



# Botanical Art

## • QUEENSLAND •

Newsletter of the Botanical Artists' Society of Queensland Inc.

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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 **10 March 2018** for the Autumn edition.

## Floressence 2017

**With something for everyone – high-quality works, excellent catering, inspiring pop-up workshops and magnificent merchandise – another successful annual exhibition of botanical art was held at the Brisbane Botanic Gardens Mt Coot-tha in November.**

**O**pened by Dr Andrea Bubenik from The University of Queensland's School of Communication and Arts, the exhibition featured 144 works of art by 38 artists plus several student works, all depicting a broad range of plant life. *See page 4 for full story.*

Pictured above: **Anne Hayes** with her watercolour painting *Banksia serrata* – Seedpod.



## FROM THE PRESIDENT

Congratulations to all – Floressence 2017 was very successful. Successful in a number of ways: first, volunteer numbers best ever – thank you everyone for offering your valuable time and knowledge to support fellow artists and visitors; second, quality conversations throughout the exhibition increased the knowledge of members and those visiting; and third, sales were solid so a few pennies returned into members' pockets and a little into the Society's account.

At right are two images depicting knowledge sharing, which is increasing engagement across all generations.

Frequently I heard the comment, the standard of work is becoming higher with each year. I wish to quote Leonardo da Vinci: *How one ought first to learn diligence rather than rapid execution. If as an artist you wish to be, study well and profitable, accustom yourself when you are drawing to work slowly, and to determine between the various lights, which process the highest degree and measures of brightness and similarly to the shadows; and so with the contours to observe which way they are tending; and as to the lines which part of each is curved in one way or another and consequently thick and fine. And when you have trained your hand and judgement with this degree of care, your work will improve thus.*

During conversations with experienced artists, I hear words such as *know your subject well; pull it apart both in colour and in form; become one with the plant; take time using the hand lenses to examine and enjoy the details of form and patterns, and hence the essences of the species will become know to you.* One well-executed art piece is valued over many poor quality pieces.

Enjoy and study well as you plan your next botanical art piece. Must away and paint. ■

by Dr Nita C Lester



Above: demonstration by Margaret Hastie; below: Helen Noad conducting exhibition tour with Kay Sullivan's pop-up workshop at front



## BANKS AND SOLANDER PROJECT – current developments –

**Working title for the proposed exhibition:**  
**Artistic Endeavours: Tracing the botanical legacy of Banks and Solander in Queensland**

The Banks and Solander Committee met recently to review project progress, and to review the first preferences submitted: 32 artists have made selections, and 72 selections have been offered, hence work has begun.

If you wish to be part of the proposed exhibition, please send your preferences or queries to the supplied Banks and Solander email address. It would be excellent to include every member.

Rebekah Butler, Executive Director and Debra Beattie, General Manager from Museum and Gallery Services Queensland visited Floressence 2017 to discuss the Banks and Solander exhibition and the proposed tour of the project. Rebekah and Debra congratulated the Society on such a successful Floressence, and were impressed with its extension – including the exhibition tours, pop-up workshops and artist demonstrations.

Museum and Gallery Services Queensland has identified our Banks and Solander exhibition as a project for development during 2018 and will assist the committee with grant funding applications and securing the opening venue for the exhibition. ■

### BASQ Officers 2017

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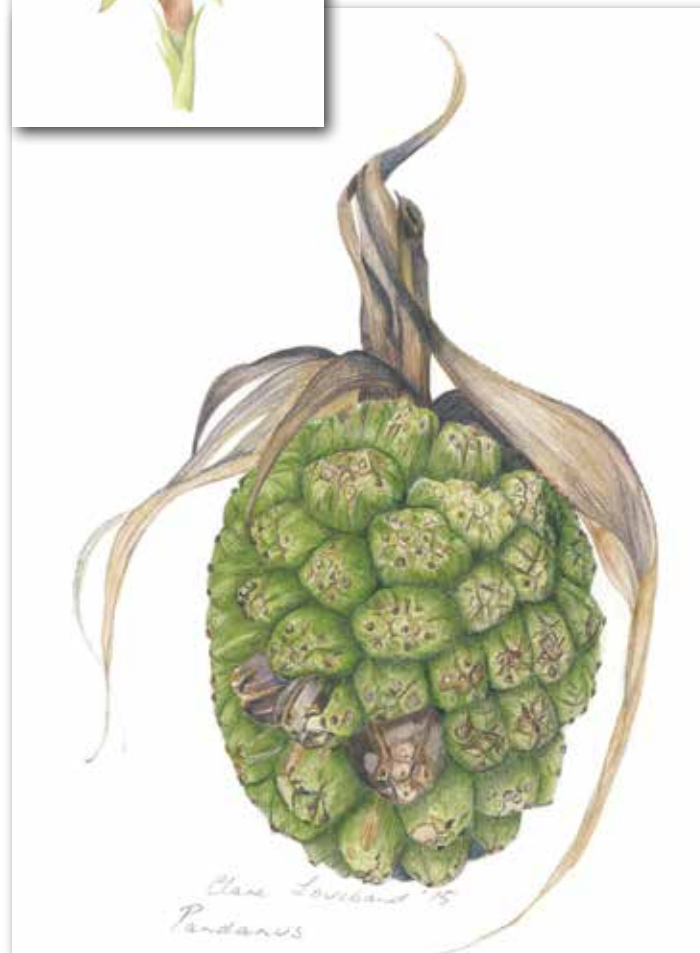
Clare Loveband



Above: *Strelitzia reginae*  
(Bird of Paradise)



Left: *Doryanthes excelsa* (Gynea lily)



Below: Pandanus

## Artist Profile – Clare Loveband

My early days of schooling were set among the birds and the gum trees at Lilli Pilli, near the Port Hacking River in Sydney. I remember feeling fortunate to be educated at a place where art and drawing were encouraged. However, at the local high school, science and mathematics were the focus of education, not art! Our poor art teacher had great difficulty controlling the class. Maybe it had something to do with the fact that the art smock she wore looked like she had come from working at Darrell Lea confectioners!

In Sydney, I loved escaping at the weekends to the Pittwater, the Blue Mountains, and the Royal National Park with the Sydney Bushwalking Club. This close connection with nature continued when I moved to Glen Innes in Northern New South Wales and lived on a rural property. The setting inspired me to attend the Glen Innes TAFE, where I completed a Fine Arts Certificate with Tanya Robertson-Cunningham and Rod Taylor (Art History). I am still grateful to those art teachers. Sometimes, when I'm painting, I can hear Tanya saying, "you only get out of the work what you put in" or "sometimes, a piece has to go back before it goes forward". In fact, two of my recent works saw me starting over again and changing from pencil to watercolour.

My life in the country ended when the family moved to Brisbane for education and later to the Redlands. In 2006, the Botanical Artists' Society of Queensland (BASQ) had an exhibition at the Redlands Museum, Cleveland: *A brush with history – a historical perspective*. The emotions evoked within me upon seeing this exhibition inspired me to attend drawing and painting classes with Margaret Hastie.

Being a member of BASQ has been a source of encouragement and friendship. It has also provided access to the wonderful workshops that the Society provides, like those run by **Claudia Bond, Dorothy Sampayo, Barbara Duckworth** and recently by **Tanya Hoolihan** in preparation for the Banks and Solander Exhibition. In the last few years I have been greatly guided by **Gillian Rankin**, a former illustrator at the Brisbane Botanic Gardens. These workshops not only provided guidance but also spaces where wonderful friendships have been made.

Currently I am working towards an exhibition next August and September at the Redlands Museum. As well as retrospective work, there will be paintings of the ten different species of mangroves. The mangrove paintings have been inspired by my walks around Eprapah, an environmental reserve containing riparian, estuarine and rainforest ecosystems. Bordering the Moreton Bay wetlands, Eprapah is a Ramsar site, that is, a wetland of international environmental significance as designated by UNESCO. ■

"You only get out of the work what you put in."



# FLORESSENCE ON SHOW

## Raffle winners:

- Cecily Gamble:** Minjung Oh's featured work framed by Chapman and Bailey Framers
- May Lloyd:** brooch gifted by Michelle Rackley
- Kati Hidegh:** card pack by donating members
- Maureen Cahill:** card pack donated by Dr Nita C Lester



Above: Margaret Hastie alongside her painting; below: Nita C Lester welcoming everyone to the exhibition on opening night.



\* BASQ engaged Sonia Uranishi for media and she invigorated the webpage, boosted our Facebook page, created listings, and talked to news media – including arranging an interview with BASQ President Nita C Lester by Jessica Hinchcliffe, ABC radio, which aired on the Saturday morning. Also, a story on Tanya Hoolihan will feature in Australian Geographic very soon. Anne Hayes has also been posting and managing the Facebook page which is a promising avenue of communication to continue to build.

Laurel Proctor and Lynda Young.



# Floressence 2017

**"In medieval times, people read about plants instead of observing them," said Dr Andrea Bubenik, senior lecturer in Renaissance and Baroque art at UQ and special guest speaker who officially opened Floressence 2017.**

And myths went on for centuries – such as the 'fact' that mandrake roots squealed! It wasn't until the revival of naturalism that things began to change: we have a lot to thank Fuchs, da Vinci and Linnaeus for."

Dr Bubenik believes the role of the botanical artist has remained essential over time, and that the boundaries between botanical art and illustration are often blurry. She also feels that a lot of research could still be done in the field of botanica.

"I think one of the best things to come out of Cook's voyage was the portfolio of thousands of drawings of plants and animals created by Banks and Solander, and the project that BASQ is undertaking could not be more significant in this time of environmental awareness. It is evocative indeed."

BASQ president Dr Nita C Lester could not agree more.

"Science and art are closely linked and I am always fascinated by what botanical artists come up with," she said. "If you put the same species in front of a dozen artists, every single one would execute it in a different way – depending on their botanical knowledge, their skill, the media used, or just what took their fancy at the time.

"It's all part of the passion and the art."

And this was certainly on display at Floressence 2017. With different species and specimens placed to best complement each other, this year's show had a different layout than in previous years. Featured artist **Minjung Oh's** work *Vigna unguiculata* greeted visitors near the entrance, the exhibition of artwork was concentrated in the middle, and the merchandise was located at the back.

As well as member pieces on show, Floressence included works by **Lesley Kendall**, Artist-in-Residence at Brisbane Botanic Gardens, and **Will Smith**, botanical illustrator and designer at the Queensland Herbarium.

Despite the rain, the show attracted around 550 visitors, most of whom had heard about it by word of mouth or by reading signs, brochures or news items in the media\*. Many enjoyed participating in exhibition tours, watching the artist demonstrations and trying out some of the materials supplied by sponsor Lindsay MacMahon, representing **Jasco's, Eckersley's and Winsor & Newton**, in the pop-up workshops. Our younger guests made the most of the Children's Corner and everyone loved the morning and afternoon teas so well catered by **Eva Richards** and her team. The merchandise was very popular, with many artists selling all their stock.

Altogether, a most successful event.

Special thanks must go to **Kath Kerswell**, Exhibition Coordinator; **Nita Lester** for coordinating the exhibition design; **Susan Hadenham, Cassandra Hodgins** and **Beryl Robertson** for hanging the show; **Elizabeth McCartney** for registration; the proofing team; **Joan Docwra** who coordinated the volunteers; **Jenny Thompson** for her prompt attention to anything financial; **Linda Phaneham** for managing the merchandise; **Tanya Scharaschkin** and **Narelle Sutton** for organising the flowers; **Sonya Uranishi** for her publicity work; **Dorothy Muller** for just everything; the artists who demonstrated their work: **Margaret Hastie, Kylie Stapleton, Jay Wallis, Tanya Scharaschkin, Lindsay Watts, Dorothee Sampayo, Kay Sullivan, Nita Lester** and **Dale Farnell**; and the 51 members and their families who assisted, whether participating in the exhibition or not. Just shows what a community-minded group we are...

Roll on Floressence 2018: get those paintings started now! ■



Clockwise from top left: Lindsay Watts, the Children's Corner, Naomi Florence, Beryl Robertson and Cassandra Hodgins setting up the exhibition, Maurine Wrigley and Dorothy Muller helping at the merchandise table, and Andrea Bubenik with Samantha Littley.



## GENERAL REVIEWS

**BOOK: *Explorers' Botanical Notebook: in the footsteps of Theophrastus, Marco Polo, Linnaeus, Flinders, Darwin, Speke and Hooker*; written by Florence Thinard, 2016 (Firefly Books)**



The recently published *Explorers' Botanical Notebook* is both very interesting in itself and very relevant at this time to BASQ members, given the strong connection BASQ has with the Herbarium at Mt Coot-tha, the workshop Nita is giving on preserving specimens, and the preparations for the Banks and Solander exhibition.

As a botanical artist I was aware that specimens are kept in herbariums but was, I must confess, rather ignorant about how specimens got there, how they are preserved, and all the work of herbariums regarding plant identification. This book, a joint project between the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew and the Institut de Botanique de Montpellier, has gone a long way to dispelling that ignorance, and provided a wealth of information about the origin of various familiar and some more unfamiliar plants, and how they come to be in our gardens and parks, veggie gardens and fields.

The short and well-illustrated introduction is a good read in itself providing, as it does, useful nuggets of information. For example, although I had often read of 'Wardian cases' I had never quite known exactly what they were like – now I do!

Some 62 explorers are included in the book, from Queen Hatsheput (1479–58 BC) to Francis Halle (1938–), with Banks and Solander among them. The large page size – 350mm x 220 mm – is beautifully used to provide a two-page colour spread for each explorer. The left-hand page details their life and travels and the significant plants they discovered, often including a map, an image of the person and sometimes a particularly relevant plant. The right-hand page is a full-page image of a herbarium sheet of a plant associated with the explorer, although the specimens shown are not necessarily ones they themselves collected – obviously not possible in all cases, especially the older ones.

Familiar plants can be seen, for example, *Eucalyptus globulus* (p.83) where the herbarium sheet shown is from the Royal Botanic Gardens Sydney, although the particular specimen dates back to 1792 and it had travelled around the world before it got back to Australia, or (p.104) one of the *Caladenia* species native to Australia, in this case *Caladenia flava* from Western Australia, as collected by that remarkable woman Georgiana Molloy in 1839, and many, many more.

This is definitely a book for browsing through and finding out about both familiar and unfamiliar plants. All human and animal life on our planet depends on plants and this book reveals the ways in which, throughout the ages, humans' desire to know and understand plants has connected cultures worldwide, as indeed it still does today. ■

by Zahra Maarten, Assistant Workshops Coordinator

by Cassandra Hodgins

**WORKSHOP:**  
*The fusion of art and science: black and white scientific illustration with Tanya Hoolihan*

The chosen subject for this two-day workshop was grevilleas. We started with some basic plant identification; then, under Tanya's skilled and practised hand (see right), we were guided through how to dissect a flower to explore the tiny reproductive organs.



After the dissection, we used a microscope to explore the fascinating world of the grevillea flower, seeing the in-depth workings and parts not otherwise seen by the naked eye.



Tanya then discussed what elements make up a good composition for a scientific illustration plate: drawing the habit, then depicting other elements that accurately identify the species, with less importance on being aesthetically pleasing.

Generally, the purpose of these illustration plates would be for reproduction in a scientific journal. Because these plates would be reduced when printed in a journal, scaling of the tiny elements is important, as well as emphasis on good penline work and stippling. Tanya discussed scale bars and how to do a key for the illustration.

Armed with all this new knowledge, we cut up our grevillea flower, drew up all its bits, assembled our composition, then completed our final drawing on drafting film in black ink.

This was a wonderful and insightful workshop presented by a generous and patient teacher. Thank you, Tanya. ■



## BEYOND BRISBANE

Just because you don't live in Brisbane doesn't mean you can't enjoy meeting up with like-minded people who enjoy botanical art. Lots\* of regional groups exist in Queensland:

### Mackay Botanical Art Interest Group

– meets at the Mackay Regional Botanic Gardens twice a month. The group has just hung its annual exhibition *Botanica 2017* in the Lagoons Cafe at Mackay Regional Botanic Gardens. Themed *Useful Plants*, which covers all plants in some way, the group also printed the research done on each plant depicted (see photo below). Contact Madge Barnett on [madge.barnett@bigpond.com](mailto:madge.barnett@bigpond.com) for details.

### Tamborine Mountain Botanical Art Group

– allied to Tamborine Mountain Creative Arts Inc., this group meets for three-hour sessions twice a month. Contact Cassandra Hodgins on [quiescence@bigpond.com](mailto:quiescence@bigpond.com) or Helen Lynch on [gerry\\_helen@bigpond.com](mailto:gerry_helen@bigpond.com).

### Noosa Botanical Art Group

– meets at Wallace House, Noosaville on Monday afternoons from 1pm–4pm. Contact Pauline Putland on (07) 5449 9223.

### Tablelands to Downs Group

– meets at different places/homes each time, and sometimes at Stanthorpe Art Gallery, from 10am–3pm on the fourth Thursday of the month. Contact Nola Sindel on [ashnol@skymesh.com.au](mailto:ashnol@skymesh.com.au) for details.

### The Artists – Botanic Garden Tanawha

– meet at Maroochy Bushland Botanic Gardens, Tanawha; workshops available. Contact Nita Lester on [nita.c.lester@gmail.com](mailto:nita.c.lester@gmail.com) for details.

### Sunshine Coast Art Group

– offers workshops. Contact Nita Lester on [nita.c.lester@gmail.com](mailto:nita.c.lester@gmail.com) for details. ■



\* If you know of any other regional groups, please let us know and we will feature details in the next newsletter.

## BOTANICAL EYE: MINT

*Callicarpa pedunculata*: opposite leaves covered in glands or hairs containing aromatic oils, no stipules



### LAMIACEAE Plants of the Mint family

The Lamiaceae are mostly herbs or shrubs comprising about 200 genera and 3200 species, commonly with aromatic, herbage, quadrangular stems, and verticillate inflorescences. The leaves are opposite or whorled, and are simple or occasionally pinnately compound; stipules are absent. The flowers are bisexual and zygomorphic.

If you pick a plant with a distinctly **square stalk** and simple, **opposite leaves**, then it is very likely a member of the Mint family. Be sure to smell it too, since many species of the family are loaded with aromatic volatile oils.

For the beginning botanist, that is all you really need to remember: 'square stalks with opposite leaves, and usually aromatic'. Note that there are a handful of other plants with square stems and opposite leaves, which may be confused with the Mints. Those plants are found in the Loosestrife, Verbena and Stinging Nettle families, but **none of them smell minty**.

As you become proficient at identifying members of the Mint family by their square stalks, opposite leaves, and spicy aroma, you should also familiarise yourself with the flowers. They have five sepals, all fused together so that only the tips are separate. The five petals are also fused together, but asymmetrical or 'irregular' the flowers are, compared to the more symmetrical or 'regular' Mustard flowers. Some Mint flowers are much more irregular than others, but if you study them closely you will see that they typically have two petal lobes up and three petal lobes down. Inside the flower there are four stamens, with one pair longer than the other. As you learn these patterns of the Mint family you will be able to recognise and use them anywhere in the world. ■



*Ajuga*, showing quadrangular stem

by Dr Nita C Lester, BASQ President



# 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, contact **Kay Sullivan**, on [kaysullivan41@hotmail.com](mailto:kaysullivan41@hotmail.com).

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: **Gardens 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: **Planning a composition** with Eva Richards

28 Mar: **Gardens Day**

8 Apr: **Momentum Day**

14 Apr: **Structure and Biology of plants** with Tanya Scharaschkin

23 Apr: **Gardens Day**

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

13 May: **Momentum Day**

23 May: **Gardens Day**

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

3, 24 Jun: **Specimen collection, preparation and botanical art** with Nita C Lester

10 Jun: **Momentum Day**

25 Jun: **Gardens Day**

1 Jul: **General meeting**

6, 7, 8 Jul: **Master class: Textured pods** with Mali Moir

## New members

Since the last newsletter we have welcomed the following new members to our Society: **Tace Clifford, Viviana Metzroth, Sherilyn Burrows, Meghan Parker-Web, Donna Gribbin, Yulia Kornienko, Harry Ting, Lucie Sorensen, Danielle Lindqvist, Trish Goss, Fleur Lesslie, Neville Parmenter, Mary Anne McIntyre, Roger Guo, Bridget Van Arkadie, Carla Caneris, Alison King, Elle Appelgren, Catherine Patterson, Alison Appelgren, Janice Wilson, Wendy Ainsworth, Avril Henzell and Colleen Coyne.** A warm welcome to you all.

## A/Treasurer 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.

## BASQ Facebook page

Please help us populate our Facebook album – send your high-quality pictures (jpg format) to **Anne Hayes** via [facebook.com/botanicalartqld](https://www.facebook.com/botanicalartqld). If you'd like to create your own videos to put online, see: [hellobrio.com/learn/video-setup](https://www.hellobrio.com/learn/video-setup).

## 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.

## Seen on the web

**Urban botanics by Emma Sibley**  
Learn how to care for succulents, cacti, flowering

**Vera Scarth-Johnson: Wild Flower: 20 October 2017 – 25 February 2018** at Cairns Art Gallery – *This exhibition brings together 50 of Scarth-Johnson's finest botanical paintings of flowering plants from the Endeavour River (Waalumbaal Birri) area alongside a number of her rarely seen floral arrangement paintings, private sketchbooks, early drawings, personal photographs and fascinating correspondence records with leading botanists and herbariums across the globe.*



and foliage plants with this unique gardening guide that is made to fit into busy lives. See: [quartoknows.com/books/9781781316535/Urban-Botanics.html](http://quartoknows.com/books/9781781316535/Urban-Botanics.html).

## Edith Rewa

Textile designer, Illustrator and fossicker, stirred by all things botanical and Australian. See: [edithrewa.com](http://edithrewa.com).

## Promote your art

Sign up for a newsletter all about art: [www.for-art-lovers-only.com/promote-your-art-here.html](http://www.for-art-lovers-only.com/promote-your-art-here.html).

## Call for Submissions: Tighrope Exhibition

Pine Rivers Art Gallery is seeking artists to submit applications for a 2018 group exhibition, *Tighrope*.

Artists are invited to respond to the following text:

*Like walking on a tighrope, the environmental story can swing from great wins to enormous challenges, trying to balance the selfish with the sustainable. With oceans warming, icecaps melting, carbon rising, genetically modified crops, deforestation and increasing population is there any good news for the environment? There is: we have solar power, wind farms, recycling, biodegradable plastics and species brought back from extinction. What do artists do with all of this information? ...often they make something beautiful.*

*Tighrope* will be exhibited at the Pine Rivers Art Gallery from 5 May 2018 until 4 August 2018. Expressions of interest close at 11.59pm, 4 February 2018.

## Margaret Flockton award invitation

The 2018 Margaret Flockton Award for Excellence in Scientific Botanical Illustration will be held from Saturday 21 April – Sunday 6 May 2018 at the Royal Botanic Garden Sydney.

If you wish to enter, please submit your work digitally between Monday 29 January and Monday 12 February 2018. All original illustrations must be scanned or photographed at high resolution and then submitted via approved large-file transfer sites. No original artworks will require sending or receiving.

Fully digitally rendered, printable illustrations (excepting animated or 3D works) are now eligible for entry. No artworks will be offered for sale (direct email or website details will be made available, with the consent of the artist).

2017 saw the very first digital artworks displayed in the exhibition, received with great curiosity, enthusiasm and approval. However, the Margaret Flockton Award Committee is still as keen as ever to see the very best that traditional illustration techniques have to offer.

See: [www.rbgsyd.nsw.gov.au](http://www.rbgsyd.nsw.gov.au) for full details. ■