



# MOSMAN ART SOCIETY

Fostering the development, practice and love of art throughout the community

## Newsletter Issue 195 February 2025

### 🎉🎉 Mosman Art Society turns 30! 🎉🎉

You're invited. Bring on the balloons! Open the champagne! We're celebrating our 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary with a **Birth Party** on **Sunday 16 March** at Mosman Art Gallery's Grand Hall, 4pm to 6pm.

And (drum roll) we're marking the occasion with a **new logo** – contemporary, dynamic, stylish. An image to take the Society forward in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

It will be members only for the **Annual General Meeting** at 3pm in the Gallery's Melody Room (agenda and details to follow), but **plus ones** are welcome to the party afterwards.

**Party RSVP** <https://www.trybooking.com/CYSRA>

## How did it all begin?

Mosman has serious history when it comes to art. The late 19<sup>th</sup> century artists' camps at Balmoral and Sirius Cove nurtured such heroes of Australian art as Tom Roberts and Arthur Streeton.

English-born artist Julian Ashton established the first of these camps at Edwards Beach in the late 1880s. Young artists crossed the Harbour from comfortable homes in the Eastern Suburbs to paint *en plein air* – then thrillingly *avant garde* - and rough it as 'Bohemians in the Bush.' There was easy socialising (even billiards and a cook at Curlew Camp) but ground-breaking art as well.



Tom Roberts, *The Camp, Sirius Cove 1899* (Art Gallery of New South Wales)

Mindful of this background, in 1994 a group of mature art students at Mosman Evening College decided that it was time to continue the tradition of supporting local artists.

Bryan Besly, current member and former President, responded to an article in *The Mosman Daily* in 1994 inviting anyone interested in a Mosman Art Society to make contact. "I thought that one already existed," he says. He found himself at an informal gathering of pioneering enthusiasts that included Rosemary Christmas, Paul Delprat and Shirley Perrett.

Amid growing interest, a formative meeting was held at Mosman Town Hall on 21 March, 1995, where Paul agreed to be Patron, and the broad aims of the Society were set out. On 23 May 17 prospective members attended an inaugural meeting at the Shirley Perrett's home in Bradley's Head Road.

An objective of the Society, they agreed, would be "to foster the development, practice and love of art in the community." Everyone was welcome to join, whether professional artists, students, or simply interested in art. If members wished to submit work to an exhibition, they would be subject to selection.



Inaugural meeting, from left, clockwise: Bryan Besly, Carolyn Boatman, Noel Bennett, Julian Eather, Joan Murcell, Jill Brown, Barbara Heath, Lindsay Howarth, Rosemary Christmas

A committee was elected and Bryan found himself President, a post he held for ten years. Rosemary was a founding Committee Member. On June 24 Mosman Art Society Incorporated was officially registered by the Department of Consumer Affairs.

At its first annual general meeting in May 1996, the Society boasted 115 members and held its first exhibition in October 1996. Things were rolling.

Ten years later, founding member Shirley Perrett authored a book to celebrate a decade of workshops, demonstrations, exhibitions, excursions and camaraderie. A copy of *Mosman Art Society: The First Years*, is in Mosman Library.

### **Inaugural Members**

Kay Baker, Noel Bennett, Bryan Besly, Carolyn Boatman, Jill Brown, Victor Brown, Rosemary Christmas, Christine Crimmins, Paul Delprat, Samuel Dunlop, Madge Dwyer, Julian Eather, Lesley Gray, Betty Green, Barbara Heath, Lindsay Howarth, Derek Hughes, Ray Johnson, Janet Madden, Joan Montgomery, Joan Murcell, Vivien O'Rourke, Shirley Perrett, Madeline Rares, Tass Simmons, George Soutter, June Ward.

### **What we worked for**

One of the Society's original objectives was "to work towards the creation of a Mosman Art Gallery" that would host the Council's Mosman Art Prize, established in 1947, and house the winners.

Back in 1995 there was no gallery and no Headland Park artists' precinct, no Frenchy's café. Middle Head, George's Heights and Chowder Bay were still Ministry of Defence property.

The Society actively participated in the campaigns that would transform Mosman's role in today's art world. In 1996 Bryan remembers a phone call from Mosman Council's Manager for the Arts to announce the lease of the Uniting Church building on the corner of Myahgah Road. In December 1998 he and Paul Delprat represented the Society at the official opening of the Mosman Community and Cultural Centre by Governor-General Sir William Deane. Mosman had its art gallery.

The encouragement and support of Mosman Council for the Society is deeply appreciated and we maintain strong ties with the Gallery. As well as our biennial exhibition, the Society sponsors the Viewers' Choice Prize in the Mosman Art Prize and an award in the Mosman Youth Art Prize.

But the Society's dream of a working studio/function/exhibition space is still unfulfilled.

Despite joining the lobby for an 'art precinct' within Headland Park when the Defence Department relinquished the area to the Sydney Harbour Federation Trust, the cost of leasing and maintaining one of the buildings proved too much for a fledgling organisation.

Meanwhile Paul Delprat, great-grandson of Julian Ashton, opened an annexe of the legendary Art School in the precinct and has generously provided access to the Society for meetings and 9x5 exhibitions over the years.



### **A Message from our Patron**

We got together and here we are now.

Adventurous friends, men and women who simply draw and paint that which is around them, joined up on this beautiful peninsular in the many-lobed Sydney Harbour, as DH Lawrence described it, to celebrate their passion for art.

That was over twenty years ago. And they are still celebrating.

In a seemingly imperfect world the promise of a raw canvas and paint and brushes suggests special magic in an artist's mind. Then to work, for it is work, and as a result so many original images have left studios, garden sheds, caravans, boats and dining room tables to share the walls of galleries under the banner of our Mosman Art Society.

There is no elitism here. All are equal. There is a lot of love to share.

This truly democratic society has been blessed with inspired presidents and committees since Brian Besly first picked up the presidential baton. This will continue.

One cannot overestimate the importance of this shared place in the hearts of all, painters and art lovers alike, who have been part of its journey over the years.

It has been a privilege for me to have travelled with it. Long live the Mosman Art Society.

**Paul Delprat**

### **Honorary Life Members**

Bryan Besly, Gerald Christmas,  
Rosemary Christmas, Paul Delprat

### **Current members who joined 1995 - 1999**

Suzanne Alexander, John Eldershaw,  
Geraldine Lockyer, Elaine Romalis,  
Jill Swart, Sandra Schaeffer

## Bryan Besly OAM, éminence grise

He was there at the start and he's still a stalwart of the Society. Gerald Christmas, who succeeded him as President, described him as a driving force in establishing the Society and fostering the work of local artists with 'passion, perspicacity and perseverance.'

Bryan – or 'Young Bryan' as he likes to sign himself – began drawing and painting as a boy in Queensland. His father was a draughtsman and an amateur painter, so art came naturally.

As a schoolboy he attended Saturday morning art classes and later passed a secondary paper in practical drawing for his school leaving examination.

"I considered art as a career," says Bryan, "but my father encouraged me to do architecture or engineering. I chose the latter. Society can't manage without engineers, you know."

He never regretted that decision but neither did he give up art. After graduating from Queensland University in 1955 he took classes with Jon Molvig, the acclaimed Australian figurative expressionist and charismatic teacher. It was a long way from technical drawing but Bryan thrived.

"You're good," Molvig told him. "You should be an artist."



### Mosman Art Society Summer Exhibition

26 November - 31 December 2011

#### Mosman Art Gallery

onr Art Gallery Way & Myahgah Rd, Mosman  
Open daily, 10am-5pm (closed public holidays) Free Admission  
Tel. (02) 9978 4178 www.mosmanartgallery.org.au



Mosman  
COUNCIL

Image: Bryan Besly, Constance Farquarson (detail)

Bryan's portrait of Constance Farquarson on the poster for Mosman Art Society's exhibition at Mosman Art Gallery, 2011.

In 1966 Bryan and his family moved to Melbourne, where he studied tonal painting in oils one evening a week with Reshid Bey, an Archibald finalist and disciple of Max Meldrum.

Bryan came to Sydney in 1990 and, on retiring as a civil engineer in 1993, was free to indulge his other passion. "I went to Ashton's in the Rocks two days a week, compiled a portfolio and was given a Diploma of Fine Art," he says.

And he could travel – to France, Italy, the UK, Spain, Morocco, Nigeria, Korea, Japan, Texas and more. His work is in private collections in England, Italy and the United States – and lines the walls of his Neutral Bay apartment: portraits, landscapes, townscapes....

It's good to know the engineering profession values the artist in their midst. In 2006 CIVIL 55 (University of Queensland's School of Civil Engineering 1955 undergraduates) asked Bryan to paint portraits of the past six heads of the School for presentation to the institution.

So what has changed for artists over the last three decades? The impact of the internet, for a start.

"Artists are showing and selling via Instagram and online galleries," Bryan observes. Promoting local exhibitions is more challenging. "In the 1990s, when Mosman Art Society held an exhibition there'd be an article in *The Mosman Daily*, letterbox drops and an ad in the Art Gallery of New South Wales' *Look* magazine."

Why join an art society then? Bryan is upbeat. "It's about encouraging and supporting like-minded people to discuss their practice and to hang works alongside each other."

Amen to that.

## Annual General Meeting

Our AGM will be held before the Society's 30<sup>th</sup> Birthday Party at **3pm on Sunday 16 March**, in the **Melody Room at Mosman Art Gallery**.

This is your opportunity to have a say in what Mosman Art Society offers its members. More workshops? Demonstrations? Exhibitions?

Be involved and join the Committee. No particular skills are required, just a willingness to turn up to a meeting every six or eight weeks, have bright ideas and lend a hand.

You'll need someone to nominate you and a seconder, both Society members. Nominations should reach the Secretary before the AGM.

## Mosman Art Society Exhibition Dates 2025

- \* **The small work art show,**  
**Mosman Rowers, 3 - 20 June**
- \* **MAS at Creative Space, North Curl Curl,**  
**8 - 21 December**

## Christmas party



Paul and Catherine Tavuzzi, winners of the lucky door raffle hamper



Getting together in the café atmosphere

The Society's Christmas Party and Pop-Up Art Exchange on Sunday 1 December went with a swing as members and guests rocked up for a festive celebration. We were even the fortunate beneficiaries of sparkling decorations, courtesy of Mosman Council's earlier soirée.

So many people arrived with fabulous A5 works for the Pop-Up Art Show it was hard to keep up in pinning them on the display boards. And at the end of the evening every contributor went home with another's picture – an artistic lucky dip!

## Around Mosman

**2088 Artists of Mosman**, 15 February - 16 March, Mosman Art Gallery

**Art@TheRowers**, 1 – 21 March, Mosman Rowers Club

**The Mosman Art Walk**, 20 February – 11 March. Mosman High School's popular fundraiser in which works by professional artists are exhibited for sale in the windows of local shops and businesses.

## Social Media

Add your artwork and bio info to the Artists' Gallery on the MAS website [www.mosmanartsociety.org.au](http://www.mosmanartsociety.org.au)  
Visit us on Instagram @mosmanartsocietyinc.  
Contact [secretary@mosmanartsociety.org.au](mailto:secretary@mosmanartsociety.org.au) to come on board.

## Magritte tour



Members and friends enjoyed a private early morning tour of *Magritte* at the Art Gallery of New South Wales on 3 December. MAS President and Volunteer Guide Anne Woodham described the Belgian Surrealist as a 'thinker in paint,' whose work has influenced filmmaking, fiction, advertising and philosophy up to the present day.

## Frenchy's Second Tuesdays

Coffee, arty conversation, show and tell and maybe some sketching every second Tuesday of the month. 10am at Frenchy's Café, Headland Park, Mosman.

Look for the table with the pot plant. Upcoming dates: 11 March, 8 April.

## A Warm Welcome to Our New Members

Sarah Dunk, Mariko Gray, Connie Godwin, Karin Attewell, John Myeongcheol, Cheryl Shaw

## MAS COMMITTEE

**Patron:** Paul Delprat

**President:** Anne Woodham

**Vice-President:** Margaret Crane

**Secretary/Treasurer:** Lindie Treleaven

**Committee Members:**

Denise Gallagher

Linda Gold (casual vacancy)

Frances (Shar) Jones

Kate Rae

## Mosman Art Society

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