more traditional sense of "craft" or paint handling, such as still-life (Joanna Margaret Paul and Jude Rae) and landscape (Douglas Badcock, Austen Deans and Grahame Sydney). Within a modernist framework, where there was an influence on newness or progress, this might have been perceived as old-fashioned (and it is noteworthy that some of these artists have been excluded from published histories of New Zealand art).'

We should remind ourselves of Tom Roberts' view that a vital art world needs to encompass a wide variety of schools and styles. That important artists are neglected or ignored by the art establishment who deem their work to be unfashionable and therefore unworthy of serious attention is a travesty.



# The Winsor & Newton NZ Summer Watercolour Competition 2021

We are delighted that Winsor & Newton is continuing to sponsor the Summer Competition. Members painted on the theme "Summer in New Zealand" and entered their work by email. 58 works were submitted. The body of paintings is currently featured on our website and is a delightful celebration of New Zealand's summer colours and action. Congratulations to the winning artists.

## 1st place: *A Pastel Afternoon in the Capital* by Kit Ong

The winning painting is featured on the front page.

**Kit:** This painting is from a series focused on semi-abstracted Wellington landscapes, chiefly painted from imagination. Vibrant apricot and pinks contrasting with splashes of pastel communicate the beauty of the capital built right on the edge of the Pacific Ocean. The abstracted harbour juxtaposes with the pure architectural lines of the high-rise buildings. Wellington is known for its wind, biting cold in winter, a delicious breeziness in summer. Tiny kites in jewel tones float around on this breeze - Wellington on a summer afternoon, no better place to be.

**Judges:** A painting with strong emotional appeal. Truly original and beautiful. Outstanding and perfect colour work, patterning and design.

## 2nd Place: *Summer Son* by Rebecca Downman-Ngapo

**Rebecca:** Summer Son was a study in high key, using the lighter end of the value scale. Early January, I had a big studio reorganisation, so this was a fun, no pressure painting to celebrate. The subject is a friend's son on her wedding day. He looked so sweet with his bow tie and straw hat, I just played up the light and the lovely fresh colours surrounding him. Painted on Fabriano hot press paper using Winsor & Newton watercolours. Thank you.

**Judges:** Extremely subtle and sensitive painting as regards colour harmony and balance. An honest expression of an appealing child.



## 3rd place: *Feeding Time in the Botanical Gardens* by David Corballis

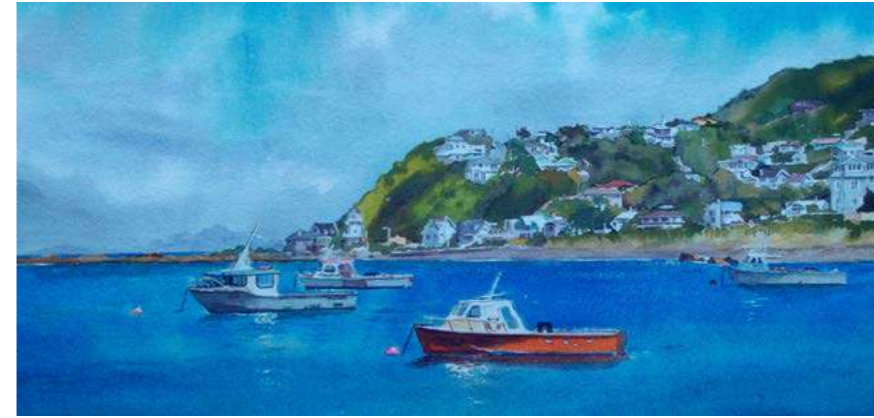
**David:** I really do appreciate the opportunity to enter this competition, so thank you to everyone who made it possible.

Summer has been a bit mischievous in Dunedin this year, soothing us with sunshine, then exacting a price soon after. This picture was painted during the former. People were enjoying the warmth and the gardens. There is a freshness to these days; we seldom achieve a parched dryness. The sun's rays bounce off the leaves which sparkle in the sun. Neither are we overcrowded, though more people were around than I included in the painting. I wanted to convey a relaxed feeling around ducks and pigeons, and a sense of post-lock-down, summer liveliness.

**Judges:** An authoritative watercolour. An interesting presentation of a family outing. Perfect colour harmony and atmospheric strength.



## A selection of competition entries



*Morning Across the Bay* by Ian Logan



*Summer Light* by Pamela Lines



*Contemplation* by Meleesa Ridling



*Summer Roses Albertine* by Susan Worthington



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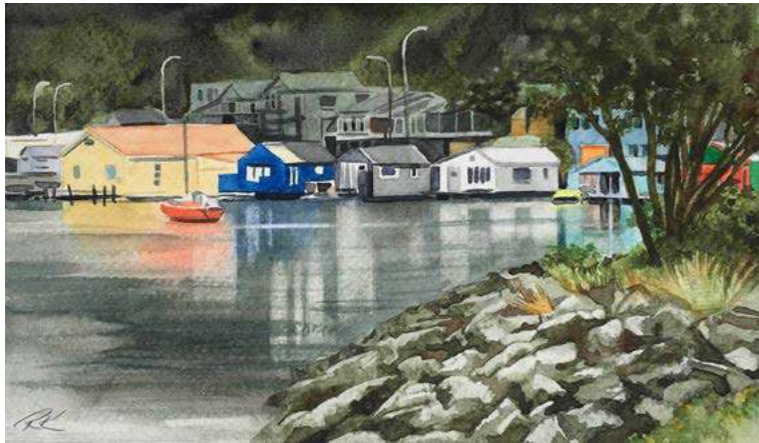




*Silly Season by Tina Seifarth*



*Petone Sailing by Susan Dey*



*Not Sunny Today by Ruth Kiel*



*Coastal Splendour by Raewyn Harris*



*Kuaotunu Beach by Mark Esteves*



*Summer at Murray's Bay by Roy Boston*

## Da Vinci Talk 2021 – “Wake Up”

### Calling all New Zealand artists!

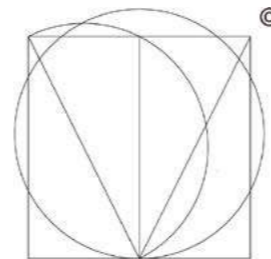
Da Vinci Talk is a non-profit annual art exhibition founded by John Zeng to promote cultural exchange between Chinese and New Zealand university students.

We are holding an exhibition later this year and are seeking NZ artists to take part. See [www.davincitalk.com](http://www.davincitalk.com) for info about last year's exhibition.

Participants are encouraged to freely interpret our theme – “Wake Up” – in their artwork. We welcome all NZ university students, including those who have recently graduated (within three years). No registration fee required.

**Submission deadline: 30th June 2021**

Please email [contact@davincitalk.com](mailto:contact@davincitalk.com) if interested for details about the exhibition and submission requirements.



达芬奇对话  
DA VINCI TALK

## Using Facebook to improve your painting

by MARTIN NECAS

Ah, Facebook! Such a polarising phenomenon. In the last few years, Facebook has come full circle. At first, Facebook represented a chic novel platform whose naïve aim was to benefit all humankind by allowing limitless potential for human communication. But it did not take long for Facebook to turn into an evil empire, preying on users' attention and making money from the worst of human vitriol, misinformation and behaviour manipulation. So which is it? Good or evil? Beneficial or destructive? And how could it possibly be used to improve your art?

Love it or hate it, the fact is that amongst the untold piles of garbage on Facebook, you can find absolute gems in the form of moderated interest groups dedicated to art, including watercolour. Moderated groups are monitored by a dedicated group of volunteers whose job is to make sure everyone behaves. These moderators have the authority to intervene in any discussions, authorise people's posts and remove posts that do not conform to the group's policies or the normal conventions of human decency. Moderators can also block repeat offenders permanently. A little bit of “surveillance” goes a long way and, as a result, moderated groups are very civil, nice and generally safe on-line communities. People can share pictures and descriptions of their art, talk about materials and techniques, ask for advice and network with artists from around the world. And because many people showcase their art, there is never a shortage of material for inspiration and comparison. You can scroll through thousands of paintings to your heart's content and this allows you to quickly judge the quality of your own work against the work of others. But... you can do a lot more. You can get a quantitative assessment of your work. How?

There is a great feature of Facebook that can help you judge the quality of your artwork and that is “reactions” (Like, Love, Wow, etc.). If someone likes your work, they can show it by clicking on a reaction next to your post. Reactions are visible to everyone. You can see how many reactions your post has attracted and compare it with the work of others or compare one of your paintings with another. For instance, are your paintings accruing more reactions over time? How do your scores compare to professional artists?

Of course, reactions are not the perfect measure of the work's quality. There are many potential biases. Just because someone has sent you a positive reaction does not mean their opinion is valid. Conversely, just because you did not get many reactions does not mean the work is no good. Different people react differently. Your scores for the same painting will also vary across different Facebook groups. Let's face it, assessing the ‘quality’ of art is always going to be difficult, subjective and biased. But overall, reactions are a surprisingly good indicator, particularly on forums with thousands or tens of thousands of participants. In effect, by reviewing your reaction count, you can get a crowdsourced international opinion about the quality of your work. The greater the number of people in the group, the more objective and impartial that opinion will be. Crowd sourcing opinion really does work.

In a well-known experiment set up to explore the accuracy of crowdsourced opinion, the National Public Radio conducted a project where they asked a large number of people (17,205 to be precise) to guess the weight of Penelope, the cow. Penelope's real weight was 1,355 pounds. Individual people gave quite a large variation of estimates, but the average came to 1,287 pounds, an astonishingly accurate figure that varied from the real figure by only 5%! What's more, the weight guessed by amateurs who have never worked with cows was actually closer than the weight guessed by a sub-group of experts who had a history of working cows! Astonishing. There are many other examples of crowd-sourcing opinion. In large numbers, it seems to work remarkably well.

So what if you too had access to a crowd-sourced opinion on your paintings from, say, 120,000 people? Sometimes with personalised comments. With the ability to ask questions and get answers from experienced peers or experts. Free of charge. Well you can! All you need to do is join Facebook interest Group such as “Watercolour Addicts,” “Watercolour Alliance” or dozens of subspecialist groups on topics as broad ranging as loose flowers or cat portraits.

Below are two of my paintings and their reaction counts. The one on the right is clearly superior in terms of composition, technique and execution. As expected, the painting received a better score.



*South by Martin Necas*  
Reactions count: 31



*Lake Ngaroto Swamp by Martin Necas*  
Reactions count: 64

continued ►



And here is an example of one of my paintings compared to a professional artist, Herman Pekel, on the *Watercolour Alliance* Facebook Group.



Waikato River by Martin Necas  
Reactions count: 54



Maldon by Herman Pekel  
Reactions count: 245

Ouch. Clearly I have a long long way to go (maybe multiple lifetimes?) before I can match the ultimate maestro extraordinaire. But that's the point, isn't it? To learn, and to progress. And I have definitely found Facebook to be a powerful tool in gauging where I am and where I want to go with watercolour. If you are on a learning journey, give it a go.

Reference:  
National Public Radio: 17,205 People Guessed The Weight Of A Cow. Here's How They Did. August 7, 2015:  
<https://www.npr.org/sections/money/2015/08/07/429720443/17-205-people-guessed-the-weight-of-a-cow-heres-how-they-did>

## A Yorkshire Dalesman Celebrates his Heritage

Watercolour New Zealand member Richard Acey was born and bred in Hull, Yorkshire. He came to live in New Zealand in 1971. To remind him of the good times in the beautiful moors and dales, his sister sends him a copy of *The Dalesman* magazine each month.

The Dalesman was first published in 1939 and celebrates the people, landscapes and heritage of England's biggest county. The magazine ran a competition to give locked-down subscribers an engrossing task: design a cover for an edition. One subscriber in Wellington, New Zealand - Richard Acey - entered. Due to Covid, his entry was received late. However the Editor considered it worthy of possible inclusion and sent it to his Facebook and Twitter readers. Richard used his watercolour skills to paint a scene with a Yorkshire Dales theme. Congratulations, Richard.





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## Ruapehu Paintaway

4-7 December 2020

We eagerly awaited this Paintaway due to the weird year, and it's obligatory to say we are grateful for the opportunity to travel, meet, greet and share. When you suffer an affliction such as ours, it can be difficult to find a support group with empathy towards splashing dye onto parts of dead trees, so it's really great to gather with fellow sufferers from around the country, to connect and commiserate, and above all to celebrate!

Charlotte Hird and her husband, Dean (seasoned ski hostel hosts) had arranged amazing accommodation at the Top 'o the Bruce in the Taupo Ski Club Lodge club with hosts David and Maggie, and over at the Matamata Ski Club Lodge with host John who held us in thrall with stories of a hard, hi-jinks-filled skiing life. These clubs are snug with log fires, great bunkrooms and large common room areas, most suitable as pop-up painting studios - an extra bonus, as it proved.

We arrived on Friday night after a ferry trip and a drive north on a beautiful day, taking photos at multiple viewpoints on the way. Early December in New Zealand is no guarantee of fine weather on a mountain and Saturday gave us a winter treat with all the weather you can imagine... including a magical snowfall. Numb fingers on the outside balcony for some, painting views through the weather, while others spent the day sketching along lower mountain trails, and of course the Chateau got a good dose of paint as well. I exploited my reservoir of photos from the previous day, alongside a roaring fire! Food and fellowship followed. (a huge high five to Charlotte & Dean for the meals over the weekend), along with what I find is one of the best things



about a Paintaway - the evening show and tell. This can initially be intimidating for newbies, but having been to many safaris and paintaways, I can say that the interest and support given is huge. This shows in the amazing diversity and increasingly higher standard of paintings on the weekend's walls.

Sunday dawned clear and stunning. A short walk to Meads Wall with views north to Ngauruhoe saw the alpine scene dotted with plein air painters. The fine day provided a crisp, amazing landscape - every single rock a painting subject in itself! Monday was another inside day for those still on the mountain with some

impromptu lessons before another nourishing meal. Tired and happy painters carried out their Lodge chores prior to departing on Tuesday, as the weather delivered another buffeting.

Paintaways are amazing - the landscapes we find, the friends we make, the food we share, the eclectic accommodations, the laughs. Oh yeah, and the painting is okay as well. Win, win, win! They must be great as so many newbies become regulars. If you haven't been on one, try it - you'll love it. You know you want to!

Pete & Maryann James



## “Southern Splash” Akaroa Gallery

by ADRIENNE PAVELKA

In April 2019 approximately 35 members of Watercolour NZ descended on Akaroa for their annual South Island “paint-away”. A truly special time spent painting around Akaroa’s historical French township and its harbour of many bays, peninsulas and tidal flats. The “Show and tell” on Sunday night produced quite a stunning variety of paintings.

Akaroa is also home to our very special Nancy Tichborne whose husband Bryan, who was at the time president of the Akaroa Gallery, is credited with the suggestion that Watercolour New Zealand have an exhibition for its South Island members at the Akaroa Gallery. I was charged with the task of rounding up the troops for this event. As the Akaroa Gallery is quite small, there was a limit to how many artists could participate. Bryan and his very professional team organised the dates and times while I provided the usual exhibition list of “things to do” with which most exhibitors had had experience.

The opening night of “Southern Splash” was just like old times with masses of people, plenty of food and wine supplied by the Akaroa gallery members, lots of happy noise and chatter and, I’m delighted to report, record opening night sales for the gallery. The occasion was also very special because of the artists who travelled to Akaroa for the opening. Claire Forbes from Timaru, Sue Simpson, Diana Marshall, Debbie Lambert and Lynda Scott from Ashburton, Fiona Carruthers from Hokitika, Roy Boston from Blenheim, Sue Currie from Chartariss Bay, Svetlana Orinko from Christchurch and of course Nancy (who just had to walk down the road), and me! Other exhibitors were Gary Hopkinson from Kumara Junction and Jane Smith from Tasman. Sue Wild from Wellington who had been (as she described) in the engine room of Watercolour NZ for many years, was our guest artist and her delightful little paintings of her European travels were popular.

Considering the diversity of styles, subjects, sizes and the shape of the gallery, the volunteers did a great job of presenting the exhibition and I’m pleased to see that they rotate the paintings to give all artists maximum exposure.

I often tell the story of one of my more enlightening watercolour moments when I was informed that my watercolours could be exhibited in this particular (unnamed) gallery “because my work was a good example of an outmoded medium.” That was almost 30 years ago and now it’s so gratifying to see the membership of Watercolour NZ and the popularity of watercolour growing every year despite the derision of some arts academics.

Our first “Southern Splash” exhibition has been a wonderful occasion and a great success.

See you in Methven,

Adrienne



Roy and Mary Boston, Lynda Scott, Claire Forbes, Debbie Lambert, Sue Simpson, Nancy Tichborne, Fiona Carruthers, Svetlana Orinko and Adrienne Pavelka in Nancy's Akaroa garden

### Weekend Workshop

#### STEP BY STEP WATERCOLOUR

Tutor: Jacky Pearson

Dates: 27–28 March 2021

Times: 9:30am–5:00pm

Venue: Karori Arts Centre, 7 Beauchamp Street, Karori, Wellington

Class level: Beginners and early learners

Student fee: \$190 – includes materials

Jacky Pearson tutors at venues across New Zealand and overseas. She has an excellent reputation as a teacher. This workshop provides step-by-step demonstrations with plenty of individual attention. Handouts and reference material are provided as well as 3D teaching models. A range of topics will be covered, including colour mixing, composition, tonal effects, brush handling, drawing, and perspective.

All materials are provided. Come and have fun getting started or improving.

**This class is full.**

A further beginners workshop will be run in the future, so please email [bookings@watercolournewzealand.nz](mailto:bookings@watercolournewzealand.nz) to be informed of details.



Summer Clouds, Wairarapa by Jacky Pearson

### Weekend Workshop

#### FOR THE LOVE OF LANDSCAPE

Tutor: Bernadette Parsons

Dates: 1–2 May 2021

Times: 9:30am–5:00pm

Venue: Karori Arts Centre, 7 Beauchamp Street, Karori, Wellington

Student fee: \$190

Bernadette has charmed viewers at *Splash* exhibitions with her work, winning merit awards and the 2014 Supreme Award. She uses a limited palette of beautiful colours and simplifies her subject into strong clean shapes. Her students will get started with a paintbrush promptly. The weekend will include discussion on composition, colour, brush-work, rendering trees and more.

To book THIS workshop please email [bookings@watercolournewzealand.nz](mailto:bookings@watercolournewzealand.nz). Priority will be given to those who registered for Bernadette's postponed workshop in 2020.



Sun After Rain, Haast by Bernadette Parsons

### Weekend Workshop

#### EDGES AND WASHES

Tutor: Charlotte Hird

Dates: 26–27 June 2021

Times: 9:30am–5:00pm

Venue: Karori Arts Centre, 7 Beauchamp Street, Karori, Wellington

Student fee: \$180

Successful watercolour painting is all about control of the pigment, the amount of water in your brush and the moisture on the paper. Only practice can deliver good control of these elements. To make this practice fun we will use vibrant colours and make beautiful edges and washes to build form. This is a two day workshop to practise the core techniques of watercolour and to use these skills in a series of paintings. We will paint flowers, trees, people and landscapes.

This course is suitable for students looking to further develop their watercolour skills.

Please bring your own watercolour paints, palette, brushes and 300gsm watercolour paper.

To book THIS workshop please email [bookings@watercolournewzealand.nz](mailto:bookings@watercolournewzealand.nz)



Charlotte Hird teaching



# OUTDOOR PAINTING

## WELLINGTON GROUP 10:00am.

Sunday 21st March	Wellington Botanical Gardens Duck Pond, Glenmore Street
Sunday 18th April	Katherine Mansfield Park, Fitzherbert Avenue, Thorndon
Sunday 16th May	Clock tower, 193 Jackson Street, Petone
Sunday 20th June	Midland Park, Lambton Quay, Wellington CBD

Painting will be followed by coffee/brunch at a nearby café.



## OTHER DATES for your Diary

1–5 March	Outdoor Painting Week in Wellington (see below)
Sunday 7 March	<b>Watercolour New Zealand AGM:</b> 2pm at Karori Arts Centre. To attend by Zoom, email <a href="mailto:bookings@watercolournewzealand.nz">bookings@watercolournewzealand.nz</a> by 10am, 7 March
27–28 March	<b>Workshop</b> for beginners and new learners – tutor Jacky Pearson
1–2 May	<b>Workshop</b> on landscape painting – tutor Bernadette Parsons
7–11 May	<b>Paintaway</b> to Methven (see below)
26–27 May	<b>Workshop</b> on washes and edges for beginners – tutor Charlotte Hird

## Welcome to our new members

Vicki Clifford, Auckland	Nicole Lee, Lower Hutt
Iona Brinch, Wellington	Michele Jung, Napier
Jiarui Sun, Auckland	Rowena Clemence, Rangiora
Yvonne Geeraedts, New Plymouth	Lauryn Johnstone, Wellington
David Lin, Auckland	James Douglas, Auckland
Judy Derbidge, Kaiapoi	Kate Williams, Ashburton
Debbie Price-Ewen, Oamaru	Katie Voller, Wellington
Suzanne Patterson, Lower Hutt	Shellene Ventenilla-Tungol, Wellington
Fay Patterson, Lower Hutt	Kavitha Shivani, Auckland
Vaibhav Arun Marathe, Wellington	Mark Esteves, Wellington
Chrissy Lamond, Blenheim	William McRostie, Oamaru
Bruce Utting, Otaki	Allie Simpson, Dunedin
Elaine McDonald, Christchurch	Sally O'Grady, Northland
Nicole Russell, Nelson	

## Autumn Paintaway to - METHVEN -

**Friday 7 – Wednesday 12 May 2021**

Members and partners are invited to join a Watercolour New Zealand Paintaway to Methven. We'll have 4-5 days to paint the scenery and enjoy the sparkling company. Paintaways are all-inclusive – experienced painters encourage new painters. Even non-painters are welcome. You'll certainly make new friends.

Methven is a small town on the western edge of the Canterbury plains. There are views to the mountains – we hope with a touch of snow.

For further information email:

[bookings@watercolournewzealand.nz](mailto:bookings@watercolournewzealand.nz)

Subject line: Paintaway Methven

## Outdoor Painting Week in the Wellington region

1 – 5 March 2021 Daily 9.30am to about 4pm

Locations:

- Hataitai Beach • Whitireia Park •
- Island Bay • Kaitoke • Hikoikoi •

Come and join Charlotte Hird, Sue Wild and others for some outdoor painting excursions. You are welcome on any or all of the days. We'll paint in the morning, lunch together (café or BYO) and paint again in the afternoon. There'll be much sharing and discussion, even assistance and advice if you'd like it.

For finer details, please email  
[info@watercolournewzealand.nz](mailto:info@watercolournewzealand.nz)

### Workshop – 'Emphasis on paint application and colour'

6 March 2021 Fee: \$45.00 per person

at Wellington Art Club, 27 Chelsea Street Miramar Wellington

Tutors: Helen Wilson 9.30am-12.30pm, John McDonnell 1-4 pm

All fees go to Wellington Art Club

Email: [wellingtonartclub@gmail.com](mailto:wellingtonartclub@gmail.com) to register interest