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# Botanical Art

## • QUEENSLAND •

Newsletter of the Botanical Artists' Society of Queensland Inc.

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## Banks and Solander 2020

The Botanical Artists' Society of Queensland is planning an exhibition of plants collected by Joseph Banks and Daniel Solander and is due to commence on Sunday 17 May 2020.

All society members are invited to participate. Please take a look at the species list emailed to you previously, complete the preferred species form, and return before the first selection deadline of 12noon, 20 November 2017.

Please contact **Dr Nita C Lester** if you have any queries regarding species or the process. You will be notified soon after 20 November which of your preferences were successful. If you plan to contribute but are unable to submit your first preferences by 20 November, please let Nita know. This will ensure you do not miss out and will assist with planning.

Throughout 2018 you may submit further preferences for consideration. Reminders will be forthcoming. Special design workshops will be held during 2018-19 for all members (whether participating in the exhibition or not) to assist with planning or drawing/painting, drawing styles, composition and more. Garden and Momentum Days, and observing plants in real life, will all contribute to your knowledge and understanding of all species.

For the Banks and Solander proposed exhibition, you can choose the media and format that suit you best (*see definition of botanical art and illustration on page 5*). Sizes are suggested within the paperwork sent. All unframed artworks must be finalised by 1 August 2019 to allow for print and exhibition preparation deadlines.

Once your piece has been assessed for quality of work and botanical correctness, you will be advised by 1 September 2019 whether or not it has been accepted.

All plants depicted must be correct to species level; pollinators may be included but cannot be the focus of the piece. No exhibition fees apply, but you must maintain current membership of the Society throughout the process. ■

### CONTENTS

From the **President** 2

Meet **Andrea Bubenik** 2

**Florescence** 2

Artist Profile: **Julie Cane** 3

Book and workshop **reviews** 4

Botanical **art** defined 5

Conservation and care of works on paper: **Inside the frame** 6

**Flowers** in the desert 7

The **Noticeboard** 8

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### BASQ

The Botanical Artists' Society of Queensland (BASQ) is a voluntary, non-profit organisation formed to foster a greater knowledge, love and understanding of Botanical Art.

The Society's focus is two-fold: to provide courses for those beginning or improving their art, and to exhibit members' art.

This biannual newsletter will keep you informed of BASQ's current happenings. If you would like to contribute, please email [sparkler@iinet.net.au](mailto:sparkler@iinet.net.au) by **15 December 2017** for the Summer edition.

# FROM THE PRESIDENT

**F**loressence 2017 is just around the corner. As this is our one and only exhibition for the year, please think about entering. Elizabeth is looking forward to receiving all your entries.

A new floor plan is being considered for 2017. Original art is the focus, while the demonstrations, pop-up workshops, displays and merchandise will all take second place. Please ensure you check the new merchandise requirements so that you – the artist – and your fellow artists organising the retail are not placed in an embarrassing position on Floressence set up day. If submitting merchandise, please add your name to the roster to assist.

In the past, only pieces from the beginner courses have been displayed and, while these have been appreciated by visitors, a change is about to occur. A display of workshop outcomes conducted this year is a new concept for Floressence. There has been strong support for this idea, hence if you participated in a 2017 workshop, you might be contacted for your work. Please be prepared. Finish that piece you promised to complete upon returning home!

The article on the front page details a little of the proposed Banks and Solander 2020 exhibition. Behind the scenes as you all appreciate is the hard work – the thinking, the drafting and redrafting. I wish to thank all members of our 11-member team. All have offered their expertise and time at different stages of this project: **Susan House, Kathryn Kerswell, Eva Richardson, Michelle Rackley** and **Elizabeth McCartney** in particular have been very busy recently. Thank you also to other society members who have contributed to the work of the team of 11.

Must away and paint. ■

by **Dr Nita C Lester**



*Maroochy Art group members (and on page 1) doing botany studies*

## See you at Floressence!



**Dr Andrea Bubenik**, arts lecturer at The University of Queensland, will be opening Floressence this year, which starts at **6.30pm on Thursday 16 November** in the Auditorium, Brisbane Botanic Gardens, Mt Coot-tha. Andrea's research and teaching is focused on Renaissance and Baroque art (especially Albrecht Dürer and his followers), histories of printmaking, court cultures and collecting, links between art and science ca. 1400–1800, and the historiography of art from ancient times to the present. She is currently researching the role of images in early modern herbals. ■

A poster for the Floressence 2017 exhibition. It features a detailed botanical illustration of a plant with purple flowers and green leaves. The text on the poster includes: "An exhibition of contemporary botanical art by the Botanical Artists' Society of Queensland Inc.", "FLORESSENCE 2017", "The Auditorium Brisbane Botanic Gardens, Mt Coot-tha Mt Coot-tha Road, TOOWONG", "Exhibition Dates: Friday 17 – Monday 20 November", "Opening Times: 9:00am-4:30pm (Closing 1:00pm Monday)", "Entry \$3 for adults \$2 for concession, children free", "Artwork and merchandise for sale Morning and afternoon tea available", and "www.botanicalartqld.com.au".

### BASQ Officers 2017

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*Julie Cane*

# Artist Profile ~ Julie Cane

I have been painting for many years, having always enjoyed art. Preferring colouring and drawing as a child rather than writing, I would draw pictures of the animals and landscape around me. I grew up on a small farm in Essex, England, where we kept many animals and were surrounded by beautiful countryside. This I found constantly inspiring and it developed my love of the natural world. My mother and both grandmothers painted in oils.

I was 14 when my mother gave me my first artist's watercolours: she was not going to let me make a mess in oil! I loved using them and gradually learnt how to get the effects I wanted. I continued to paint and draw while I was at university and, after I qualified as a veterinary surgeon in 1993, I found opportunities to paint whenever I could around pursuing my career.

A couple of years later I got married to my wonderful and supportive husband, Simon, and relocated to Wiltshire, where I found a great local art society and met my mentor, Trevor Waugh. The first painting I sold at a public exhibition was a study of a Cox apple and apples have appeared regularly in my art ever since.

I controlled my watercolour by using a small brush, which my mother-in-law noticed, and so she bought me a botanical painting course for my 30th birthday. This was with the late Pauline Dean, who was a multiple Royal Horticultural Society (RHS) gold medallist in botanical painting. I loved the botanical painting and I did a second course with Pauline the following year. Her influence led to my pursuing botanical painting and I gained membership of the Society of Botanical Artists in London.

I then started a family, and five years later we emigrated from England to Brisbane, where we are now. Having a young family initially slowed my art practice down but after we emigrated I decided to pursue my art more seriously and joined BASQ. I do less botanical art now as I have branched into oils, though these mainly contain botanical subjects, including detailed paintings of leaf litter and still life which have won awards. I am hoping to highlight the beauty of the natural world and encourage people to cherish and protect it, as every little act of kindness to the planet will help.

*There is always one!* a watercolour of onions (pictured below left) was highly commended in the Lethbridge Small Scale Art Award in 2013. In 2014 I won the Lethbridge Small Scale Art Award with *Do You?* an oil painting of leaves, with leaves spelling out three



words and a tree growing from the leaf litter (pictured at right). Find the words and answer the question that the title asks!

I love painting and the ability to constantly challenge myself and tackle new subjects, media and techniques. My work over the years is an eclectic mix but I have loved producing each of them. ■



*Stargazer lily*

“I am hoping to highlight the beauty of the natural world and encourage people to cherish and protect it, as every little act of kindness to the planet will help.”



## GENERAL REVIEWS

### **BOOK:** *The Flowering Of The Pacific: Being an account of Joseph Banks' travels in the South Seas and the story of his Florilegium*



This book, written by Brian Adams and published by Collins, Sydney in 1986, is particularly relevant to the forthcoming celebration of the 250th anniversary of the *Endeavour's* voyage up the east coast of Australia captained by James Cook.

The expedition also included Joseph Banks, the rich gentleman scientist; Linnaeus's pupil, the botanist Daniel Solander; and the gifted artist Sydney Parkinson, who illustrated their finds.

The book has two parts: one detailing the three years of the actual voyage, the other why it took another 200 years before the important results of this historic voyage became more generally available.

The *Endeavour* left England in 1768, crossed the Atlantic to South America and then sailed round Cape Horn into the Pacific, eventually reaching Australia, or New Holland as it was then known, in 1770.

The expedition nearly came to a tragic end when the ship was holed on the Great Barrier Reef. But, while the crew made repairs, where what is now known as the Endeavour River enters the sea, Banks and Solander went plant hunting and Parkinson completed many drawings. Once repairs were completed the *Endeavour* sailed on to the East Indies and then, across the Indian Ocean and round the Cape of Good Hope, to arrive back in England in 1771.

Although Banks got as far as having plates made from Parkinson's drawings and paintings, he never got them printed, or published the detailed botanical descriptions. When he died his collections went as a bequest to the British Museum.

Over the next two centuries some things saw the light of day. The story of how, finally, in 1980 full colour prints were made from 738 of the original plates and published as *The Banks Florilegium* is truly fascinating.

The book is illustrated, not only with reproductions of plates from the *Florilegium*, but also with portraits – and even caricatures – of the main characters, as well as paintings of significant people, places and events.

In particular, I much appreciated the way that the book brought together the whole voyage and the story behind the publishing of the *Florilegium*. ■

by Zahra Maarten, Assistant Workshops Coordinator

by Nola Sindel, Tablelands to Downs Regional Group

### **WORKSHOP:** Botanical Art with Rebecca Berrett

We are a small group of Botanical Artists in the Tenterfield-Warwick-Toowoomba area and have been meeting regularly each month for at least 12 years.

Recently we held a two-day botanical art workshop to develop our skills using coloured pencil. This workshop was assisted by BASQ's Regional Funding Support and we are most grateful for this as it allowed us from several regional areas to meet and work with a very talented artist, Rebecca Berrett. It also assisted with our botanical art exhibition *Botanical Expressions*, which was held at Stanthorpe Art Gallery in May-June.

Rebecca is a very talented and dedicated artist and tutor. She is also an author, illustrator, book-binder and calligrapher, so with this variety of skills was a wonderful tutor for our group. As a full-time artist and arts tutor, specialising in natural history painting, illustration and fine drawing in graphite, coloured pencil, watercolour and pen-and-ink, and passionate about field drawing, Rebecca was especially helpful and inspirational in our workshop.

After admiring many of her original coloured pencil works and portfolio, Rebecca took us very carefully through the process of using and caring for coloured pencils, illustrating how to make excellent artworks with fine detail and smooth application. Working from plant specimens, Rebecca encouraged us to draw from the specimens, produce a fine final drawing, then use coloured pencils to complete a botanical artwork.

Our group consists of **Sandy Amos** (Warwick), **Jacqui Bydder** (Toowoomba), **Barbara Diery** (Warwick), **Jac Pommer** (Warwick), **Suzanne Ridley** (Warwick), and myself, **Nola Sindel** (Tenterfield) and we all thank Rebecca for the time, expertise and patience that she exhibited with our workshop, and to BASQ for supporting our development. ■



Rebecca Berrett with workshop participants Sandy, Barbara, Suzanne and Jac

## BOTANICAL ART AND ILLUSTRATION DEFINED

The main difference between botanical illustration and botanical art is that botanical illustrations are created specifically to accompany and clarify taxonomic, botanical text in a scientific publication. Botanical art is created as decorative art to be hung on walls, while being botanically accurate.



## TRADITIONAL COMPARED WITH INNOVATIVE BOTANICAL ART

In the nineteenth century, when botany became recognised as a legitimate science, several

conventions were established that defined the genre of botanical art and differentiated it from the somewhat looser genre of flower painting.

Some of these conventions were:

- only a single species was illustrated on a plate
- the illustrated plant was presented against a plain, white background
- important, identifying or diagnostic characters were often illustrated separately, often magnified, at the bottom of the plate
- shadows were largely restricted to a minimal amount of tonal shading to describe form, while cast shadows were frowned on.

It must be stressed that these were conventions, not necessarily rules, so the definition of what constitutes traditional botanical art today is fairly loose. Perhaps the most important 'rule', rather than convention, is that to qualify as botanical art and botanical illustration the drawing or painting must be botanically correct and accurate. The plant must also be illustrated with precision and detail so that the species can be unambiguously identified by a botanist.

Thus, while an artist can follow the above conventions and produce a 'traditional' piece of botanical art, it is possible to work beyond these conventions and produce innovative pieces. This definition allows for a range of styles that would qualify as innovative botanical art but, as stated above, the art piece must be botanically correct, for example:



- using different materials [acrylics, scraperboard, lino cut, engraving, pastel, mixed media]
- introducing different compositional elements [habitat, environmental and ecological contexts]
- presenting and framing unusually

- combining subjects in unexpected ways
- using digital media.

**It is the accurate depiction of the plant that differentiates botanical art from 'flower painting'.** ■ (BASQ Strategic Plan)

## WORKSHOP: Scraperboard with Kay Sullivan

**W**hat is scraperboard drawing? This is what we spent a winter's day learning all about with renowned local expert **Kay Sullivan**.

According to BASQ's Strategic Plan 2015 (see left), creating botanical art with a scraperboard is classified as innovative, because it differs from the traditional water colour on white paper. However, it could also be classed as innovative as it requires a completely different way of looking at a subject – back to front! At least that was my impression...

Anyway, to the workshop. After being shown several examples of scraperboard's possibilities, the tools involved and specific techniques, we were set free to experiment on some scraps of board ourselves. Playing with different sized 'scrapers' and trying a range of mark-making techniques gave us the confidence to then draw our pre-prepared A4 designs onto a 'real' sheet of scraperboard. It was fun!

Most people managed to complete a final drawing by day's end and nearly all depicted the delicate lines and graceful composition of their individual subject (can't say I was one of them!). The results were quite different from the standard botanical art paintings we are used to seeing.

What surprised me most about scraperboard was how we can use colour in what is essentially a black-and-white illustrative technique – i.e. scraping back a black board to reveal the white surface underneath – just by using coloured pencil or dry-brush water colour.

After spending a day experimenting with this wonderful new medium, my prediction is that it will be the next big thing. Try it for yourself and see! Thanks, Kay. ■



by Suzanne Parker, Newsletter Editor

# FRAMING OPTIONS

In the second of a series on the care, storage and presentation of works on paper, Kath Kerswell, Senior Registrar at the UQ Art Museum, talks about the importance of archival care and techniques. This issue covers conservation framing practices for the long-term preservation of your work.

## Conservation and care of works on paper: Inside the frame

### Mat and backing boards

- Archival matboards and backing boards are 100% acid free or buffered pH neutral.
- Conservation board colours are whites and creams: be aware that **coloured matboards are not acid free**.
- The borders are measured to suit the size of the artwork. For example, on a work 30cm high by 20cm wide, the border will be 6-7cms top and sides, and 9-10cms at the bottom. The slightly larger bottom border is needed to give visual 'weight' to the work.
- The 'window' is cut in the mat, giving rise to the term 'window mat'. The cut is made at a 45° bevel, which prevents a sharp shadow when displayed.
- The backing board is taped to the window mat along the top edge with a strip of archival linen tape.
- The window mat works as a visual device to present the artwork. It also has a preservation function to prevent the underside of the glazing from contacting the surface of the artwork.

**Diagram 1: Cross section of a framed work on paper showing the relationship of the components inside the frame**



- a. Frame  
d. Linen tape  
g. Frame backing
- b. Glazing  
e. Artwork  
h. Framer's point
- c. Window mat  
f. Backing board  
i. Framer's tape

### Hinges

- Conservation framers use long-fibred rice paper tissue, which is adhered with methylcellulose paste and is fully reversible.
- Reversibility is a prime consideration in modern conservation procedures. Hinges may need to be removed in the future and this should be achieved with no loss to the artwork.

### Matting the artwork

- The most common style of attaching the artwork to the backing is a T-hinge. Two to three tabs are adhered along the top edge of the artwork and allowed to dry.
- Once dry, the work is positioned on the backing to line up with the window and the hinges are adhered to the backing (See Diagram 2).
- The hinges are applied along the top edge to allow the artwork to expand and contract freely within the mount. Paper is very sensitive to changes in humidity and, especially in our Queensland climate, humidity can vary considerably from one day to the next.

### Glazing

- Framer's grade acrylic sheet, such as Perspex, is crystal clear without a colour caste, blocks 99% of harmful UV light, is lightweight and shatterproof.
- The disadvantages of acrylic sheet are that it is soft and scratches easily, needs special cleaners, and because of its static quality is problematic for dry media such as charcoal and pastel.
- There are new products, such as TruVue glass and acrylic sheet, which are expensive but include features such as UV block, scratch resistance, antireflective and non-glare.
- Cheaper glass has limited light blocking capacity and embrittles over time.
- The once popular 'non-reflective' glass, apart from distorting the artwork, has a greater surface area allowing an even higher percentage of light to enter the frame.

### Back board for frame

- The best material for the back of the frame is archival polypropylene sheet, similar to Corflute. It does not absorb moisture which could migrate into the boards inside the frame, is easy to clean so that exhibition labels can be attached and removed if you are reusing frames for exhibitions, and is light weight.
- The backboard sits flush within the frame profile and is secured by framer's points.
- The frame needs to be sealed with a sturdy framer's tape, to ensure that pests such as cockroaches and silverfish cannot get inside the frame.
- Some frames have quick loading systems for short term, temporary exhibition changeovers.

### Common framing faults

- Beware poor quality matboards. These may look okay when new because they are faced with a good quality, but not necessarily acid free, paper and backing with an acid pulpboard core. Over time the acid core browns, especially when exposed to light and moisture. The acid then 'migrates' causing 'acid burn' which appears as a brownish 'halo' extending onto the artwork.
- Archival tapes may be used by framers, but the adhesives are not easily removed. They often need pressure to bond, which makes them even more aggressive and, when the tapes are removed, fibres are torn from the artwork.
- Double-sided tape cannot be removed without damaging the artwork.
- **Some do nots:**
  - Do not adhere artwork around all edges
  - Do not adhere artwork to the underside of the window
  - Do not use acid tapes, such as masking tape or sticky tape inside the frame
  - Do not use double-sided tape on your artwork.

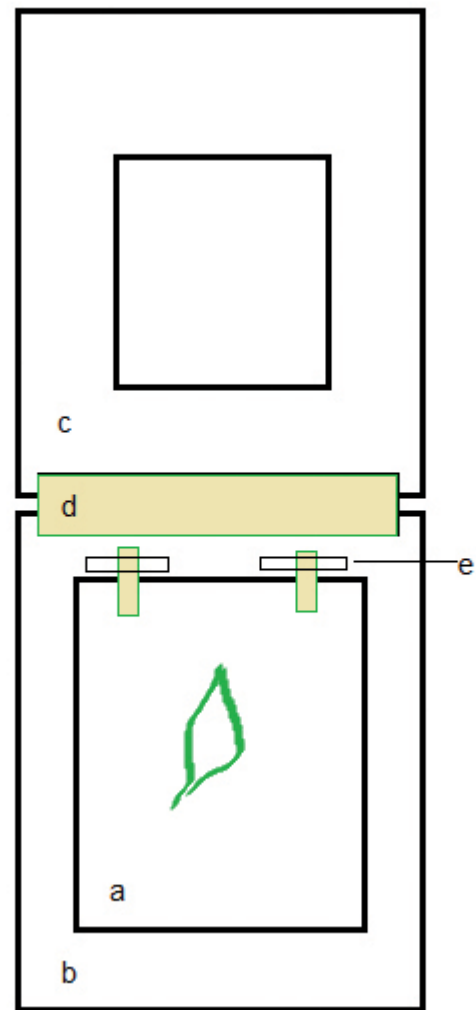
### Hanging hardware

- 'D' hangers are more flexible, as they can be used with hanging systems, such as the chains and hooks used for Florescence.
- The 'D' hangers can also have framer's wire attached so they can be hung from hanging points installed directly on the wall.

The first article introduced the concept of adopting a standard size and style for your framing so that mounted works could be loaded and unloaded easily for exhibition. The mounted works, when unframed, are then protected for storage. In the long term this approach saves on framing and the unmounted works take up less space to store. The next issue will cover storage of your work.

In 2018 there will be a workshop with a conservator that will cover conservation, storage and framing in more detail. ■

Diagram 2: Mounted work showing T-hinges



a. Artwork      b. Backing      c. Window mat  
d. Linen tape      e. T-hinges

### Flowers in the Dust



## New release *Flowers in the Dust*

The Desert Uplands region is sandwiched between the brigalow belt to the east and the Mitchell grass downs to the west. Astride the Great Dividing Range and comprising four percent of Queensland's land surface, it is a region of eroded sandstone plateaus and extensive sand plains. Little known until recent land use controversies thrust it into the limelight, the Desert Uplands support an abundant diversity of flora.

'Flowers in the Dust' honours the region's botanical heritage through the exquisite watercolour paintings of Barcaldine artist Jenny Mace. Jenny's work vividly demonstrates that there is beauty and significance to be found in the flowers that grow in the Desert's dust.

Available now - Order forms available via the Barcaldine Regional Council website, [www.barcaldinerc.com.au](http://www.barcaldinerc.com.au)

ALPHA

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BARCALDINE

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# NOTICE BOARD

## Upcoming BASQ events

Mark your calendars now. All BASQ events listed are held in the seminar room (unless otherwise listed) at Brisbane Botanic Gardens Mt Coot-tha; Garden and Momentum Days start at 9.30am. For more details on any event, contact the Secretary, **Kay Sullivan**, on [kaysullivan41@hotmail.com](mailto:kaysullivan41@hotmail.com).

1 Oct: **Momentum Day**

7–8 Oct: **The fusion of art and science** workshop with Tanya Hoolihan \*

16 Oct: **Garden Day** (shelter shed – 32 on Gardens Map, Native Plants for Brisbane Gardens)

5 Nov: **Momentum Day**

16–20 Nov: **Florescence** (Opening on 16 Nov; open to public Fri 17–1pm Mon 20 Nov (Auditorium))

3 Dec: **Momentum Day**

3, 10, 17, 24 Feb: **Introduction to botanic drawing 1** with Margaret Hastie

11 Feb: **Momentum Day**

18, 25 Feb: **Intermediate botanic painting** with Margaret Hastie

26 Feb: **Garden Day**

3, 10, 17, 24 Mar: **Introduction to botanic drawing 2** with Margaret Hastie

4 Mar: **AGM and general meeting**

11 Mar: **Momentum Day**

18 Mar: **Composition for botanical artists** with Eva Richards

28 Mar: **Garden Day**

28 April; 12, 19, 26 May: **Introduction to botanic painting 1** with Margaret Hastie

2, 9, 23, 30 Jun: **Introduction to botanic painting 2** with Margaret Hastie

## New members

Since the last newsletter we have welcomed the following new members to our Society: **Lauren Tarrant, Carolyn Webb** and **Rayna Kellam**. A warm welcome to you all.

## Committee member needed

Can you help? Our Society desperately needs an Assistant Treasurer. All training will be provided. Please contact **Kay Sullivan** on [kaysullivan41@hotmail.com](mailto:kaysullivan41@hotmail.com) if you can help.

## Rare plants group

If you would like to help create this new group, please contact **Zahra Maarten** at [zmsbotanicals@bigpond.com](mailto:zmsbotanicals@bigpond.com).

## BASQ Facebook page

Help us populate our Facebook album – if you have any high-quality pictures (jpg format), please send them through to **Anne Hayes** via [facebook.com/botanicalartqld](https://www.facebook.com/botanicalartqld). If you'd like to learn about creating your own videos to put online, check out this great instructional website: [hellobrio.com/learn/video-setup](http://hellobrio.com/learn/video-setup).

## BASQ nametags

In the spirit of efficiency and saving time, the Society will be issuing an electronic template for all new members in future.



## THECA Art Show

The Hut Environmental and Community Association Inc (THECA) will host its inaugural Art Show on 21–22 October 2017, with a theme focusing on Australian native flora and fauna. Artists are invited to participate

**The Collections Project: 31 August – 3 November 2017** at The Studio, Flinders University, Bedford Park, SA – See the results of this collaboration between artists and the Museum's collections and staff to create new work.



**Ecstasy: Baroque and Beyond: 15 September 2017 – 25 February 2018** at UQ Art Museum, St Lucia – Focusing on the transcendence of normal consciousness, this exhibition explores how Baroque style continues to inform contemporary art (curated by Dr Andrea Bubenik, who is opening *Florescence 2017*).

and, using their favorite media (watercolour, acrylic, oil, pastel, mixed media, drawing), create artwork that illustrates the enormous diversity of animals, plants and natural environments that surround our communities. See [theca.asn.au](http://theca.asn.au) for more details. Entries close 30 September.

## Florescence: collection and delivery of art and merchandise

Artworks and merchandise are to be delivered to the Mt Coot-tha Auditorium between 9am and 11am on set up day, Thursday 16 November. Unsold artworks and merchandise to be collected between 2pm and 4pm on Monday 20 November. Artists are responsible for their own packing: please unpack your work and take your packing home. Sold works will be packed by BASQ volunteers. Bring your packing to repack your unsold works.

## Sherwood Arboretum Tree Trail

The Friends of Sherwood Arboretum are developing a Tree Trail that will appear on the arboretum website and as an app. As well as written information and photographs, the Friends would like to feature botanical paintings of the trees and BASQ has been invited to produce these. A list of the trees included

in the walk is available to interested members. If you are interested, please contact **Eva Richards** at [evarichards@outlook.com.au](mailto:evarichards@outlook.com.au) or **Dorothy Muller** at [rd.muller@bigpond.com](mailto:rd.muller@bigpond.com).

## Member exhibitions

Congratulations to **Tamzin Barber** for her recent selection for the *2017 Art meets science* exhibition held at the DSITI Ecosciences Precinct, Dutton Park, from 11 August – 8 September.



## Botanical art workshops

Fay Boyd will be running a series of workshops in Grafton over five days, 15–19 April 2018. See: [fayboydsfineartschool.com](http://fayboydsfineartschool.com) for details. Leonie Norton and **Margaret Hastie** are featured tutors. And if you want to venture further afield, why not enrol in some workshops in Greece? See [lagouraxi.com/lgr2\\_wp/courses/](http://lagouraxi.com/lgr2_wp/courses/) for full information about holidays in Spring 2018.

## Upcoming events

**Springtime on the Mountain: Open Gardens Trail** 22–24 September 2017, Tamborine Mountain: [tmbotanicgardens.org.au/springtime](http://tmbotanicgardens.org.au/springtime) ■