Soon after my arrival in Maitland, in 2004, I was told about the Jewish Cemetery in a rural corner of Louth Park. And, not long after, I went searching for the cemetery, to pay my respects to my unrelated ancestors who, like me, called Maitland home. I got lost a number of times as passers-by and residents standing beside their fences offered different directions. Then I found it.

A cemetery is a place set apart for burying the dead. The word cemetery comes from the Greek word for sleeping chamber. A cemetery is also a place for contemplation and for remembering. In Hebrew, the phrases used to include ‘house of life’ (םייחה תיב) and ‘house of eternity’ (םלע תיב): the dead are connected to the living, the cemetery is a site for visiting, a permanent resting ground requiring respect and care - it for me an evocative place.

For artists, writers, poets, musicians cemeteries have provided inspiration. They respond to the imagery, sounds, feelings, words. They produce paintings, novels, poems, music. They provide lyrical and aesthetic responses: some offer reflections on mortality, some evoke a sense of place, some connect past and present.

For historians, the sense of place is important: location, shape, layout, vegetation, age. The stones and inscriptions identify people. Records and memories then build to stories and patterns. The cemetery and its grave markers become entry points to histories of families, a community and a locality, and to themes, events and understandings that extend well beyond a specific place.

Almost three years ago MRAG commissioned the artist Hanna Kay to work on an exhibition inspired by the Maitland Jewish Cemetery. On 30 May Philip Adams, Hanna and almost 200 people attended the opening of the exhibition titled Undertow.

Hanna’s exhibition is also complimented by the publication Maitland Jewish cemetery: a monument to dreams and deeds and an installation of the same name based on the history of the cemetery and the people buried there. The book is authored by Janis Wilton and the installation is designed by David Guy.

Art and history coming together invite conversations between these different approaches: the visual, emotive, musical, lyrical with the information, the stories and the people. This multifaceted; exhibition, installation and dual publications offer a taste of the ways in which art and history can complement each other and can extend our engagement with art and with the past. They also provide us with different perspectives on the nature of the locality which this art gallery serves. They are part of a flow of projects the Maitland Regional Art Gallery has initiated and will continue to pursue that focus on different ways that art and artists respond to, engage with and represent Maitland.
from the chairperson: judy henry
coming members’ events...

art, olives and wine a special tour of hunter art studios

Greta resident and new member of MRAG, John Cormack, supervises the cellar Door at Adina Vineyard on weekends and takes wine tourists around Lovedale and Pokolbin weekdays for Hunter Valley Wine Tours. Through this ‘field experience’ and a lifelong love of art, John has put together a proposed specialist art tour of the area.

The region is dotted with artists and studios, and cellar doors with significant art collections, and by adding a visit to a working olive mill plus a la carte lunch and tossing in two or three wine tastings, there’s the makings of an entertaining, informative and busy day out.

The studios and artists will be available to give informal presentations of their works, something not always available to the casual visitor.

Numbers will be limited, with a proposed minimum of ten up to a maximum of fourteen people, with a proposed Wednesday and/or Thursday timing with a morning pick up and return Maitland. Costs at this stage would be $100 for non-members, and $85 for members of MRAG (includes lunch at Adina cafe: breads and dips, main, glass of wine).

At this point, this tour is specifically targeted to members (and friends) of MRAG. To register your interest in these tours, or make further enquiries, please contact John at johnshannoncormack@hotmail.com.

felting workshops with giselle penn

Saturday 28th August and Saturday 4 September 2010. The first day will feature nuno felting and the second day will concentrate on bags, nuno felted scarves and 3D objects.

cost: members $60 per day or 2 days for $110.00 non-members $70 per day or 2 days for $130.00 phone the art gallery to book (02) 4934 9859

mragm sculpture by the sea coach trip
saturday 6 november 2010

Sculpture by the Sea, Bondi 2010, the 14th annual exhibition, is on from 28 October - 14 November 2010. See the spectacular Bondi to Tamarama coastal walk transformed into a giant sculpture park of over 100 sculptures by artists from Australia and across the world.
High Tea
at the Gallery

Saturday 31 July 2010
1:00pm - 3:30pm at MRA

Join us for a sit down high tea with champagne, miniature savouries, sweets, live entertainment from singer Juanita Farmer, the Spring 2010 Collection fashion parade from Liza’s of Lorn as well as the auction of a Charles Blackman print.

For more information or to book contact the art gallery on (02) 4934 9859 or artgallery@maitland.nsw.gov.au

R.S.V.P. 23 July 2010.

Members $50.00
Guests $60.00

This is an event coordinated by MRAGM to raise funds to install child friendly and innovatively designed outdoor chairs and tables in the MRAG grounds.

During the Archibald Prize exhibition, MRAG provided services and school visits for over 1000 school aged students within a single month. In the interest of developing our resources for this vital audience, MRAG education is keen to provide permanent outdoor chairs and tables that can be used by students and the general public alike.

Potential for this project could be anything from a mini amphitheatre to a range of picnic tables and chairs, and the project will be developed by artists and designers.

Your support for this project is greatly appreciated.
This is the 6th year Maitland Regional Art Gallery Members, (MRAGM) travelled to the Art Gallery of NSW to visit the Archibald, Wynne & Sulman Art prizes. Two very informative guides, Denyse and Pat, guided us through the exhibition for a private tour before the gallery doors opened. We also viewed Artexpress, Wilderness: Balnaves contemporary painting and of course the shop. Before we knew it, it was time to go. We travelled to The Rocks for lunch and had time to wander through the markets.

At 2.00pm we met at the Museum of Contemporary Art (MCA). Three guides Wendy, Susan and Pat took us on a guided tour to see, We call them pirates out here: MCA collection selected by Davis Elliott; almanac: The gift of Ann Lewes AO; Sylvie Blocher: What is missing?

The Volunteer guides at the Art Gallery of NSW and Museum of Contemporary Art (MCA) were just marvellous, informative and very passionate about the arts.

A big thank you to those who donated prizes for our raffles on the way down and back. Altogether we raised $634.00 for MRAG Education programs.

A big thankyou to Ken Tindal, Kim Aqualina and MRAG for your kind donations for our raffles.

Judy Henry
Chairperson & Trip Organiser for MRAGM

past members’ events...

felting workshop with giselle penn

happy students during the felting workshops held on Saturday 5, Saturday 12 and Saturday 19 June 2010.
exhibitions now showing

hanna kay | undertow
until 11 july 2010

hanna kay’s undertow will be complemented by *maitland jewish cemetery: a monument to dreams and deeds* a publication and installation on the history of the cemetery and the people buried there, curated by janis wilton and joe eisenberg, and designed by david guy.

christine ball | pattern maker
recent ceramics
until 18 july 2010

les darcy | an exhibition from the mrag collection to commemorate the passing of the sporting great in may 1917
until 30 june 2010

opening 6:00pm friday 25 june 2010

tom kearney & michelle gearin | nest
an art factory exhibition
18/06/10 - 05/09/10

annette iggulden | breath and stones
25/06/10 - 15/08/10

ruth waller | a 30 year survey
an exhibition from the canberra museum and gallery, curated by deborah clark.
25/06/10 - 15/08/10

clockwise from top: hanna kay *undercurrent* (detail), 2008, oil and tempera on linen, 180 x 350cm;
michelle gearin and tom kearney *nest* (detail) 2010 acrylic on vintage wallpaper on board dimensions variable;
ruth waller *dulle griet (pastel on camouflage)* (detail) 2003 synthetic polymer paint, oil, enamel on canvas 96 x 89 cm;
annette iggulden *pieta in absentia* (detail) 2008 acrylic and ink on canvas 210 x 115.5 cm
exhibitions coming soon

**ccp documentary photography award**
23/07/10 - 12/09/10
opening 6:00pm friday 23 july 2010

**operation art**
03/07/10 - 22/08/10
opening 6:00pm friday 23 july 2010

**adrian lockhart | shorelines**
16/07/10 - 12/09/10
opening 6:00pm friday 23 july 2010

**in[two]art**
20/08/10 - 10/10/10
opening 3:00pm saturday 21 august 2010

**on the hunter**
17/09/10 - 14/11/10
opening 3:00pm saturday 18 september 2010

**suzanne archer | afterlife**
17/09/10 - 14/11/10
opening 3:00pm saturday 18 september 2010

**ruth downes | lunch for the trades**
an exhibition in the art factory
10/09/10 - 31/10/10
opening 3:00pm saturday 18 september 2010

Images anti-clockwise from top:
- **krystle wright** school of fish 2009 archival pigment print, 36.5 x 54.8 cm from the ccp documentary photography award
- **adrian lockhart** sea level wash drawings (detail) 2010 acrylic on canvas 100 x 134cm
- **ruth downes** mechanics minestrone, lunch for the trades 2007 mixed media (hub cap, car parts & tools, silicone) 30 x 30cm x 200cm (h)
- **john turier** petal 2008 steel, silk, timber, paint 50cm x 50cm x 11cm courtesy of the artist from in[two]art
My passion for working with clay began in 1969 when I made my first pots at high school and it has continued unabated since then. After finishing school in 1970 I enrolled in art school in 1971 and studied pottery at night at Narrabeen. I went on to study ceramics at the National Art School (East Sydney Technical College) in 1972 and 1973. Peter Rushforth was Head of School with Bernard Sahm, Derek Smith, Col Levy, Shigeo Shiga, Gillian Grigg and Joan Grounds on staff. That proved to be a wonderful grounding in all aspects of pot making and I will remain forever grateful to them for their teaching and excellence in ceramic practice.

My earliest memory of pottery comes from an intense interest, as quite a young person, in Greek and Roman myths and associated artworks with a special love for Attic red and black figure pottery. I have derived a great deal of inspiration from that period along with inspiration from Native American, Pre Colombian, Asian and modern ceramics. The environment is also a rich source of inspiration: fish, shells, fossils, leaves, dogs, and shadows, to name a few.

There is something absolutely remarkable about pots, which have been made with passion, care, attention, thought for function, form, texture, colour, decoration, etc. I have a large collection of pottery, much of which has been made by other potters, and I derive an enormous amount of pleasure from using or just gazing at these objects. Even washing up is enjoyable when using thoughtfully produced pottery.

I am currently experimenting with different clays, glazes and techniques. It is a very exciting time for me, even with the many failures and mediocre results. There’s always that one special pot that drives me on to make another special pot and so on. I hope to wood fire and salt glaze in the future and look forward to that time with excitement and trepidation; for me, nothing beats the texture and colour of a pot licked by flame, wood ash and salt. I cannot foresee a time of not wanting to work with clay, glaze and fire.

The pots you see here are either made from a white stoneware clay called JB3, Les Blakeborough’s beautiful translucent porcelain clay body, Southern Ice or YG, an iron bearing clay body. I’ve used a number of different glazes, many of which are of Asian origin such as celadon, chun and copper red. The pots are fired to about 1300° centigrade in a gas fired fibre kiln in a reduction atmosphere.

Christine Ball
education

hanna kay interview with lauren van katwyk

This interview was conducted for the Hanna Kay: Undertow education kit. Hanna Kay: Undertow will be showing at the art gallery until 11 July 2010.

LVK What does being an artist mean to you?
HK The freedom to follow, sometimes obsessively, an intuitive drive to explore an idea: to give it an aesthetic expression and then communicate it whilst pointing out different viewpoints and other aspects of the very same issue.

LVK Can you talk a little bit about your artistic process? How do you go about beginning an exhibition of paintings?
HK Usually an exhibition will be a result of several years of working and examining a subject matter. When I feel that I am ready to show what I have done, I choose the ones that best depict the idea I would like to convey, and following their lead, I work towards putting together an exhibition.

For Undertow, which was commissioned by MRAG as a specific project, I went through a somewhat different process. First I had to educate myself in the history of both the Hunter Valley and the Jewish people who migrated to Maitland in the 1800’s, some of whom are buried in the cemetery. Second, I had to ‘re-educate’ myself - be the historiographer of my own heritage. For this I went back to texts that would have informed the Jewish consciousness in general and in particular those of the migrants.

LVK Water is another recurring visual theme. What has the water signified for you in these works?
HK While leafing through the stories and legends, especially through the Old Testament, paragraphs referring to ‘water’ would leap out. I did not take it as a ‘sign’ as such, but rather an affirmation of my artistic interests at that time - to explore the qualities of water, its properties and the way it interacts with its environment.

Thus ‘water’ or the ‘lack of water’ has become the means by which
I approached preparing the exhibition. It was an intuitive decision that was validated when I delved deeper into the project realising the important role ‘water’ has played in the lives of the people of Maitland, and of the European migrants to the Hunter valley in the 1800’s.

I find the ethereal qualities and properties of water fascinating. On one hand, there is the illusive nature of a surface that reflects its surroundings, that absorbs the light and interacts with the atmosphere. On the other hand, water is a force in flux that has no intrinsic formal characteristics such as shape, colour or form, and yet it creates and destroys. I used fragments of wet lands in which gravestones from the cemetery are reflected. In addition to signifying movement and change, devastation and regeneration, water has become a layer through which the past resonates into the present and impacts on it.

LVK In your paintings, bales of hay have been used repeatedly over several of your works. Can you explain a little bit more about their meaning in Undertow?

HK Grass, hay and hay bales are my way of locating the exhibition narrative in a rural environment.

LVK As you can see in the documentary which is part of the exhibition, when creating the work Undercurrent, the painting undergoes several different layers of paint. Can you talk a little bit about how important this layering process is to the finished painting, and how do you know when you have finished?

HK In my paintings I use layers of oil paint and tempera, which is water based paint. It is a technique that was used by the old masters which I adapted to fit my needs. This way of creating an image allows me to make ‘light’ prominent in my artworks. While painting I don’t follow a predetermined path, and though I might start a painting with a precise composition of the various elements, I let the painting take me along on a journey whose end I know only when I see it.

In addition to my usual way of painting, for Undertow I used a combination of photographs and oil paint. Creating the multimedia canvases was a new process which has inspired some new approaches in my current work. I have also discovered a certain empathy with my Jewish heritage which I did not know I had.

Hanna Kay Wake (panel 3 of triptych), 2008 oil and tempera on linen 66 x 132cm
other events

the professional artists studio trail

is held on the last Sunday of every month from April to November 2010, open 11am – 4pm. This is a self drive tour visiting professional artist studios, and a café/pub, while making new friends in a round trip. For more details visit www.artiststudiotrail.com

ADFAS
Australian Decorative and Fine Arts Society

The Australian Decorative and Fine Arts Society has great pleasure in inviting MRAG members and visitors to attend a Special Interest Event on Sunday 25th July 2010.

Lars Tharp, Danish-born historian, lecturer and broadcaster, and one of the longest running ‘experts’ on the BBC antiques programme, Antiques Roadshow will give a most stimulating lecture entitled:

What you need to know about China

The lecture will be held at 2.00pm at the Maitland Regional Art Gallery.

Bookings are required

Light refreshments and Hunter Valley wines will be served. You will have the opportunity to meet the lecturer.

Lecture Fee: $30
For booking and further information, call 4991 7098 or email pokolbin@adfases.org.au
mragm committee and meeting information

next mragm meeting
4.00pm Monday 9 August 2010 at Maitland Regional Art Gallery

Chairperson: Judy Henry
Vice Chairperson: Jeff Sinclair
Secretary: Gailie Witt
Treasurer: Jean-Paul Ruelle
Newsletter Secretary: Lizz Cooper
General Committee Member: Vicki Woods
General Committee Member: Ruth Trappel

maitland regional art gallery members’
(MRAGM) primary role is to promote public awareness of Maitland Regional Art Gallery (MRA) 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. 9 August and 11 October 2010 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