

mragm newsletter

autumn 2010 | maitland regional art gallery



from the director

I came to Maitland Regional Art Gallery five years ago, thinking that within a year or two, building would start and a new art gallery would open soon after. I came because of the potential I saw in the several visits that I had made with Janis and the Children over the preceding years.

Little did I know that all would take five years and that even the fundraising (the reason I was ready to leave Armidale for) had to take place. There was much I wanted for this new art gallery. The wait however has been worth it. By the time I write next the cafe will be operating and under the management of the best people we can find.

The completed extensions were not all that I had envisaged or indeed hoped for. Some spaces were different to what I had expected and some areas were quite different. But how refreshing. Now well into our first six months of watching exhibitions come and go, public programs underway and education well and truly ensconced in the art factory.

I suggest that you as a member pay a visit on weekends in particular, when many children roam the galleries and look at art and then sit at tables making art. On the other hand any day of the week will do particularly when you come spend time in the best gift shop in Maitland, if not the Hunter. There is so much to see and do.

The gallery spaces are different to what I imagined but I did get my moving walls. I have in quite a short time fallen in love with what we can do with what we have. There are many challenges for hanging and for lighting, but that makes the mounting of exhibitions all the more adventurous and exhilarating. There are little nuances that we have already come to terms with. Art is now like a giant toy with which I and the staff can have so much fun.

There are eleven gallery spaces and each can be used in a variety of ways—oh how lucky we are. The viewers, the public, and visitors, like us that work here are starting also to see the possibilities and the challenges. Maitland city Council needs to be congratulated for the insight and challenge that they took on. We, all now have an amazing cultural induction. And, I truly believe that our end of High Street will become a new focus and other shops, eateries and small businesses will join us in revitalizing this part of Maitland.

Each one of you of the more than 600 who are already members, I am sure that you are glad that you have joined. Share your good news with others you know and get them to become members. MRAG and its members force has a lot to offer, to educate and to give pleasure. We will each week offer you more titbits to go with the exciting exhibition program that is already in place for the next two years. We want you to enjoy and have fun.

As I write, it took five years to really be where are now, it won't take five years to show you what we can do for you, your friends, neighbours and visitors. We are new but we will present art, history, culture, fun, education, music, dance, film and even fine food. So hurry up and join. The members are the people that are the backbone of MRAG and it is with your help and support that we will remain new and offer the best.

Joe Eisenberg
Cultural Director
Maitland Regional Art Gallery



director's book choice

Edmund Capon *I blame Duchamp: My Life's Adventures In Art*. Non-members \$49.95, members discount \$44.95

'Featuring more than fifty beautiful reproductions of paintings and drawings from collection around the world, this collection is a fascinating insight into the mind of one of the liveliest and most generous thinkers of our generation.'

from the mragm chairperson



This is a very exciting time to be a Member of Maitland Regional Art Gallery (MRAG) with the completion of the art gallery extensions, we now have a regional art gallery unsurpassed by others.

With 11 exhibition spaces and a dedicated education facility, the value of the financial support provided by the Members to the art gallery cannot be underestimated. Along with the expansion of the art gallery we have also had a corresponding increase of the membership numbers. From the time of the opening, 16 August 2009 the membership number has gone up from 371 to 610 (an increase of 239 Members).

For the trivia buffs here are some membership stats as compiled by Lauren Van Katwyk MRAG Education Coordinator;

67% of our members are individuals, whether they be adults, children or concession memberships.

65% of our members are locals living at postcodes between 2320 - 2323.

53% of our members have chosen one year memberships.

20% of our members are families.

9% of our members are children under 18 on individual memberships.

0.5% of our members are from out of state.

And just for fun... 3.5% of our members are named John, 1.6% are called Anne or Ann and 2.1% are called Sue or Susan.

MRAGM is going from strength to strength and subsequently this allows us to provide an ever increasing contribution to MRAG. I would like to thank our Members, volunteers and the MRAG staff who are always there to help and would urge our Members to continue to visit the art gallery, enjoy and to participate in our trips and fundraising events.

Judy Henry, MRAGM Chairperson

helpers needed

MRAGM are looking for volunteers interested in helping to organise bus trips throughout the year or offering suggestions for any fundraising events. Unfortunately, the committee members do not have the personnel to organise all the fundraising events and would greatly appreciate any help offered.

keep these dates free!!

saturday 17 april 2010: archibald, wynne & sulman prize agnsw and mca coach trip ph (02) 4934 9859 to book.

saturday 6 november 2010: sculpture by the sea

archibald, wyne & sulman prize agnsw and mca coach trip

presented by
maitland regional art gallery members (mragm)



saturday 17 april 2010

- | | |
|-------------------|---|
| 6.30 am | depart maitland regional art gallery (mrag) saturday 17 april 2010 |
| 7.00 am | leave bluetongue brewery 42 stenhouse drive, cameron park |
| 8.00 am | morning tea provided |
| 9.15 am | arrive art gallery of new south wales (agnsw)
for a private guided tour of the archibald.10, wyne and sulman prizes
exhibitions also on at agnsw: <i>wilderness: balnaves contemporary painting;</i>
<i>colour, rhythm, design; artexpress 2010; the dreamers, hymn to beauty: the art of utamaro.</i> |
| 11.45 pm | coach leaves agnsw for the rocks |
| 12.00 pm | lunch at the rocks/circular quay (byo or buy) |
| 2.00 pm - 3.00 pm | museum of contemporary art (mca) for a private guided tour of the exhibitions;
<i>we call them pirates out here: mca collection selected by david elliot;</i>
<i>almanac: the gift of ann lewis ao; sylvie blocher: what is missing?</i> |
| 4.00 pm | depart from museum of contemporary art |
| 6.00 pm | arrive at bluetongue brewery |
| 6.30 pm | arrive maitland regional art gallery |

cost: \$65.00 members / \$75.00 non members/guests

remember to bring your stash of \$1 and \$2 coins for the raffles on the bus, there are some great prizes to be won!!

rsvp monday 12 april 2010. to book your seat, drop in to the art gallery or phone (02) 4934 9859 **please note** payment is required at time of booking.

mragm
maitland regional art gallery members

NORTHERN
Highland
TRAVEL

a cultural expedition

In the middle of February this year with support from the Gordon Darling Foundation, I had the opportunity to travel to galleries in NSW, VIC and the ACT. I visited 25 cultural institutions and met with gallery staff (both paid and voluntary) in most of these venues. Joe was originally granted this support from the Foundation, but due to an injured knee he passed the grant on to me.

The purpose of the trip was to look first hand at current trends in regional art gallery practices and to look at what innovation might, or might not be happening. I made appointments with Directors and other gallery professionals and every person I spoke to, without exception, gave generously of their time and information about how they were operating.

My area of interest was looking at a general overview of gallery practice with specific focus on membership and volunteer programs; retail and commercial enterprises such as cafes and gallery shops; staffing structures; exhibitions; and public and education programs. In particular I was investigating what other galleries were doing in the area of audience development to augment our own audience development program Regional Conversations. A number of our members participated in Regional Conversations and it continues with our visitor's survey questionnaire, located near reception.

The break down of my trip led me to eight regional art galleries in NSW, eight regional galleries in VIC, and 9 state and national institutions in the ACT. It was an exhausting yet fruitful exercise. I made contact across a broad geographic area and was able to 'spread the word' about MRAG, MRAGM and all of our programs.

I am grateful for the opportunity to travel and experience so many galleries and museums across such a wide area over a two week period. I am thankful to the Gordon Darling Foundation, to Joe for letting me take his place, and to Maitland City Council for allowing me the time away from MRAG to participate in such a worthwhile project that will benefit MRAG on many levels for many years to come.

Kim Blunt
Public Program Coordinator



exhibitions

current

Construction

Carla Feltham / Michelle Maartensz / Martin Trew.
Construction tells the story of MRAG's progress from a small one hundred year old building into a new, large, wonderfully modern gallery, where old meets new in a very relaxed manner. 23 jan to 21 march.

Spanning the Void

Giselle Penn / Michael Garth, a work marrying the inflexible with the flexible. Extended to exhibit until 21 march.

53rd Maitland International Salon of Photography

is an exhibition of the top 100 prints received for the annual display. 26 feb to 21 mar.

Archibald Prize 09

Maitland is the last venue for this touring exhibit. This is an event not to be missed. 6 mar to 18 Apr.

Brighten My Day is our new art factory exhibit. The young at heart will love the settings and vibrancy this exhibit brings each time you enter the space. You will be drawn to the corresponding exhibit upstairs by the illuminated stairwell. 6 mar to 16 jun.

semi-permanent

We regularly advise you, the member, of our exciting new exhibits as they arrive, but I wonder who among you notice our semi-permanent displays. We are endowed with many through-out our wonderful spaces.

Outside the front door:

Points Of Possible Surety **Paul Selwood**

Seen through the glass over the old entrance: *Obbligato*

James Rogers In the atrium: *Bullflower* **John Turier**

Just inside the front door:

Dancing Swans and Dead Dog **John Turier**

Over the reception desk:

Girls and Flowers **Charles Blackman**

Art Factory entrance downstairs: *Song 4* **John Turier**,

Song 5 **John Turier**, *Dogs Chasing Hair* **John Turier**,

Mother and Child **Lisa Roet**

At the top of the marble stairs: *Song 2* **John Turier**,
Song 3 **John Turier**, *Template Doors* **Qing Dynasty**
 Either side of the Juliette balcony: *Piano A* **John Turier**,
Piano B **John Turier**

Hidden between the old building and the new, with viewing upstairs and down: *Time Capture* **Lara O'Reilly**

Coming down the marble stairs: *Bedroom Still Life*

Margaret Olley, *Banksias* **Margaret Olley**,

Untitled (x3) **John Gleeson**



coming soon

opening 10 april 2010

julio santos | 30 years with glass

brian roberts and shirley cameron-roberts | progression

love on mount pleasant | garry shead toasts maurice o'shea curated by gavin wilson

australia suite | lynn hard and garry shead



images left to right

garry shead *maurice with bandicoot*, 1966, oil, enamel and wine glass on board, 75cm x 60cm.

garry shead's drawing for lynn hard's poem *sydney harbour bridge* from *australia suite*.

julio santos *flat central twist cabaca* (detail) 1997 hand blown glass 29 x 17 x 8cm

shirley cameron-roberts *regeneration # 2*, 2009-2010, acrylic, charcoal and paper on canvas, 122 x 122 cm.

floor talks / public programs

On 12 February 2010, we were thoroughly entertained by a wonderful floor talk by Caroline Jones. Caroline is the presenter on the ABC television program *Australian story*, and a friend of Salvatore Zofrea. Caroline spoke sensitively about her new book 'Through a Glass Darkly', a memoir of grief and happy times with her father. Caroline signed her books sold on the night. Caroline's books are for sale at reception for \$30 and \$35.

On March 6, to launch the Archibald Prize 09 exhibit, we have Max Cullen performing a Tribute to Henry Lawson.



caroline jones in front of a salvatore zofrea print at maitland regional art gallery

photographing gallery events



Most of you Members will have seen me with camera and flash in hand wandering around at the opening of the new exhibitions at the Gallery and, of course, when the modified and enlarged Gallery re-opened in August 2009. Why, you may ask, and what happens to all the photos? The answer of course is to create a visual diary of the main events and famous, and yet to become famous, artists who come to our great gallery.

A few years ago people would joke about not having any film in the camera but now with digital images, the film and its processing and storage, are complications that we no longer have to deal with. We can store thousands of images cheaply and with ease of access on disc or computer hard drive.

Ever since the advent of photography around 1830, photographers have wanted to capture “A Moment In Time”, as the great French photographer Henri Cartier-Bresson so aptly put it. Some of the moments I have “taken prisoner” for the Gallery archives are very special – for example Margaret Olley making her scintillating speech at the re-opening last August. Or more recently, Edmund Capon entertaining us in his inimitable way at the opening of the wonderful Salvatore Zoffrea exhibition.

Then of course there are the “crowd shots” and candid photos of you members and visitors who attend our various events. Candid photos can be cruel sometimes, a person caught with

their eyes closed or mouth open – just because they blinked or were speaking when the shutter snapped! For this reason I will usually seek permission, or give people a few moments notice of a closer, more detailed shot – after all if our countenance is to be captured forever, we all like to look our best, don’t we.

The crowd photos are really just a way of remembering just how many people come to enjoy the Gallery. They can also be used at times when Government funding is available. After all, there is nothing like photographic evidence to prove how many people utilize a great cultural centre for Maitland.

Possibly in the not too distant future, a selection of photographs from the past four years will be on display. I hope that this may enable us to share some memories and show why I am happy to volunteer my time to help record the progress and development of Maitland Regional Art Gallery.

Jeff Sinclair



margaret olley addressing a crowd of 1500 at the new gallery opening
 edmund capon opening salvatore zoffrea’s exhibition
 edmund capon & salvatore zoffrea sharing a quiet word



Looking for something interesting, unique, beautiful, quirky or locally crafted? We invite you to explore our new Gallery Shop where you will find the perfect gift. In the Gallery Shop at MRAG you will discover a beautiful range of hand blown glassware, unique antique glass and ceramics and other object d'art. We have Aboriginal items as well as objects from South East Asia and the Oceanic region. We also stock folk art from Mexico, South Africa and USA as well as special tin toys for the young at heart. All our jewelry 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 gallery shop

open tuesday - sunday
10:00am - 5:00pm

The 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. We stock unusual toys and books for the discerning buyer at more than reasonable prices. Not only do we stock books on art, artists, history and food, but we also have a wonderful range of children's books that are beautifully illustrated, award winning, funny, sweet and 'different'.

featured gallery shop artists | the strutt sisters



Twin sisters Catherine and Jennifer Strutt are visual artists working collaboratively and exhibiting professionally since 1995. They are well known in the art community for their intriguing and often humorous constructions in aluminium, collage and painted wood and have built up a large following for their work in Sydney and Newcastle. In 2003 their work was hung as a finalist at the Art Gallery of NSW in the prestigious Sulman Prize and is in many private collections including the director of the Museum of Contemporary art, Elizabeth Ann Macgregor. The Strutt Sisters have been described by critic John McDonald as "Newcastle's next big thing waiting to happen" (Daily Telegraph, May 2003), and by Ruth Skilbeck as "Newcastle's hottest contribution to contemporary art" (Australian Art Review, Feb. 2004).

Taking the knowledge of construction, colour and design from their extensive experience in art making, the Strutt Sisters have designed accessories for everyday wear born from a frustrating lack of lightweight funky jewelry in the common marketplace. Inspired by the colours and traditional costumes of Scandinavia, a land they have travelled extensively, every piece has been made by hand in distinctive Strutt Sisters style and is alive with the colour and pattern of bygone years and the clean and simple shapes evocative of classic Scandinavian design. ...as if created by the hand of a girl in her summer house in the Finnish archipelago.

the strutt sisters
www.thestruttsisters.com

education

Throughout the first summer holidays our new art gallery experienced, MRAG Education enjoyed very satisfactory attendance across the variety of education programs presented. *Art Sundays*, MRAG's free weekend art activity program, broke its attendance record with over 50 children and their parents in one 2-hour session. We also held an offsite event at the Australia Day Fair and hosted a children's workshop inspired by the works of Salvatore Zofrea.

The excellent summer period has capped off a great end to 2009, when during November and December, staff and education volunteers worked hard to welcome over 850 school students from across all age groups. As part of a grant-funded school visit program called *ArtPass*, volunteers and staff toured young primary-aged children through several exhibitions, created works of art with them, and also accumulated a vast collection of drawings and written passages from the students about the perfect children's art gallery. In addition to these visits, there were also several early childhood centres and preschools who came to visit the art gallery, and a mixture of high school classes.

Now, reaching the end of summer, and in the process of installing the next exhibition, *Brighten my Day*, in the Art Factory, MRAG's dedicated exhibition space for kids, I would like to extend my gratitude to the volunteers who supported MRAG with their effort and time during 2009. *Brighten my Day: colour in the everyday*, has been my first


major project for the Art Factory exhibition and play space, and I must congratulate the efforts of volunteers again before continuing on to urge you to visit this exhibition.

In the exhibition space for *Brighten my Day*, works of art from the MRAG collection which convey the colour and vivacity of everyday life have been hung at child height on the walls, while a brand new permanent light installation, developed by Melissa O'Brien, hangs in the adjacent stairwell space. In the play space, a 10 metre children's collaborative drawing installation runs the length of the exhibition space, flanked by a children's kitchen intended to point out the colour and pattern hidden in the everyday, and a relaxing garden where parents and kids can sit down to read one of MRAG's children's books on colour, or inspect the details of a digital montage 'garden', created out of drawings by students from Term One's *Art Tuesdays* class.

A great line-up of exhibitions has been secured in the Art Factory for 2010, including a touring exhibition from Questacon, the National Science and Technology Centre, Canberra, which will teach children about the diverse faculties of water, and how to preserve and maintain it.

Lauren van Katwyk
Education Coordinator

Interested in helping out with education projects at MRAG in the future? Go to mrag.org.au and click on the 'join' tab to download an application form.



brighten my day
colour in the everyday
curated by lauren van katwyk

in the art factory
6 march - 13 june 2010

the art factory
children's art space
made possible with assistance from the Thyne Reid Foundation

mrag art sundays

free!

free art activities for children of all ages
11:00am - 1:00pm every sunday
(excludes public holidays)
maitland regional art gallery 230 high st maitland

about

every sunday, mrag invites families to drop in to the art gallery for free art activities inspired by the exhibitions on display. no bookings are required, all materials are provided. while you are here, have a look at mrag's new dedicated children's art space, the art factory,

new gallery staff

We have four new staff to welcome to our gallery. Each has been employed under the umbrella of casual Gallery Attendant. Vanessa Evans, Linda Greedy, Anna Buxton-Soldal, and Suzannah Kersey.

meet an mrag member

Would you like to be included in the mragm newsletter winter 2010 edition? Simply email your answers to the questions below along with a photograph of yourself. The best entry will be published in the next newsletter.

- What is your earliest memory of mrag?
- How often do you visit mrag?
- What is the most memorable exhibition at mrag?
- Is there an exhibition you would like to see at mrag?
- Who is your favourite Australian artist?
- What is the best thing about being an mrag member?

Email your answers and your photograph to artgallery@maitland.nsw.gov.au.

waste as art 2010

Demonstrate 'resource recovery' through the use of waste products & materials in the creation of art

Waste as Art 2010 Art Prize - \$2500

Prizes up to \$1000 in the following categories:
3D/Sculpture Art; Functional Art; 7 Wicked Wastes (NEW);
Maria Callinan Memorial Award; Junior/Secondary Age Groups; People's Choice Award

Entry forms available at www.hweg.com.au or by phoning your local Council

Entries forms must be received by Friday 30 April 2010.
Entry is FREE - thanks to our generous sponsors:



mrag member success

Teenager Holly Farrell, an mrag member, has been rewarded by believing in herself. Her work, *24 Rabbits*, (below) which she entered into Art Express is now on exhibition at the Art Gallery of NSW (18 February to 9 May). Holly's work will travel to Newcastle Region Art Gallery with the exhibition (15 May to 1 August). Well done Holly.



My artwork is about the introduction of the European rabbit into Australia and its destructive effect it has had on our environment. I have examined the issue of preserving, preventing or exterminating introduced species. This is important to me because I sympathise with the rabbits. My work relates to personal choices I have made, such as becoming a vegetarian in support of animal rights; yet, I do also understand the value of preserving the natural landscape and indigenous species. Therefore I am left in conflict, just as the audience is left puzzled by the opinions I have expressed. Holly Farrell

highlights of a visit to maitland

- Australian Museum Of Clothing and Textiles
- Picturesque Morpeth
- Historic Maitland Gaol
- Walka Water Works
- Exploration Tourist Drive
- Heritage Walks
- Wine, Produce & Heritage Trail
- Antiques Trail
- Lorn Gallery

A detailed Visitors' Guide and accompanying map is available from the Maitland Visitor Information Centre; p (02) 4931 2800 e info@maitlandhuntermvalley.com.au w www.maitlandhuntermvalley.com.au

Look Who's Talking is travelling around local venues in Maitland. These informative and inspiring talks feature a new guest speaker at each event. The speakers vary in their careers and life choices. MRAG was the host to last month's Steffan Lehmann, an architect. More information can be obtained at each of the local libraries.

public holiday closures

The art gallery will be closed on Easter Friday 2 April and again on April 25 to honour Anzac Day.

have a safe and happy easter break

mragm
maitland regional art gallery members

the 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.

2010 meetings will be bimonthly, held on the second monday, of the month at 4.30pm. april 12, june 14, august, 9 october 11. the next agm is set for 18 october 2010.

mragm patron mr frank terenzini member for maitland in the nsw legislative assembly.

mrag enquiries

maitland regional art gallery | 230 high street | po box 220 maitland nsw 2320
ph (02) 4934 9859 | fax (02) 4933 1657 | email artgallery@maitland.nsw.gov.au | web mrag.org.au
art gallery and shop hours | tuesday - sunday 10:00am - 5:00pm closed mondays and public holidays

mragm committee and meeting information

next mragm meeting

4.00pm monday 12 april 2010

@ maitland regional art gallery

chairpersonjudy henry
vice chairperson.....jeff sinclair
secretary.....gaile witt
treasurer.....helen lowe
newsletter secretary.....lizz cooper
general committee member.....vicki woods
general committee member.....ruth trappel

