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Geelong Inc



Newsletter 41 ♦ March 2019

Member of the Association of Australian Decorative and Fine Arts Society
ABN 86 017 404 297 Group Member of The Arts Society (UK)



From the Chair

With Margaret Montgomery

Welcome, both new and returning members to another wonderful programme of lectures for our 27th year! Our current membership is 235.

2019 has already started with a fabulous lecture and study day with the enormously popular and complete professional, Hilary Kay. As well as sharing the secrets of the *Antiques Roadshow*, she also opened our eyes to the world of the new collectors.

A little information about the national structure...

Australia wide, ADFAS consists of 37 societies, which are divided into four circuits. Geelong's six lecturers, who are sent to us from Britain's Art Society (formally Nadfas), commence their tour in Perth, then travel to Fleurieu, Adelaide, **Geelong**, Melbourne, Central (Kyneton), Canberra, Molongolo Plains, Murray River, Ku-ring-ai and Cambden.

Our committee chooses the three Australian lecturers based on glowing recommendations from other societies. The Chairs of the 37 ADFAS societies meet with the national executive in Sydney twice yearly, and the Victorian chairs also meet biannually in Melbourne.

Once again I would like to thank the committee, who work together so efficiently. This year I am delighted to welcome Suzie Speirs to our wonderful and enthusiastic team, and remind you that we always appreciate new committee members who bring new and revitalizing ideas.

Sadly we are losing our media guru, Marion Pescud, who is moving to the sunny north. Marion has been responsible for all our newsletters, with their wealth of information, as well as advertising and the slide-shows, which



*Margaret Montgomery
Enjoying lunch with
Hilary Kay*

we enjoy each month. The committee will also miss her friendship, commitment and energy and wish her well.

We are very grateful to Rhona Tomlinson and our new member, Jennifer Kloester who are hosting two of our lecturers this year. Geelong ADFAS ‘home hosts’ our lecturers and we are always thrilled when our members ‘chip in’.

I wish you all well and look forward to seeing you as we enjoy another year of excellent lectures; details of which I hope you’ll share with your friends.

 Margaret Montgomery

Radio Promotion

In January Margaret Montgomery and Marion Pescud were interviewed by Mitchell Dye from Pulse Radio on his show *Mitchell’s Front Page*. They spoke about ADFAS nationwide and the relationship with our parent association, Britain’s ‘Arts Society’. They responded to questions about ADFAS Geelong and its input into the Arts community, and discussed how the Committee makes decisions about the lecturers and topics chosen.

Margaret and Marion also used the opportunity to promote our first lecture and special interest day with Hilary Kay.



*Margaret Montgomery and Marion Pescud
with Mitchell Dye at Pulse Radio, Geelong*

Supporting The Smith Family

This year, ADFAS Geelong’s Young Arts Programme is supporting The Smith Family, a national charity helping young Australians in need to get the most out of their education.

Our donation is assisting *SmArts* – the Arts enrichment initiative which helps to inspire and engage students creative skills, self-confidence and awareness of post school options, thus ensuring that disadvantaged students can raise their aspirations and career knowledge of the creative arts.

ADFAS Geelong Committee

The 2019 Committee began the year at a gallop, working to ensure the ADFAS Geelong lecture programme is finalised and the presenters' accommodation organised. The Antiques Roadshow Special Interest Day required a great deal of planning, particularly sourcing and cataloguing the unique items for Hilary Kay to appraise.

2019 Committee

ADFAS Geelong Chair

Vice-Chair, Membership Secretary

Treasurer, Lecturer Liaison Officer

Secretary

Publications and Publicity

Committee Members

Carmel Apted

Claire Hewitt

Louise Player

Margaret Montgomery

Sally Birrell

Gianna Varasdi

Cathy Stewart

Marion Pescud

Jenny Bowker

Kate McEachern

Suzie Speirs



Margaret Montgomery

A luncheon was held in December at Claire and Graeme Hewitt's lovely property in Leopold to thank the committee, and welcome new member Suzie Speirs.



Robbie Youngman, Jenny Bowker, Sally Birrell and Geza Varasdi



Louise Player



Cathy Stewart, Gianna Varasdi, Suzie Speirs, Carmel Apted and Kate McEachern



Marion Pescud and Craig Snyder

The Antiques Roadshow Experience

Special Interest Day with Hilary Kay



On Tuesday 19 February, the delightful Hilary Kay from the BBC's *Antiques Roadshow* was the guest presenter at ADFAS Geelong's Special Interest Day held at the Geelong West Town Hall. Over 120 participants found the day very interesting, and were enamored with Hilary who not only demonstrated her knowledge and professionalism, but charmed the audience with her friendliness, wit and humour.



Hilary with a few of the 'Roadshow' items

The morning began with a talk about the activity behind the scenes on the *Antiques Roadshow*, complemented with slides and videos. Hilary gave an insight into the machinations of the production, the hard work and exhaustively long filming days for the appraisal experts and production crew, and the crowds who spend hours in winding queues. Wedged between the anatomy of the show were some hilarious stories.

After morning tea, Hilary spoke about the great finds made over the years on the *Antiques Roadshow* and the amazing prices fetched for items; some family heirlooms and others found in various locations (like the tip!) She also entertained the audience with very funny stories of people's reaction to the value of their items, and the awkward positions in which the experts sometimes find themselves.

After a lovely boxed lunch accompanied by wine, tea, coffee and fresh fruit, the audience were treated to their own 'Roadshow' where Hilary provided information and valuations for items presented by members and guests. Sadly there were no 'great finds' but the items were varied and interesting. There was not time for Hilary to look at every item, but those she selected were appraised with enthusiastic honesty which generated much laughter.



Margaret Montgomery (centre) with ADFAS guests Anne Prior (Chair, Melbourne) and Ruth Caple (Chair, Yarra)



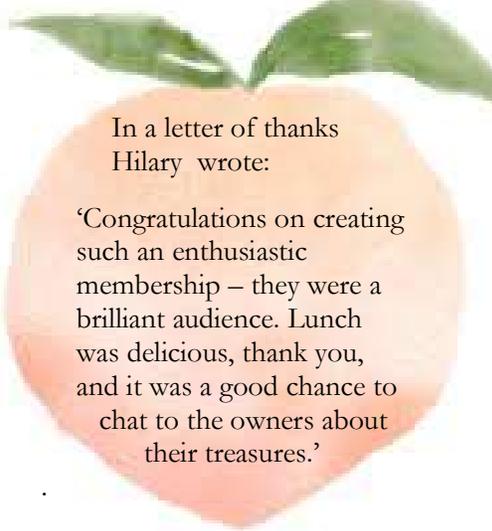
ADFAS Committee Members serving lunch with a smile. Gianna Varasdi, Sally Birrell and Louise Player

The day was a great success, made all the more memorable by the knowledge and sense of fun provided by Hilary Kay and the generous participation of the audience.

 Marion Pescud



Members and Guests enjoy the Antiques Roadshow Experience



Debo McNab

A Colourful Talent

I spoke to Debo in a sunny room at her property at Freshwater Creek – a space as bright and eclectic as Debo herself. Crammed floor-to-ceiling bookshelves filled one wall and art of all types hung on the others. Shelves and tables were covered with treasures as diverse as beautiful porcelain, a collection of wood planes and a goat's skull perched atop a glass vase.



Toddler's dress, designed and knitted by Debo from her own merino wool

As always Debo was friendly and chatty, looking unique in a pair of casual shorts and exquisite strand of pearls. Her artistic talents are many and she believes they are genetic. “My mother was a terrific sock knitter” she says, explaining her interest in the craft began at an early age. Debo loves fabric and textures and, being raised on a Western District farm, has an appreciation of fine natural products and the breeding history of the donor animals. For years she and her husband Duncan, owned a sheep property at Anakie producing pure merino wool, some of which she'd keep for herself and have spun into yarn. She would then dye the wool to the colour specified by clients who purchased her custom-designed hand-knitted garments and rugs.

Debo also ran knitting classes at the Australian Tapestry Workshop in Melbourne, one of only three places world-wide that dye their own embroidery yarns, with an incredible inventory of 360 colours.

Now retired, Debo mostly knits rugs for the Mirabel Foundation that assists children throughout Victoria and New South Wales who have been orphaned or abandoned due to parental drug use. She is an avid supporter of the organisation which without government funding, still manages to provide for these children until they are 18.



Part of a 'Mirabel rug' knitted by Debo from the dyed wool produced by the Australian Tapestry Workshop



In addition to the 'Mirabel rugs', Debo showed me what she called a 'horse rug' but was in fact, a colourful cardigan for a horse – complete with pockets and lovely buttons!

Debo's other creative passion is art. In 1958, after graduating from the University of Melbourne with a Commerce Degree, she travelled to London to work but

Left: Debo's massive 'horse cardigan'



instead married her first husband and became a 'Battersea housewife'. That allowed her time to take art lessons from a very elderly gentleman who was a contemporary of Welsh artist, Augustus John.

Left: Debo with a recently completed work in acrylic

On her return to Australia, Debo continued with her art, experimenting with different media and tools. She paints with oils or acrylics, and draws with a stick that she's picked up in the garden using ink, paint, or even boot polish. She likes to create a narrative in her work, and describes her style as 'energetic in a whacky way'. She

currently attends a life drawing group, and also paints with ladies who meet weekly in honour of their friend Louise Reeve who passed away two years ago with breast cancer.

Debo's attitude is as lively as her work. With imagination unbound by conventional techniques, one can't begin to imagine what she will do next.

 Marion Pescud

Book Raffle

The book, *Susan Sutton: the artist and her art*, was raffled at our first lecture for the year. The winners were delighted to receive their prize about the life and work of Susan, our very talented ADFAS Geelong member.

Wendy Cheever from the morning members group was quite overwhelmed with her win. She said she was delighted to receive the quality publication and pleased that Susan's paintings depicted so much of local interest. It contains beautiful images of Geelong and the Surf Coast, particularly the beach culture around Lorne and detailed bushland scenes from the Otway hinterland.

The raffle proceeds will go toward our Young Arts Programme, which this year is assisting a budding artist under the auspices of The Smith Family.



Book's author Marion Pescud with the morning group's winner, Wendy Cheever

Heavenly Bodies Exhibition

Margaret Montgomery in Manhattan

One of the great joys of travel is visiting galleries, from the smallest to the largest, both in Australia and overseas. On a recent trip to New York, apart from the fabulous galleries of Guggenheim, MOMA, Frick, Whitney etc, where one iconic masterpiece follows another, I stumbled across truly outstanding exhibition, *Heavenly Bodies, Fashion and the Catholic Imagination*, at the Metropolitan Museum of Art (the Met).

This exhibition featured the work of designers who were raised in the Roman Catholic tradition. Although their current religious convictions vary, the lasting influence on their designs is evident with catholic imagery and symbolism. The collection was an interplay between fashion and medieval art from the Met collection with haute couture garments from the early 20th century to the present.



the Met Cloisters museum



*Gold wedding dress,
Dolce and Gabana*



*Machiavelli
John Galliano*

The cornerstone of the exhibition was papal robes and accessories from the Sistine Chapel sacristy, many of which have never been seen outside the Vatican.

Exquisite garments were displayed in the Met 5th Avenue however, the truly outstanding part of the exhibition was in the Met Cloisters. The Cloisters holds about 5,000 works of art and architecture, all European and mostly dating from the Byzantine to the Early Renaissance periods, exhibited in the architectural settings of French monasteries and abbeys.



*'Adam and Eve' dress,
Valentino*

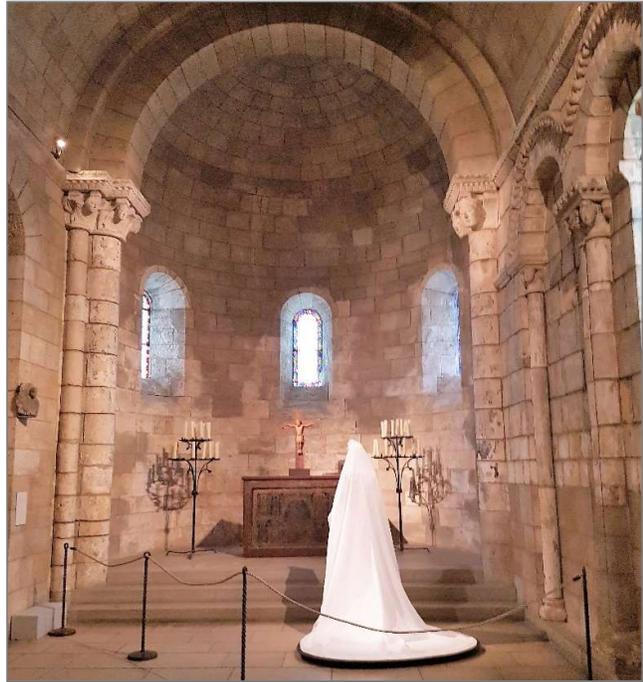
The museum is sited on a steep hill, featuring upper and lower levels. It contains medieval gardens and a series of chapels and galleries designed to evoke a sense of medieval European monastic life. The four European cloisters were purchased by American sculptor and art dealer, George Grey Barnard. They

were dismantled between 1934 and 1939 and moved to New York and later acquired by John D Rockefeller, who donated them and the collection to the Met.

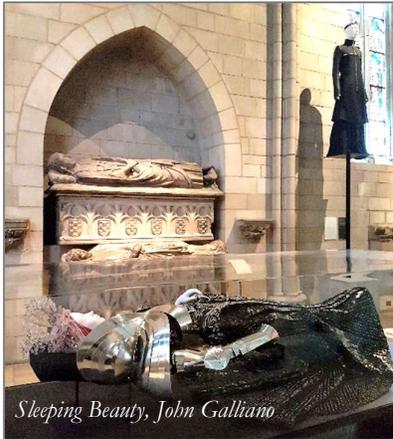
The Heavenly Bodies garments were perfectly staged throughout this beautiful museum with reflecting walls, altars, windows, tapestries and paintings. The wonderful overlay was the most contemplative religious music playing in each room. All of these elements, came together to create a truly sublime experience.

If you are in New York, do not miss the Met Cloisters.

 Margaret Montgomery



Wedding dress, Marc Bohan – Second Chapel



Sleeping Beauty, John Galliano



Unicorn wedding dress, Thom Browne



adfas.org.au

Australian Decorative and Fine Art Society

new members always welcome

- ◆ art appreciation
- ◆ social arts events
- ◆ cultural tours

For membership enquiries, please call:
Sally Birrell, on 5250 3264 or 0427 342 213

Treasures of Russia's Hermitage

Last year, I was fortunate enough to travel to Russia and this trip of course included a visit to St Petersburg and the iconic State Hermitage Museum of art and culture. It is one of the world's largest encyclopaedic museums, housing furniture, ornaments, sculpture, paintings and more. As well as its collections, the architecture of the Winter Palace is also a delight. The collections occupy a large complex of six historic buildings along the Palace Embankment including the most famous, the Winter Palace.



Pat Rizvi, cruising on the Volga



The Hermitage, St Petersburg

Hermitage adjoining the Winter Palace. After the 1917 revolutions, the buildings and the works of art they housed were nationalised with the Winter Palace becoming the face of the Hermitage as an art museum open to the public.

The collection in the Winter Palace is vast and diverse. Our guide took us to the most important exhibits on what seemed at the time to be whirlwind tour. One advantage of being with an organised group is that we avoided the long, long queue for tickets. The downside though is that there really isn't as much time to linger as I would have liked. However, a few works really stick in my mind. I saw Da Vinci paintings, a small statue of a dog which people think looks so like Putin that everyone wants to touch it (for its own safety it now has been placed behind glass), beautiful furnishings and ornaments and, most memorably, Rembrandt's painting of Danae which was vandalised in 1985. A man threw sulphuric acid onto the canvas and then cut it twice with a knife. Over the next 12 years, the painting was carefully restored. There are small areas of the painting that have lost their clarity but really the restoration is an amazing feat. It makes one wonder about the dilemma of making works of art available for all to see and simultaneously protecting them.

I was travelling with an organised tour which took us only to the collection in the Winter Palace, which was the residence of Russian emperors from the middle of the 18th century. Its first occupant was Catherine the Great. She was a great patron of the arts and assembled one of the largest collections of paintings in the world. To house her collection Catherine built the Small and then the Large



Part of the Hermitage's magnificent interior



Above: Rembrandt's 'Danae'

At the conclusion of our tour of the Winter Palace there was about an hour of free time. I was well aware that across the square the General Staff Building housed a wonderful holding of impressionist, post-impressionist and modern art, however I decided though to stay in the Winter Palace and look a little more closely there.

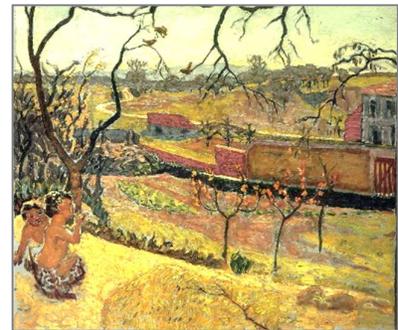
Left: Da Vinci's armour Collection



Below: The dog that resembles Vladimir Putin



So, it was with great joy that I saw that an exhibition of these newer paintings was showing at the Gallery of New South Wales in Sydney and I travelled to see it. There were works by Cezanne, Matisse, Picasso and Kandinsky as well as many of their contemporaries, some of whom were unknown to me. The works themselves were wonderful but what was equally fascinating to me was the story behind the collection of these newer works. Almost all the French painting were brought to Moscow from Paris by the avid art collectors Sergey Shchukin and Ivan Morozov at the beginning of the 20th century. The Gallery of New South Wales told this story in a most innovative way with a dedicated theatre showing film on one screen telling the story of the collectors and simultaneously on a second screen film showing five dancers symbolising Matisse's painting of five dancers (La Danse).



Art from the Hermitage on loan to the Gallery of New South Wales. From left to right: Kandinsky, Rousseau and Bonnard

Morozov was particularly fond of Denis and Bonnard and commissioned works from both these artists. Shchukin's admiration was for Matisse. He commissioned two enormous panels, Dance and Music, for his own mansion. Matisse was also impressed by his patron saying 'It took sheer nerve to paint in this manner and it took sheer nerve to buy it'. Following the Russian Revolution, the Shchukin and Morozov collections were nationalised. The collection was divided between the Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts in Moscow and the State Hermitage Museum in St Petersburg. It was a great delight to see some of the works I had missed in Russia at home in Australia.



Artisanal Tour of Morocco

10 - 20 November 2019

This specialist Artisanal Tour provides the opportunity to Explore the traditional Amazigh (Berber) arts, food, music and crafts of Southern Morocco at a grassroots level. Weavers of carpets and cloth, embroiderers, metal workers, jewellery, leather and pottery are found in remote locations where the artisans maintain aspects of their traditional life style. The tour visits Marrakech, Skoura Oasis, Sahara, Nkob, and the UNESCO World Heritage site of Ait Ben Haddou.



Accommodation is provided in comfortable traditional guesthouses, offering the delights of Moroccan food, music and hospitality while having a relaxing holiday adventure. This tour is an innovative and creative way to explore a unique place that is stimulating and safe.

The tour is led by artist and curator, Rita Lazauskas. Her focus is on drawing and painting while her broader skills incorporate art history, contemporary art, textiles and photography. Abdenabi Imelouane is responsible for the day to day operations ensuring participants receive the highest quality service.

Tour Price

AUD\$5,580 pp, twin-share.

Single Supplement: AUD\$940 pp.

Minimum participants: 4, Maximum: 12

Optional Extra 6-Day Extension Tour 20 - 25 November 2019

From Marrakech, the tour drives to Fes via the northern side of the Atlas Mountains, then through the Rif Mountains to the 'blue city' of Chefchaouen. After savouring more cultural experiences, visits to kasbahs and artisan workshops, the journey ends in Rabat before departing from Casablanca on the final day.



Extended Tour Price

AUD\$2,990 pp, twin-share

Single supplement: AUD\$390pp.

Minimum participants: 2, Maximum: 12

Includes a free return transfer to Marrakech if required.

For Enquiries and Bookings
please contact Rita Lazauskas at:

enquiries@culturaltoursmorocco.com