



**BLUE MOUNTAINS CREATIVE ARTS CENTRE NEWSLETTER December 2020**

WEBSITE: [www.bmcac.org.au](http://www.bmcac.org.au)

FACEBOOK: [bmcac](https://www.facebook.com/bmcac)

[bmcacsaturdaypotters](https://www.facebook.com/bmcacsaturdaypotters)



*From all the Committee Members blessings and good wishes for Christmas and the New Year*

*Frontrow L to R: Liz Bryden (Publicity Officer, Life Drawing Facilitator), David Russell (Buildings and Facilities Maintenance Officer), Ingrid Russell (Vice President, Art Director & Class Coordinator), Joy Myers-Creed, Bronwyn Campbell (Secretary & Pottery Facilitator),*

*Backrow L to R: Rudi Christen ("Creations" Editor), Gus Carrozza (Librarian), David Attwood (Treasurer), Alison James (President & Workshop Coordinator),*

*Not present: Katherine Kennedy (Print Making Coordinator)*

**CHRISTMAS FAIR AND PARTY 13<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER 2020**

**WHEN: 12 noon – 2pm**

**WHERE: At the Centre, outdoors, weather permitting**

**BRING your sale items, set up and man your own table.**

**BRING a Christmas plate to share for lunch.**

**BBQ sausage sizzle.**

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## FROM THE EDITOR

Reflecting over the year I wonder how much of a "2020 vision" we managed to adopt?

Let's appreciate that we have gone through a difficult time and yet still accomplished much, especially with renovations, refurbishments and landscaping the Centre as well as behind the scenes management. As far as I know, all in our local community have been able to avoid Covid-19. Let's be grateful and continue taking special care. After so much "social distancing" we even will be allowed to sing Christmas carols in unison.

Regrettably, Richard Cutler will put no further "Musings" to pen. I'd like to thank him for his contributions and collaboration.

Now, I just hope Santa doesn't catch the virus.

Wishing you all a merry and safe holiday.

Please send contributions for "Creations" to [rudich7@dodo.com](mailto:rudich7@dodo.com)

Rudi Christen

**PLEASE NOTE**  
**OUR ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING WILL BE HELD**  
**ON 27<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2021**  
**AT 2 PM**  
**IN THE MAIN ROOM (Purple Building).**  
**ALL BMCAC MEMBERS ARE WELCOME**

**Get in touch with us ! We like to hear from you.**

Alison JAMES	President & Workshop Coordinator	0416 957 688	<a href="mailto:arty_ali@hotmail.com.au">arty_ali@hotmail.com.au</a>
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Liz BRYDEN	Publicity, Gardening, Grants & Life Drawing	0447 474 462	<a href="mailto:ebryden@bigpond.com">ebryden@bigpond.com</a>

## CORRESPONDENCE

Hi Blue Mountains Creative Arts Centre,

I'm Mie and I work with [WEA Sydney](#) (\*), a not-for-profit adult learning provider based in the Sydney CBD.

We are currently looking into expanding our online course options to give people living outside of Sydney, the opportunity to join our classes. Before we roll out the online course program, we'd like to find out if this is something in that people would be interested

We have created a survey which will help us learn more about the interest for online learning in the Blue Mountains community. It takes three minutes to complete. We also offer participants the chance to win a free (F2F or online) WEA course of their choice.

I was wondering if you might be able to help distribute this survey via your social channels or in a newsletter? It would be a tremendous help for us, and hopefully the people of the Blue Mountains ☐

The link to the survey is here: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/F5B2NJY>

I look forward to hearing from you.

Mie

(\* Workers' Educational Association)

### **2021 We are looking for Models.**

Our life-drawing group is meeting weekly on Friday mornings at our BMCAC Centre in Hare Street. Usually we are between six and twelve drawers.

Models should be available on Friday mornings from 10am till noon and willing to travel to Glenbrook.

Payment accords with normal penalty rates per hour.

If you are a model or know of someone, please contact Liz on 0447 474 462 or at

[ebryden@bigpond.com](mailto:ebryden@bigpond.com)

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT *Alison James*

Dear Members,

What a year!!!! One that none of us are likely to forget.

Bushfires, floods and a global Covid 19 pandemic that has caused us to see lockdowns, restrictions and closures. We've seen the good, the bad and yes the ugly (stockpiling toilet paper!! Really!!! What were people thinking) of human nature and hopefully we've all learned a little about ourselves that has a positive outcome.

For many with time on their hands, they turned to art or craft to keep them busy. I wonder what this will mean for art coming out of 2020 and into 2021? Will we see a surge in Expressionism, Surrealism or Dada type art as people seek to release their thoughts and feelings about a year that has been simply chaotic!

Our art centre has fared well!

Despite having to close for a period and missing a couple of our key events, we have managed to get through financially. We have continued with improvements on the buildings and the grounds thanks to our maintenance team who are extraordinary volunteers. We have new siding being installed on the main room and we now have a turf lawn out the front of our yellow and jade yurts thanks to the landscaping crew at Let Us Landscape.

The behind the scenes work on the website, social media sites and secretarial duties have continued keeping our members and community up to date with what's on offer and to ensure that we have adhered to all necessary requirements of the federal and state governments.

I'd like to thank our committee for everything they've done this year. I'd also like to thank our teachers as they've navigated through the new rules and taken on the extra cleaning duties without complaint. I think we all deserve a pat on the back for a job well done.

Members, I look forward to seeing the development of your skills and work that you hopefully exhibit at one of our numerous events planned for next year.

Wishing you all a very happy and safe holiday break.

Your president

Alison James

## ART DIRECTOR'S REPORT *Ingrid Russell*

As we come to the end of fourth term 2020 we are already looking forward to Term 1, 2021. Most of the classes will be offered again. Sadly we will be losing Anne Cutajar for now, hopefully we will see her back another term in 2021. All other teachers will be back.

The Term 1 timetable will be online soon and early enrolments will be available. Early memberships for 2021 will also be included as these are necessary for enrolments to process. Enrolment day and deadline is Saturday 30th January, 10:00 till 1:00, and classes start Monday 1st February.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the teachers at BMCAC for their perseverance through a difficult 2020, and for their diligence in keeping up the hygiene procedures required. I wish you all a relaxing holiday season and a great start to 2021.

### Hare St Gallery report

Sales have been steady through November. We are holding a Xmas fair on 13th December. All members are welcome to come along and set up a table to sell their wares, bring a plate to share and enjoy some social time (distancing included), and do your Xmas shopping.

## LIFE DRAWING REPORT *Liz Bryden*

We have been getting between 4 and 6 people per week, the former not covering the cost of the model and rent. However the models have been more reliable since the last meeting. The life drawers who have attended have been very positive in their enthusiasm and seem to be looking forward to 2021.

I am planning a change to next years schedule which will be discussed and worked out in time for next year's return to life drawing.

An email will be sent out to all current life drawers regarding any changes and the 2021 start date. I will also provide this information to be included in Creations and for the webpage. If something could be submitted to our Facebook page it would be appreciated.

*"The real voyage of discovery consists not in seeking new landscapes, but in having new eyes."*

*Marcel Proust*

## POTTERY FACILITATOR'S REPORT *Bronwyn Campbell*

Mother Bear has been repaired at the cost of \$220. It appears to be firing well at the moment.

The Monday group has a steady 5 attendees with Gary convalescing after a hand operation (get well soon Gary) and one or two others attending spasmodically. The 14<sup>th</sup> December is the last official night for the Monday night group. Due to Covid there will be no Christmas gathering for the potters. Everyone is a little exhausted after such a difficult year, so the Monday group will celebrate quietly on the 14<sup>th</sup>. We continue to have inquiries from new potential members, so I would say we could be in for a growth spurt in 2021.

Kiln bookings have been really hectic the last couple of weeks. Thanks so much to everyone who have done their very best to fit as much in each firing as possible. We have had extra pressure on the kilns because the Nepean Potters were gearing up for their annual exhibition "Clay Creations" 5<sup>th</sup>/6<sup>th</sup> Dec weekend at Glenbrook Hall. They were able to get most their pieces fired with the cooperation of all the kiln firers and they would like to thank everyone for all the help during their time with us. The good news for the Nepean Potters is they returned to their premises in St Marys last week to a much larger room.

*The Nepean Potters Exhibition has since been held and was really successful. We have a number of potters in common, so that was a really happy event for all of us.*

Just a couple of issues with firing the kiln:

It is good practise to dust/brush front and back of the shelves before packing as this saves grit from falling on precious pots.

If glaze drips on the shelf please don't put it back with the others. Make some endeavour to remove the glaze or let me know. Often it will chip off with a hammer and a chisel.

I will be making some new setters for the kiln room on Monday night. If anyone else could contribute some, that would be great.

Alan Campbell is in the process of creating some flexible extra shelving to be used on the children's shelves and is tidying up boards supplied by Bruce Dwyer to be used on the end of the tear drop wheels – a more convenient space for tools and water. Thank you to them both.

Next page there is an article I wrote about glazing and firing. I hope it might hold some interest for you.

### **XMAS FAIR 13<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER**

Set up and man a table of your work for sale.

Time 12 pm – 2pm.

Bring a plate to share and your own drink.

A sausage sizzle will be provided free for members.

\$3:00 for non members.

## SOME REFLECTIONS ON FIRING POTTERY- By Bronwyn



My favourite most recent piece - sprayed with tenmoku, chun and a red glaze - fired under reduction to 1280.



I thought some of you might be interested in how I go about my glazing and firing process.

My kiln is approx. 8 cubic ft packing space (sorry not metric) designed by Stephen Harrison, built by my husband Alan Campbell (sheet metal worker/TAFE teacher by trade) and myself. The shell is stainless steel, inside walls, roof and door 2 layers/grades of ceramic fibre and the floor has two layers of fire brick. It has four gas burners underneath and is fired using 2 45kg gas bottles that I switch between depending on the stage of firing. I always have a spare bottle as a backup. My firings can take between 20-24hrs. I put the kiln into reduction when the temperature is about 1000. I check/adjust it every 30mins-1hr depending on the stage of the firing. It is a tiring process, fortunately because my output is slow, I only fire a few times a year. My advice to newer potters – start with a much smaller kiln. I mix my own glazes and glaze by dipping, pouring and spraying - always a messy process and my least favoured task.

So, some tips:

Glazing: Always wear gloves and mask. Be careful how you take off your clothes and apron, every movement creates dust you breathe in. I often change my apron through the day. Dust can last in the air for up to 24hrs. If possible mix and glaze out of doors. Even with precautions during a glaze week I sometimes end up with quite bad headaches and wonder what I am doing to myself and why. I usually sieve my glazes through a 60 mesh sieve 3 times.

Keep a record of every batch of glaze you make and the exact ingredient and brand you have used. Brand can make a difference. Mesh count can also make a difference. My silica has been sieved through a 200 mesh.

Keep a record of all your tests. I make test rings because they are easy to store and I can tie them to my bucket of glaze. Labels over time can fall off buckets. Lately I have written the recipe on the bucket with permanent marker.

on the back of the test ring I record the clay type, the shelf : 1 for bottom, 2 for middle ,3 for top and the glaze. (In my glaze diary I record what book and page I got the recipe from. After dipping the ring, I double dip one side of the ring and I paint on a line of red iron oxide, a rutile wash mixture I use, cobalt oxide, copper oxide and manganese dioxide - always same order left to right. This way you find out what colours will react with the glaze.

I try to do a set of rings in my buff clay (Keanes 5) and a set in white clay porcelain or JB1. I try to test at least four new glazes each firing. I usually concentrate on a glaze type each time e.g. lately I have been testing ash glazes and pale blue celadons.

I record a description of the results. Some glazes work better in different parts of the kiln. I

have one glaze I always pack on the bottom. If they run badly I try to allow for that when I make up a batch and glaze. ( Not always successfully) Successful glazes are made up into a small batch because they are sometimes fire differently in a larger quantity.

When you glaze your pieces keep a diary of what glazes you put on each piece. Inevitably you bump off, chip or find an area you have missed. Different glazes, when dry, can end up a similar colour. If you need to repair a glaze just as you pack – which glaze did you use? I can fit between 80 – 90 pots in my kiln. I have ended up with a pot with a different glaze partly painted on a rim, not a happy discovery. If you are packing at The Centre, and you use bought glazes take your glazes with you in case you need to do a repair.

Greg Daly suggests a good quick way to test how your favourite glazes react with each other. Make a square tile, paint your favourite 6 glazes in stripes down the tile | | | |, then turn the tile 90 degrees and paint the same 6 glazes down in the same order. Record what glaze you used on the back of each stripe. This way you have good idea of what the glazes will do under and over each other.

When firing a gas kiln keep a graph of the firing. You can compare between firings and get a sense of the way your kiln works. I used my graphs once to work out when to shut the kiln down because my gauge failed and I had trouble seeing the cones. I use a set of cones 8,9,10. They more accurately let you know the temp. inside the kiln. It is a good idea to put them on the bottom, middle and top of the kiln to find out how your kiln works and where the cool spots are. You can then pack appropriate glazes in those spots. This is useful even in computer operated electric kilns.

When I pack, I use three props for each shelf. My kiln is packed with a column at the back that I pack first two props at the back corners one prop in middle at front of the shelf. I was taught that 3 props are more stable than four and they take up less room on your shelf. When I pack the front column, I pack with one prop in the middle of the back and two props in the front corners. Of course sometimes a large piece may force you to vary this arrangement. If this happens I pack that piece towards the top. I try to stagger the shelves so they don't match the front ones to create good air flow throughout the kiln. I tend not to pack plates or open dishes on my top shelf because little pieces of fibre sometimes fall from the ceiling during the firing. So vases and bottles often go on the top shelf. I also try to brush both sides of the shelves as clean as I can before packing.

As I have gotten older I seem to have more trouble seeing the cones in the kiln. I have tried several suggestions but the one that has worked best was offered by Amanda at Blackwattle. – hold a metal rod in the spy hole and when it heats up the light reflects on the cones. I use a thick tent peg. It works like a charm. Such a relief to know what the little suckers are up to.

When I unpack the kiln I record the results of the glazes for each shelf – has the glaze worked well? Is it under fired? Is it over fired? Has it bubbled? Has the pots glaze next to it affected it in any way?

I know a lot of you use electric kilns, but a lot of these same procedures apply.

My last tips, if you are painting a design on a glaze using red Iron oxide mixed with water, paint a strip over newsprint. If you can just read the newsprint, that is a good consistency. The rutile wash ( see below) needs to be thicker than the red iron, so you shouldn't be able to read the newsprint. When it is fired it becomes more fluid than the red iron and spreads and bleeds creating a great effect if that is what you want.

I thought I would leave you with my favourite very versatile slip recipe that can be used on almost any stoneware clay. Most slips are painted on when the pot is leather hard but recently discovered mine works on dry clay as well, but test on your clay before doing that. It was given to me in the 1970s at TAFE and I still use it in every firing I do. You can add oxides or body stains to change colour of the white base. The other recipe below is a wash that I use to paint designs on glazes. Under reduction it turns a beautiful/red gold colour.

Stoneware slip

25 china clay

25 ball clay

25 silica

25 feldspar ( I use potash feldspar)

Rutile wash = parts

Red iron oxide

Rutile

Silica

Kaolin

Hope something here has been helpful.

I will leave you with some wise words from Greg Daly, one of our preeminent potters.

*"When your work emerges from the kiln, take time to view it – we are often too quick to make a judgement. The work may not be how we conceived it, but by taking time to consider an unexpected result our initial disappointment, may turn to pleasure."*

Have a wonderful Christmas everyone. Stay safe and Covid free. May 2021 be full of many unexpected delights, love, laughter and a legion of spectacularly lovely creations. I look forward to seeing you all again next year.

Many best wishes 🎄

Bronwyn



Peter Rushforth, "Shipleys Winter Trees", 1981  
Stoneware, blue Jun glaze.

## Grants

Sadly we received notification regarding the Community Building Program Grant, that we have been unsuccessful this year. The grant would have been used for a path between the main building to the front of the site, plus tree removal and new railings. The \$850 received from the Community Assistance Grant will be used for this purpose but will need to be supplemented by our funds.

## Garden

The rain has been very welcome and the plants seem to be thriving. I have planted a few plants over the past month and they all seem to be doing well. However, we do need to remulch the gardens, especially those areas to the front of the main building up to the road. This area can get very hot and is exposed most of the day but mulch should help. Although I did request free mulch from Dixons via email, this has not eventuated, however I will try to contact them again. Otherwise I think mulch from Attunga Rd would be good but of course would cost. For discussion and approval if necessary.

Also, I think that we need to do something about improving the wooden border to the road as some of the wood is warped and doesn't prevent large amounts of leaves and bark from building up on the garden. The leaves and bark are blown from across the road where two large gums are located. An added problem given the amount of leaves that fall from our own site and from the bushland to the back of the block. Overall this adds dramatically to my workload and I think something needs to be done to find a solution to this problem.

Another issue that should be addressed, maybe with the Council, is the very uneven layer of road base at the top of the path. This is quite dangerous and also an eyesore. Something that maybe could be tackled early next year with a letter to Council?



New lawn and pavement.

# Poetry Corner

Two Poems by Wendell Berry

## ***How to be a Poet***

*(to remind myself)*

*Make a place to sit down.  
Sit down. Be quiet.  
You must depend upon  
affection, reading, knowledge,  
skill — more of each  
than you have — inspiration,  
work, growing older, patience,  
for patience joins time  
to eternity. Any readers  
who like your poems,  
doubt their judgment.*

*Breathe with unconditional breath  
the unconditioned air.  
Shun electric wire.  
Communicate slowly. Live  
a three-dimensional life;  
stay away from screens.  
Stay away from anything  
that obscures the place it is in.  
There are no unsacred places;  
there are only sacred places  
and desecrated places.*

*Accept what comes from silence.  
Make the best you can of it.  
Of the little words that come  
out of the silence, like prayers  
prayed back to the one who prays,  
make a poem that does not disturb  
the silence from which it came.*

## ***The Dance***

*I would have each couple turn,  
join and unjoin, be lost  
in the greater turning  
of other couples, woven  
in the circle of a dance,  
the song of long time flowing*

*over them, so they may return,  
turn again in to themselves  
out of desire greater than their own,  
belonging to all, to each,  
to the dance, and to the song  
that moves them through the night.*

*What is fidelity? To what  
does it hold? The point  
of departure, or the turning road  
that is departure and absence  
and the way home? What we are  
and what we were once*

*are far estranged. For those  
who would not change, time  
is infidelity. But we are married  
until death, and are betrothed  
to change. By silence, so,  
I learn my song. I earn*

*my sunny fields by absence, once  
and to come. And I love you  
as I love the dance that brings you  
out of the multitude  
in which you come and go.  
Love changes, and in change is true.*

## WHAT'S ON ?

Workshops, Galleries, Exhibitions, Prize Entries, Coming Events

### IMPORTANT DATES

Sun. 13 Dec. 12 noon - 2pm Christmas Fair and Xmas Party.

Sat. 27 Feb. 2021, 2pm ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING (Purple Building)

all BMCAC members are welcome.

### WORKSHOP SCHEDULE

Sun. 13 December – Art Workshop by Christopher Vidal

Fri. / Sat. 27 / 28 February 2021 – Print Making workshop by Katherine Kennedy.

Watch out for a proposed Jewellery Workshop by Jane Tadrisk in 2021.

### PENRITH REGIONAL GALLERY

86 River Road, Emu Plains

#### **BONITA ELY: MEMENTO**

Until 28 February 2021

Mementos are the objects we surround ourselves with, as a reminder of the past – both distant and more recent. In this exhibition Bonita Ely presents work that draws connections between human experience and the physical and psychological environments that we inhabit. *Plastikus Progressus* presents a futuristic museum that traces the history of plastic waste and its impact on the natural environment, including photography, a fictionalised timeline and several 'creatures' that Ely has speculated as genetically modified consumers of plastic rubbish. With *Interior Decoration*, the artist looks inwards to consider the chronic, intergenerational effects of post-traumatic stress disorder as the result of conflict. Uniting these two projects is Ely's ability to transform everyday objects into powerful mementos – reminders of personal and collective histories – that also offer hope for the future.

#### **MAPBM: FABRIK**

Until 28 February 2021

The exhibition, *Fabrik*, which will be presented in Lewers House, will explore the idea of the material object, as well as the processes of making and unmaking of textiles, clothing and papers. These objects often exhibit a seductive beauty and are major components of the contemporary cycle of production and consumption. The exhibition also includes the questioning of the environmental and social impacts of production and their retailing. These impacts include the human rights and social justice of instances of the use of child labour, inadequate wages, labour movements and poor and unsafe working conditions. The artists involved in the project are Vivienne Dadour, Anne Graham, Beata Geyer, Ian Milliss and Ebony Secombe and Fiona Davies (curator).

## BLUE MOUNTAINS CULTURAL CENTRE

30 Parke Street, Katoomba 2780

Gallery and Shop

Monday – Friday 10am – 5pm, Saturday + Sunday – 10am – 4pm

### Judith Martinez Estrada: Revenant

5 De-

cember 2020 – January 17 2021

In her exhibition *Revenant* Judith Martinez Estrada presents a series of works, created using antique vernacular photography. Working from these originals Martinez Estrada alters the subjects of the photographs by the partial erasing or concealing of the figures. These reimagined identities and scenes articulate new narratives which explore notions of fragmented identity caused by displacement.

## REGENERATE: BLUE MOUNTAINS

19 December 2020 – 31 January 2021

*Regenerate: Blue Mountains* invites local schools and families to creatively reflect on stories of resilience and growth in the face of bush fire. Over 2,500 local children have decorated leaves to represent the burning and regeneration of local resilient plant species during and after bushfires. View the final artwork at the Blue Mountains Cultural Centre this summer school holidays.

### Gary Shinfield: Landscapes of Anxiety

23 Jan – 7 Mar

In the exhibition *Landscapes of Anxiety* artist Gary Shinfield explores ideas based around the three geographical forms that dominate the landscape of the Blue Mountains – the plateau, the escarpment and the valley. These landforms are reinterpreted as formal, subjective and metaphoric images carrying the memory of recent and future events; drought, fires, flooding and human presence. The plateau, a place of stability and human habitation; escarpment, referring to a fall and dramatic change in direction; and valley, a place of nurturing and healing. The artist uses relief printing (etched lino and woodcut) on handmade paper, shown unframed and as installation. The exhibition also includes unique state prints with some of the work including staining and drawing resulting in an individual (unique) work of art created using mainly print techniques with paper used for its creative potential and sculptural qualities.

## Blue Mountains Portraits 2021

23 Jan – 7 Mar

Blue Mountains Portraits is the Cultural Centre's annual celebration of the local community and its diverse members. The exhibiting artists portray the unique people that make up the cultural fabric of the Blue Mountains and

# **2021 CALENDAR OF EVENTS**

## **ENROLMENT DAYS**

**Term 1** 30<sup>th</sup> January

**Term 2** 24<sup>th</sup> April

**Term 3** 17<sup>th</sup> July

**Term 4** 9<sup>th</sup> October

Mothers Day 8<sup>th</sup> May 2021

**MEMBERS' EXHIBITION:** 24<sup>th</sup>-25<sup>th</sup> April

Planning a formal opening Friday night 23<sup>rd</sup>

**LIFE DRAWING EXHIBITION:**

No Life Drawing Exhibition is planned for 2021 at this stage

**PRINT PRIZE:** 26<sup>th</sup> 27<sup>th</sup> June.

Opening night 25<sup>th</sup>.

Drop off 20<sup>th</sup> June - Collection 27<sup>th</sup> June

**ART PRIZE:** 18<sup>th</sup> -19<sup>th</sup> September

**CLAY CREATIONS EXHIBITION:** 16<sup>th</sup> -17<sup>th</sup> October

Planning a formal opening Friday night 15<sup>th</sup>.

# OUR VALUED SPONSORS



**STELLA'S GALLERY**

**Stella Melito** Director  
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