



BLUE MOUNTAINS CREATIVE ARTS CENTRE NEWSLETTER June 2022

WEBSITE: www.bmcac.org.au

FACEBOOK: bmcac & bmcacsaturdaypotters

INSTAGRAM [lifedrawing_glenbrook](https://www.instagram.com/lifedrawing_glenbrook)



Saturday 10am - 4pm
Corner of Hare and Moore St,
Glenbrook

Come, visit and find unique, locally made wares on offer: pottery, art works, jewellery, cards, ideal gift ideas.

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EDITOR'S NOTE

Despite near-freezing temperatures at night Liz's skilful gardening has yielded beautiful blossoms at our Hare Street Centre. Help celebrate these winter flowers (page 11).

Bronwyn has written an article about a burnishing technique known as Terra Sigillata (Pages 5 & 6).

Also in this issue you find the first instalment about artists who inspire with their life drawing practice, featuring Richard Diebenkorn (pages 8 & 9).

Andrea is again gathering creative women on 18 June. And Sue Jeffries from Second Time Round NSW will be running another 'Chalk Painting' workshop on 24 July.

As always, I'd be delighted to receive suggestions or contributions from readers for our 'Creations' magazine.

Rudi Christen
rudich7@dodo.com



More Winter Flowers on page 11.

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

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ART DIRECTOR'S REPORT *Ingrid Russell*

We are halfway through Term 2 and are starting to think about Term 3.

Enrolments will open July 1 and close July 23.

Term 3 starts July 25 and ends September 16.

The following week will be the hanging of the **Art Prize** which is on September 23, 24&25. Bump in for works is on Sunday September 18. Entries for the Art Prize will open July 1.

So now is the time to start thinking about what you are going to enter.

Hare St Gallery Report

The gallery is looking really great with lots of artwork on the walls and plenty of pottery on the shelves. If you are thinking of joining us please send us an email.

GARDENING & GRANTS REPORT *Liz Bryden*

Grants

The Clubgrant money has arrived in our account and will help with the improvements to the jade yurt. So once again we have Glenbrook Panthers to thank for their support and I have passed on our appreciation to the Club.

The Blue Mountains Community Assistance Grant is still being considered, so hopefully this will come through too in the near future. The maximum amount available is \$1000.00 but anything would be greatly appreciated. I will let you know when I hear whether we have been successful or otherwise.

Garden

The windy and cold weather has meant that I haven't been to the garden for a few weeks. My last efforts though involved removal of a large amount of leaves from behind the buildings and between the jade and yellow yurts. A build up of leaves poses a fire hazard, not to mention a hiding place for unwanted visitors so leaves need to be cleared regularly. My dream is that the windy weather will have hastened the leaf fall to a point where anything that can fall down will already have done so by my next visit. Here's hoping! Overall though, when I was last there the plants were doing well which is great. The garden makes visiting the Centre a much more enjoyable experience.

PUBLICITY REPORT *Andrea Ketterling*

There isn't much to report this month. I'm still working on the Canva posters to advertise Hare St. Gallery and classes. I will run them past everyone when they are complete.

I've had 12 sign-ups for a Women's Gathering on Saturday June 18.

I was so impressed with the street library! Two people who walked by commented on how inviting it looked.

The Monday and Tuesday night drop-in groups are very healthy at the moment. I have regularly had 6 of us attend with a couple of potters coming both nights. We have another new member starting on Tuesday night next week. One member is using the pottery yurt on Wednesday nights as there isn't a class this term, so if others wish to attend on Wednesday nights they may. A member has purchased two of the very large 50cm batts we have at \$12 each. We have a number of these batts for sale, some smaller, so let me know if you wish to purchase some.

The Saturday drop-in group had an incident with one of the Venco wheels giving up the ghost and deciding its motor had simply had enough, lots of smoke and consternation. The fire extinguisher was taken down and instructions read, but in the end it wasn't used. However, this incident does illustrate how important it is to have our fire extinguishers checked and up to date, along with all our electrical equipment.

The electrician had planned to look at Baby Bear this week but a previous job took longer than expected. He now plans to come on the 9th or 10th. To help him determine exactly what's going on with BB, we agreed that I would attempt to do a 1080 firing in BB with cones on all levels, also to double check all the elements. I'll send him a report and that will help him get the job done more quickly when he comes. During my conversation with him it transpired that he can and will replace the motor in the Venco wheel for us. We will order the motor and when it arrives he will install it for us. The cost will be around \$490. Our equipment is proving to be expensive of late – hence the reason why the potters' membership is higher than for the other members.

I have \$400 to give David from our drop in fees, so that will go towards costs.

Just a reminder that the Nepean Pottery Society is holding their exhibition on the 18th and 19th of June at Glenbrook Theatre Hall. The society is in great need of new members, so if you want to join their society you can participate in that event. The joining fee is just \$20. By joining both BMCAC Potters and NPS, you are able to participate in four exhibitions a year, all held at Glenbrook Theatre Hall. They meet at St Marys at The Corner every Tuesday morning. It is not necessary to attend their sessions at St Marys to be a member.

Jan Needham, the very long serving President of NPS and Life Member of BMCAC has had to step down due to illhealth and Wendy Field is now the new NPS President. We wish Jan well for a speedy recovery.

HINT: Did you know you can make your own crayons to draw on bisque ware. Mix Feldspar and oil or wax with a colourant (oxide or body stain) in a saucepan – pour molten mixture into a mould. Voila!

Happy Potting - Bronwyn

Who knows clay better, the Geologist or the Potter?

Anon

TERRA SIGILLATA WORKSHOP

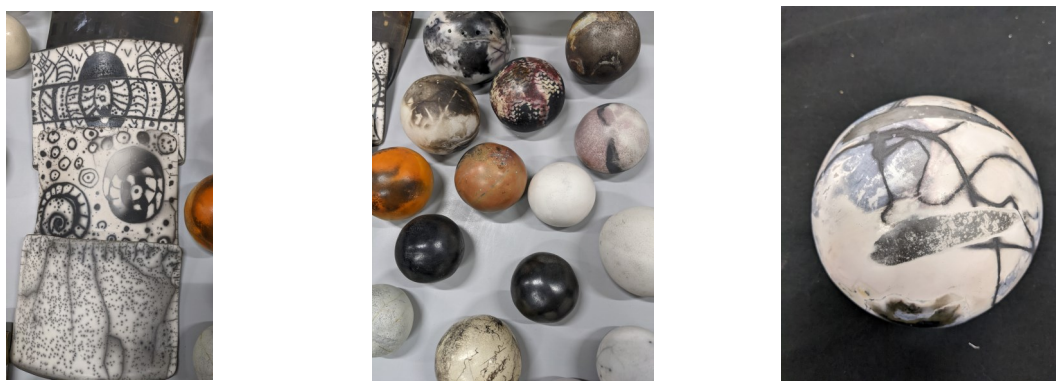
By Bronwyn Campbell



Recently I attended a talk hosted by The Ceramic Study Group. For those who don't know, the CSG operates from 92 Seven Hills Rd, Baulkham Hills. Its members consist of some very well regarded potters and the President is author and ceramicist Leonard Smith. They regularly hold very interesting talks and workshops by some of our best ceramicists. Membership is \$65 and you receive an informative monthly newsletter.

The talk this month was by JULES IRVING – "Working with Terra Sigillata"

Terra Sigillata is a finish that can be added to highly smoothed, burnished pots that are then low fired to 950 degrees in a sagger (enclosed ceramic box containing flammable matter) or a raku kiln. "If you fire too high, you tend to lose the beautiful shiny effect of the burnishing."



Jules is originally from Melbourne, has travelled widely through Australia and lived for 8yrs in Paris. She has studied both at Hornsby TAFE and Brookvale TAFE achieving Certificate 3 and a Diploma at Hornsby TAFE and Diploma and Advanced Diploma at Brookvale TAFE. She currently works at the Open Studio at Brookvale TAFE.

Jules says there are many videos on the internet that show different methods of how to create and obtain the Terra Sigillata, so didn't go into great detail about making it but I found the following description in "Surface Design for Ceramics" by Maureen Mills - a book that I highly recommend. This book says it is best to make the sigillata from dry powdered natural clay: Redart, Barnard and Albany make red terra sigillata and ball clays make white sigillata. (Jules says the best clay to use is the dried clay of the clay you used to make your pot. It gives the best fit. She sieves her dry clay body through an 80 mesh sieve.) The book says to use by volume a ratio of 1:4 – clay to water e.g. 3 cups of clay to 12 cups of water. Slake the mixture thoroughly and then add a deflocculant (a suspension agent) such as sodium silicate using 1 teaspoon to 1.1 litre of water and stir vigorously. It will help suspend the finest particles and let the coarser particles settle - store in a clear container for 24 hrs. *You could use a clear plastic drink bottle.*

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Jules explained that the mixture settles into 3 layers. The middle layer is the desired layer. She found the most effective method was to pour the mixture into a tall plastic container. After 24 hrs, perforate the container just above the second layer which drains off the top layer of water. Then perforate just above the bottom thick layer. This drains off the sought after terra sigillata layer. The bottom layer is discarded. The book says to siphon off the middle layer with a 90 or so cm tube into another clear container. (There is always more than one way to do things.) Don't worry if some of the water gets into the sigillata when it settles the little bit of water will evaporate off.

Jules' pots are hand build from coils. The clays she uses include Keane's Lumina porcelain and a 60-40 blend of Raku and Stoneware 7. She finds raku on its own too gritty but a certain amount helps with the expansion and contraction of the raku firings.

Once the shape is formed a serrated metal tool is scraped backwards and forwards to even out the surface and eliminate the dents. A finer serrated tool is also used to further shape the surface. A tiny hard rubber kidney and then a softer tiny rubber kidney further smooths the surface. Finally, the burnishing process begins. Burnishing begins at leather hard stage. If clay sticks to the burnishing tool, it is too soft, let it dry a little. Tools for burnishing include the back of a spoon or a smooth gemstone. Her favourite burnishing tool is a candle shaped light bulb. Jules says she has never had one break in her hand but has had them roll off the table. Burnishing continues until the piece is nearly dry. It can be a long, long process over days. If you get a scratch when it is becoming too dry to burnish, you can add a little oil to burnish out the scratch. If you are working on large pieces rest your pieces in egg shell sponge rubber during this process.

Once ready the piece can be sprayed with terra sigillata. The mixtures can be coloured with stains. Jules suggests spraying with an air brush is the best way to add the mixture to the pot surface. You get a drip free even coating by constantly turning the piece on a banding wheel. She suggests spraying on 3 layers, letting it dry between layers. More than 3 layers can cause a layer to peel off. A hakeme brush can also be used to paint the terra sigillata on. Leave it on the wheel until it is touch dry and then she burnishes again by rubbing the piece with her fingers inside a plastic bag.

The pieces can be fired in saggars. Combustibles are added to the sagger and draped over the piece to create different effects. Combustibles include sawdust, banana skins, plant matter like seeds grasses, leaves, pine cones and seaweed. Copper wire or copper mesh from a scrubbing pad, salt and copper oxide can also be added. *I have used ferrous chloride and stannous chloride in the past as well.* You can also fire your pot in raku or do a naked raku process. The black and white piece on the left of the photos is an example of naked raku.

A final coat of bees wax, tile sealer (Bondcrete) or liquid quartz (however this is very expensive) can be used to help protect the final surface.

Jules lists Izette Flethun, Magdalena Odundo, Walter Auer, Janet Deboos, Shannon Aarso and Maria Martinez as those who inspire her from her chosen field. Google these artists to see their incredible bodies of work.

She recommends the books "Painting with Smoke" by David Roberts and "The History of Making Terra Sigillata" by Bridget Johnson.

Maybe some of you could try a sigillata piece is our upcoming raku event.



We aim to provide a relaxed, creative space within the framework of life drawing.

It is great to see the enthusiasm that everyone is bringing, along with the diverse range of styles being explored during each session.

We're gaining momentum with 15 people now in our group, including several casual attendees. Thank you to everyone for pitching in with the set-up and put-away each week. Also, for all of your ideas and suggestions.

Key to our inspiration are our models. For many, this is part of their own creative practice and we are very pleased to have several visual artists, dancers, actors and athletes modelling with us. As such, we've just completed our first half-term with the privilege of drawing five of these talented individuals.

Another source of inspiration is the talent of visual artist's past and present. In this month's Creations, you will see our new feature called, 'Artists who Inspire'. We will feature one famous artist each month, who utilised life drawing as part of their practice. These are the artists who have personally inspired members of our group. Our first homage will be to American artist, Richard Diebenkorn - a favourite for many of us at Life Drawing Glenbrook.

Katrina Jago
Facilitator, Life Drawing Glenbrook



Inspirations for Life Drawing



Ocean Park #60, 1973

Richard Diebenkorn, (1922-1993), USA

Surprisingly it's not always the polished, fully finished artworks that inspire, as is the case with American artist, Richard Diebenkorn. His best known abstract expressionist paintings were loose, with washes of colour and scraped back areas to reveal under-layers and sketched beginnings. In colour and sense he was influenced by Henry Matisse, but responding to his local landscapes of New Mexico and coastal California. In composition, he created a sense of 'rightness' and harmony on the canvas.



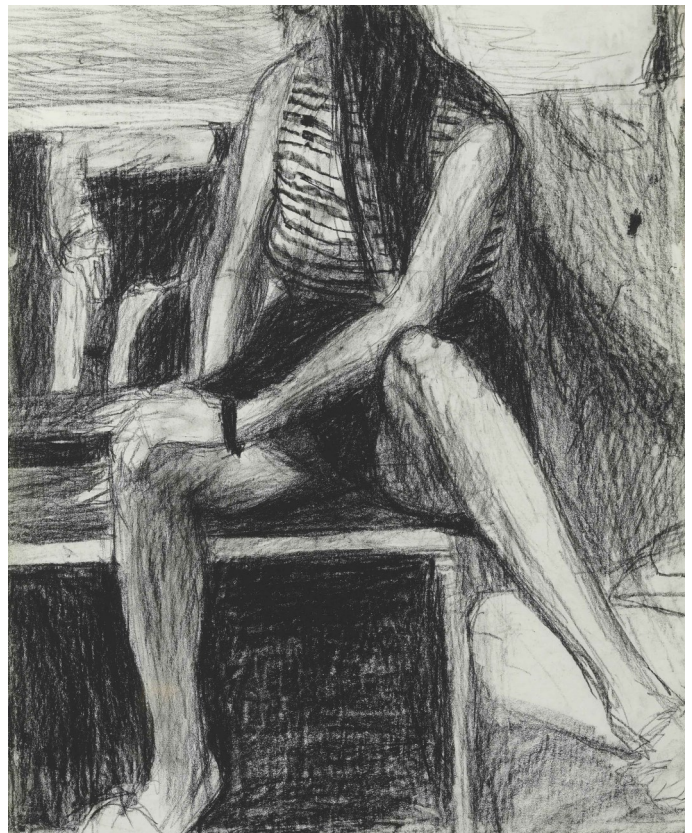
A keen life-drawer and *en plein* artist, Diebenkorn, in his unique approach considered people, objects and landscape as design elements in his semi-abstract work. As seen with his life-drawing sketches, he used dynamic, well-considered sketchy lines and spacial design to lead the eye through areas of tension and interest. His compositions were strongly asymmetric and yet he always achieved a very satisfying sense of balance, whilst erasing nothing and valuing the history created in the piece.

Famous quotes:

"Do search. But in order to find other than what is searched for".

"The pretty initial position which falls short of completeness is not to be valued, except as a stimulus for further moves".

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Further information: <https://diebenkorn.org/>
<https://www.idealart.com/magazine/richard-diebenkorn>

BUILDING COORDINATOR's REPORT *David Russell*

Since last month, we have been more fortunate with weather and the sunny days have allowed D1 and D2 to continue up the garden path and we now have a step up to the main path connecting the kerbside parking in Moore Street to the main building. Due to the complexity of the path and structure it has taken a long time to construct and in some ways to the detriment of other jobs around the centre. Ah well...



As of today, the path has been pressure-jetted and exposed some beautiful colours in the path's sand-stone. Next will be to finish the path at the other end near the entrance to the Jade Yurt. We are sourcing more pavers and rocks to complete this section. A small, curved retaining wall will complement the path. Alison's mini tiles have now been inserted into the mortar and will create a great treasure hunt game for future classes.

While the path has been ongoing, Stuart Russell was given the brief to construct an Outdoor Library to enable some of the Art Centre's books to be circulated in the community. It has now been fixed to the rocks that most of the centre is built on and has already weathered the winds and rain over the past week. Thanks for the work, Stuart.



WINTER FLOWERS by Rudi Christen



GENERAL BUSINESS

ART PRIZE

The ART PRIZE is to be held 24th and 25th September
23rd September Opening night – 7:30pm award presentations.
1st July – call out
16th September - entries closed
18th September - Deliver artwork between 10am and 2pm

PRIZE POOL

Michael Powe: \$2,000
Roy Brooks Ceramic Award: \$500 No sponsor as yet
Sadie Foster Prize: \$500 Stuart Ayers has donated \$250 towards this prize
Barbara Dahl: \$250 No sponsor as yet
Indigenous Award: \$250 voucher from the Black Door Gallery
Youth Award: \$250 voucher from Black Door Gallery
Derivan Awards: donation to be split into three
 \$220 Acrylic Paint - Highly commended
 \$100 Watercolour supplies – Highly commended
 \$180 Print Making supplies – Highly commended
Blackbird Paper: \$200 supplies
Smalti Australia: Mosaic Award: \$150 voucher
Stella's Gallery: \$150 – Highly Commended
Builders Prize \$150
Picture Framing Warehouse: \$100 voucher – Highly commended
Artsup Encouragement Awards: 2x \$50 Vouchers
Gus Carozza Water colour Prize \$50
Bronwyn Campbell/Alison James Children's Prizes

STREET LIBRARY

Our new street library is up and running thanks to Stuart Russell. It looks fabulous.

To be fully human, one must be an artist. Our culture does not value this. We value efficiency, economy and function. Therefore, we create ugly things out of our values. Mass production is irresistible because it makes things so cheap, but we lose a part of our humanity.

Eckhardt Tolle

Yahia Lababidi

Starlings

*Hypnotic like a school of airborne fish
they frolic about in the open sky
flickering into focus and diffusing
back to the ether that spawned them*

*Gathering like a storm and breaking in waves
raining hard, a downpour of butterflies
flitting like a great kite, giddy it got away
yet guided by a steady and invisible hand*

*How do they know to spell such exalted shapes
fluid arabesques across the stage of heaven
as they swarm and glide as though of one mind
a soundless symphony, mysteriously conducted?*



Photographer: Søren Solkær

WHAT'S ON ?

Workshops, Galleries, Exhibitions, Prize Entries, Coming Events

IMPORTANT DATES

Thu. 7 July, 7.30pm, Next Committee Meeting

Sat. 30 July Raku Firing for potters

Fri. 1 July – call out for BMCAC Art Prize

Fri. 16 September - Entries close

Sun 18 September - Deliver artwork between 10am and 2pm

Fri. 23 September, 7.30pm - Opening night with Award Presentations.

Sat. 24 and Sun. 25th September - Art Prize Exhibition at Glenbrook Community Hall

WORKSHOP SCHEDULE

Sat. 18 June **Creative Women's Gathering** with Andrea Ketterling.

Sun. 24 July '**Chalk Painting**' workshop (Furniture Painting) with Sue Jeffries,

How to refurbish furniture correctly with chalk paint (for details: 0407 918 593)

EXHIBITIONS

PENRITH REGIONAL GALLERY

86 River Road, Emu Plains

The Gallery is open daily from 10am – 3.45pm

Until 14 August

[A Girl Like You - Penrith Regional Gallery](#)

[Sunrise, Sunset - Penrith Regional Gallery](#)

[Christine Dean - Penrith Regional Gallery](#)

BLUE MOUNTAINS CULTURAL CENTRE

30 Parke Street, Katoomba 2780

Gallery and Shop: Monday – Friday 10am – 5pm, Saturday + Sunday – 10am – 4pm

[Above the Clouds: 10 Years of the Blue Mountains Cultural Centre Collection - Blue Mountains Cultural Centre](#)

[We Are Here - Nyaliya yinyam & Connections - Blue Mountains Cultural Centre](#)

[Braemar House & Gallery - Blue Mountains Cultural Centre | Blue Mountains Cultural Centre](#)

Blue Mountains Art Prize

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The Hon. **Stuart Ayres** MP 
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Cr. Brendan Christie




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