

# muswellbrook regional arts centre

Newsletter Vol 3, No 3, June 2007

## Drawn Together

The drawing lives of Nora Heysen, Judy Cassab  
& Margaret Woodward

23 June - 5 August



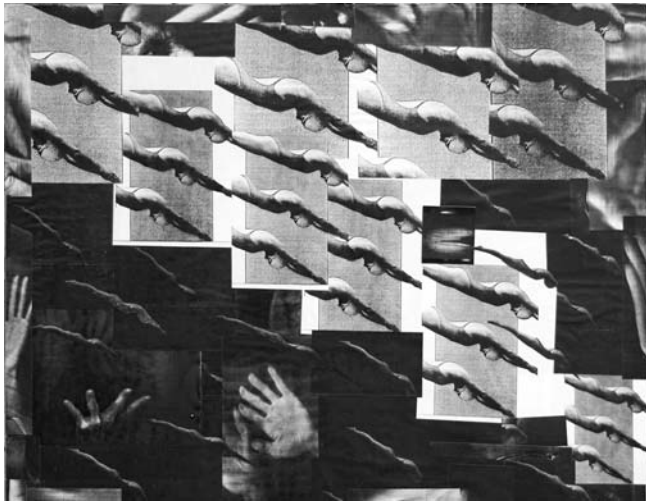
Left to right: *Self Portrait* Nora Heysen undated, private collection; *Judy Cassab* Margaret Woodward c1993, private collection; *Margaret Woodward* Judy Cassab 1994, private collection.

This exhibition is an exploration of the perceptions, passions, insights and range of human emotions that only great artists are able to elicit so easily from each of us. Heysen was the first woman war artist in World War II and the first to win the Archibald Prize, in 1938. Cassab won the Archibald Prize twice. Woodward has won the Wynne Prize and Portia Geach Portrait Prize twice. All three artists have made a contribution to the dialogue that is Australian art.

Heysen, who died on 31 December 2003, has been an Australian icon of the 'quiet achiever' in the arts. Cassab is a living treasure through her extraordinary engagement with a diversity of Australian cultural life and creative explorations of abstraction and portrait painting. Margaret Woodward has made contributions to art in Australia through her extraordinary skill, distillation of contemporary experience and explorations that result in a synthesis of conscious and subconscious aspects of visual expression.

Having drawn together for many years Heysen, Cassab and Woodward formed close bonds. They are all strong women in their own particular ways, and each has an unerring passion for art, a drive to excel, and a sense of creative exploration that ensures the most exciting discoveries for the viewer – as evident in the nuances of a momentary line. This exhibition explores the relationship between these three women, follows their 'drawing life lines' and the nature of drawing within their art. The exhibition also shares the dialogue concerning drawing now – as a method of making artwork, as a way of seeing, as an art form in its own right and in terms of its role in our consciousness. *(continued next page)*





Roger Skinner *Diving Into Silence* 1990 photocopied collage, featured in *Doubling Up* from the Max Watters Collection. (© courtesy of the artist)

## Doubling Up

### Selected works on paper from the Max Watters Collection

This small suite of works on paper allows the viewer to compare and contrast a range of styles and mediums by a selection of artists who have a double representation of works in the Max Watters Collection.

Most of the selection is figurative. One theme choice of subject matter includes images inspired by myths and legends. The two Robin Wallace-Crabbe linocuts *Diver Lunges*, *Venus Rises Below Waterfalls* and *Resting Figure Observed by Mummies* contain elements of classical imagery and Margaret Early's pair of intricately detailed gouache paintings, *Ali Baba Series No 10* and *Ali Baba Series No 12*, have strong links with the traditional art of Persian miniature painting and the famous stories of *The Thousand Nights and One*. Elisabeth Parkinson's decorative linear drawings *Couple with the Mountains* and *The Three Sisters* reflect the popular Indian inspired culture and fashion of the 1960's.

Another theme, which aims at showing movement, includes the mixed media drawing, *Figures Moving Left to Right (1)* and the oil study, *Figures Moving Left to Right (2)*, by Euan Macleod. Both capture an impression of marching soldiers in direct, expressionistic brushstrokes. The collage pieces *Voice of ...* and *Diving into Silence* by Roger Skinner both achieve their sense of movement through the repetition of a constant shape in a progressive sequence. Images have been taken directly from the television or made through the duplication of images on a photocopier. Conversely, the two studies of *Footballers* and *Cricketers* by Michael Allen Shaw are quite static with the images being pared back to simple flat design shapes.

Marcus Adams, the only non-figurative artist in this selection, has used a combination of flat floating rectilinear shapes and a grid pattern of intersecting lines in *Bright New Day* and *Harbour Designs* to define spatial relationships within the picture plane.

*Doubling Up* will be officially opened along with *Drawn Together* at 6pm on Friday 22 June. The exhibition will be on display until 5 August.

## Gaba Gali, from the mountains to the water

Local Muswellbrook artist, George Anderson, had his latest public art work unveiled in May. The 14 metre long mural called 'Gaba Gali, from the mountains to the water' welcomes visitors to the Aboriginal Health Unit at Wallsend Hospital. Commissioned by Hunter New England Health through the John Hunter Hospital Arts for Health Programme and assisted by the Muswellbrook Regional Arts Centre's Artist Support Programme, the mural took twelve months to complete. George worked on the eight panels in his Muswellbrook studio and it wasn't until the launch ceremony at Wallsend that he saw the mural in its entirety. "I'm glad that it has been so appreciated" said George, "The mural has occupied all my time over the past year". Terry Clout, CEO of Hunter New England Health, said that the mural was an important part of their strategy for ensuring that health services are culturally appropriate for Aboriginal clients.



Ms Sonia Hornery MP, Member for Wallsend with George Anderson pictured in front of his Wallsend mural *Gaba Gali, from the mountains to the sea*

**39<sup>th</sup> Muswellbrook  
OPEN ART PRIZE  
and  
Muswellbrook  
Open Ceramic Prize**

**Sponsored by  
Bengalla Mining Company**



**Entry Forms Available from 18 June at  
muswellbrook.nsw.gov.au  
telephone 02-6549 3880  
fax 02 - 6549 3886  
PO Box 122, Muswellbrook NSW 2333  
Entries Close 5pm, 30 July 2007**

**Section A**

**sponsored by Bengalla Mining Company**

\$10,000 – Acquisitive - Open Prize  
\$2,500 – Non acquisitive – 2nd Prize  
\$1,000 – Non acquisitive – Local Award  
For a two dimensional painting of any subject in any medium

**Section B**

**sponsored by Muswellbrook Shire Council**

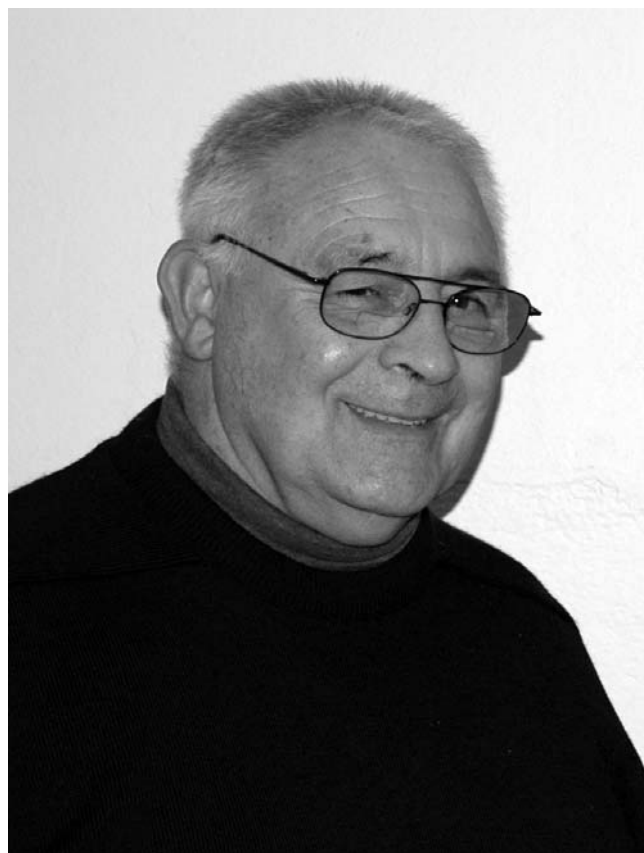
\$2,500 – Acquisitive – Open Prize  
For a work on paper of any subject, in any medium  
(excluding photography)

**Section C**

**sponsored by Bengalla Mining Company**

\$1,500 - Acquisitive – Open Prize  
For a ceramic work

## Les Elvin - featured Koori Artist for NAIDOC Week



Les Elvin

Les Elvin is a descendent of the Wanaruah people of the Upper Hunter and an art teacher and practitioner. Les is well known for his work at St. Helliers Correctional Centre and with the Hunter Institute of TAFE as well as Upper Hunter Community Services Inc. working with disadvantaged young people in the creation of numerous murals around Muswellbrook.

While Les now lives in Cessnock he grew up on the banks of the Karuah River behind Port Stephens where his grandfather taught him the ways of bush tucker. Les' paintings now feature the 'food chain of the bush tucker' as he calls it. Paintings of echidna, platypus, turtle, stingray, crab and fish abound but also the kangaroo and that other all important ingredient in bush tucker - fire.

Les is also an accomplished portraitist, capturing the inner being of his sitters as well as their external appearance. Fire is often present in Les' abstract works but whether figurative or abstract in style, Les' work has a strong basis in the spiritual world of Wanaruah traditions. His studies in the fine arts have been built upon his continued learning about his Wanaruah heritage as well as the traditions of other Aboriginal nations from across the continent.

In 2005 Les was commissioned to illustrate the book 'Bush Tucker in Kidney Failure and Diabetes' for the Renal Resource Centre and the beautiful paintings Les produced caused quite a stir at the Arts Centre when they were exhibited in last years NAIDOC Week group show.

This year the NAIDOC Week Exhibition will officially run from the 3rd July to 5th August 2007.

**SINGLETON ART PRIZE 2007** - A painting and drawing show presented by Rotary Club of Singleton on Hunter  
Singleton Civic Centre, Queen Street, Singleton  
Exhibition dates: 7 - 11 July Judge: John Bradley Opening night and presentation of prizes: Friday 6 July  
Entries close: 22 June  
11 sections across traditional, watercolour, pencil and pen, flowers, still life, miniature, local and three youth awards  
For entry form and details call: 02-6577 5539

## Artist Profile - Jean Davies

A lifetime interest in art was formulated in Jean by the influence of her parents from early childhood. Holidays were always spent camping with her parents. Her mother regularly gave her presents of paint boxes and her father, a keen and committed environmentalist and bush-walker, instilled a great love for the outdoors and the many aspects of the surrounding landscape. He would often say to her "Let's go out and try and find the Black Hand Cave in Ku-ring-gai Chase". These expeditions formed the basis of her interest in *en plein air* painting and it is not surprising to learn that her favourite painter is Claude Monet and her personal style is based on the principles of Impressionism. She has visited Monet's garden in Giverny and has travelled regularly interstate just to see his work and that of his contemporaries. Childhood trips to the Art Gallery of New South Wales were a regular family outing. Painting holidays with other artists is a regular part of Jean's life. A number of trips have been made to the Macquarie Marshes to paint and, on her last trip there, she shared an exhibition in the Shearers' Quarters of the woolshed at Willie's Station. Overseas holiday luggage always includes painting and drawing equipment and Jean returns with a swag of work done "on the spot from life".



Jean Davies *Nundle Gold* 1995 watercolour (© courtesy of the artist)

During her University studies, which eventually established her career as a pharmacist, it was the drawing aspects of Biology and Botany which held a particular interest for her. One of the most salient features of her artwork, including a personal and constant interest in miniature painting, stems directly from this in that she is primarily a landscape and still life painter who likes to draw first hand from her subject.

For the past twenty years Jean has worked prolifically in the mediums of watercolour and pastel. She was encouraged by Gillian Hook, a former local artist who was instrumental in revitalising interest in watercolour painting in the Upper Hunter. The eminent Australian watercolourist David Taylor has given, largely through Jean's organisational skills, watercolour workshops in the area for many years. Jean is always keen to try new techniques and mediums and has a great respect for the more traditional aspects of her craft. Ivorine, a favourite support for miniature painters, is a particularly difficult ground to paint on and Jean has used it to produce many works of great delicacy and competence. Rough or smooth watercolour papers are not a problem for this artist who feels equally at home with either. Jean prefers a direct approach to her painting technique and rich glazes are a constant and identifying feature of her work. Jean's painting *Nundle Gold* was exhibited with the Australian Watercolour Institute.



Jean Davies (Murrurundi based artist)

Jean has been a regular supporter of the many art exhibitions and competitions held both within the region and the Arts Centre in particular. She has won many awards, the most recent being in the Miniature section of the Currabubula Art Prize which has just had its 44<sup>th</sup> annual prize.

In 2008, Jean will head off again to take part in a pastel drawing workshop given by the internationally famous American pastellist, Richard McKinley in the village of Cortona in Tuscany.

# Reading Room News

In diversifying the services the Arts Centre provides, we have increased the number of arts related books available for sale. Most of the publications relate to either the Arts Centre's collections or the exhibition programme and include a number of excellent catalogues from previous shows.

Available Now:

Arts NSW and The Australia Council for the Arts have just released a large format guide to public galleries in NSW called 'Beyond Region'. The release features the Muswellbrook Regional Arts Centre, other regional galleries as well as the public galleries in Sydney, such as Artpace in Woolloomooloo and Object in Surry Hills. Each gallery is profiled and major works from their collections or activities from their programmes are illustrated in full colour. This is an excellent resource for anyone traveling the state with a taste for art. Available at the front counter for \$25.00.

Other publications currently available include:

- The Beat Goes On – Muswellbrook Band History by Norma Fowler; \$21.00
- Wannin Thanbarran – A History of Aboriginal and European Contact in Muswellbrook and The Upper Hunter Valley by Greg Blyton, Deirdre Heitmeyer & John Maynard; \$5.00
- Let's Face It – The History of The Archibald Prize by Peter Ross; \$65.00 (HB) & \$50.00 (SB)
- 05 Archibald Prize by Jo Litson & Jennifer Blunden; \$16.00
- Regarding Retro – Reanimations of The Preloved by Ingrid Hoffmann; \$15.00
- Works 2002 - 2006 by Franziska Klose; \$9.50

You can also order local artist Hanna Kay's 'Notes from The Shed – Selections from a Journal' book & DVD; \$125.00 through the Arts Centre.

Available Soon:

To accompany the upcoming exhibition Drawn Together – The Drawing Lives of Nora Heysen, Judy Cassab & Margaret Woodward we will have the comprehensive catalogue available from the opening night on 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2007.

At this point you will find the items for sale spread between the reception area and the Reading Room but plans are afoot to consolidate all items into the one spot. Any enquiries can be made at the reception desk. At present all sales are cash only.



Kellie Tym (Arts Centre volunteer) browses through the new additions to the library



Beyond Region: public galleries in New South Wales - published by Arts NSW and the Australia Council 2007

The Reading Room also has many new books and journals available for your use. Our aim of providing stimulating and rewarding back up to the Arts Centre's collections has been furthered recently by the addition of monographs on Fred Cress, Janet Dawson, Alun Leach-Jones, John Martin, John Peart and David Strachan, all artists with works in the collections. We have also added a number of books on contemporary Australian art and its development such as definitive works like *Rebels and Precursors - The Revolutionary Years of Australian Art* by Richard Haese and Kym Bonython's *Modern Australian Painting & Sculpture - A Survey of Australian Art from 1950 to 1960*, as well as important catalogues, for example, *The Fifth Biennale of Sydney 1984 - Private Symbol: Social Metaphor*. Again these are books featuring artists from the Arts Centre's collections. Our selection of art journals and magazines continues to provide high quality reading in an inviting and relaxed environment, so please take advantage of the Reading Room and drop in for a browse.



John Williams (on far right) delivers a floor talk for his photographic exhibition *Along My Road* at the Arts Centre on Saturday 19 May.

## SCONE ADFAS

### Lectures for 2007

10 July - Jane Gardiner NADFAS

#### **The Golden Age of Venetian Glass**

(The stylistic development of the glass produced in Venice from the late 15th century to the late 17th century)

14 August - Andrew Davies MA Hons

OXON NAFAS

#### **The Art of the Poster: Everyday pleasures - Travel, Sport, Entertainment and Shopping**

4 September - Mrs Clare Ford Wille BA  
NADFAS

#### **From Fresco to Frame: Artist's Techniques from the Middle Ages to the Twentieth Century**

6.30pm Arts & Crafts Centre, Kingdon Street, Scone  
Visitors are very welcome at \$20 (includes supper)  
Membership details & information available  
by contacting Sally McHugh 02-6545 1156  
or Gail Bragg 02-6543 4620

## Sacred Spaces Concerts

Mercy Convent, 30 Queen Street, Singleton

2pm Sunday 10 June

Bastien & Bastienne - a short opera by the young Mozart

2pm Sunday 1 July

Music by the Fireside

Tenor: Raffaello Pierro Guitar: Guiseppa Zangari

Flute: Laila Engle

Bookings: 02-6572 2398 [consing@hunterlink.net.au](mailto:consing@hunterlink.net.au)

Entry for each event: \$20.00 (\$15.00 concession) includes refreshments, School students \$2.00

Details: [www.sacredspaces.org.au](http://www.sacredspaces.org.au)

## EMAIL?

Would you prefer to receive the Arts Centre newsletter and invitations as a pdf file sent by email?

If so, please contact us on  
02-6549 3880 or email to  
[artscentre@muswellbrook.nsw.gov.au](mailto:artscentre@muswellbrook.nsw.gov.au)  
and we will amend our records to  
allow this to happen.

# Exhibition Update

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**1 - 30 June**

## **Youth Snaps 2007**

Youth Snaps is an exhibition developed from a series of four photographic workshops for young people aged 12 to 15 years. The project was facilitated by Upper Hunter Community Services Inc. and Muswellbrook Regional Arts Centre. The workshops were held for four Saturdays in a row during April and early May as part of the 2007 Youth Week celebrations.

**22 June – 5 August**

## **Drawn Together – The Drawing Lives of Nora Heysen, Judy Cassab and Margaret Woodward**

This touring exhibition consists of a gathering of drawings and associated prints and paintings that span the lives of these three artists and covers nearly 80 years of art making in Australia. The works are drawn from major State and National collections as well as private collections, including rare finds from the studios of the artists.

Drawn Together will provide people from across the Arts Centre's catchments (Muswellbrook, Singleton and Upper Hunter Shires) and surrounding areas with access to a detailed look at drawing.

## **Doubling Up**

This small suite of works on paper allows the viewer to compare and contrast a range of styles and mediums by a selection of artists who have a double representation of works in the Max Watters Collection.

**3 July – 5 August**

## **NAIDOC Week exhibition - Les Elvin**

An annual exhibition to celebrate the creativity of Aboriginal artists resident in the Upper Hunter region of New South Wales. This year showcasing Cessnock's Les Elvin, whose great grandfather was one of the local Wanaruah people.

**11 August – 7 October**

## **39<sup>th</sup> Muswellbrook Open Art Prize**

The Muswellbrook Open Art Prize began in 1958 and is now a nationally recognised art prize on the Australian cultural calendar with total prize money of \$16,000. The Muswellbrook Open Art Prize features 3 sections - Two Dimensional Painting of any subject in any medium, a Work on Paper of any subject in any medium (excluding photography) and the Open Ceramic Award. Entry forms for both awards will be available in early June.

**13 October – 25 November**

## **Muswellbrook Local Art and Ceramic Award**

Open to artists resident in the local government areas of Singleton, Muswellbrook and Upper Hunter. Featur-

ing The Esther Bellis Youth Prize and the Max Watters Prize for ceramics.

**Muswellbrook Photographic Award** – Features the Open Prize for photographers resident in Australia, as well as Local and Shire sections. Entry form and conditions for both awards will be available from the Arts Centre in early July.

**1 December – 16 December**

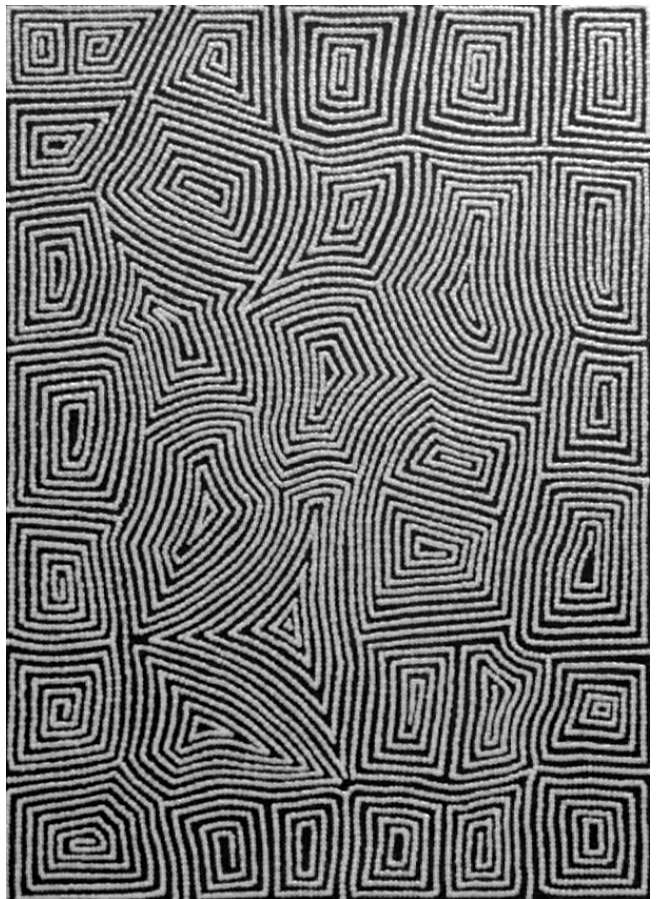
## **Artists Selling Show (artists sell out)**

An exhibition of original works by local artists, just in time for Christmas. All pieces are under 60cm and under \$200.

**1 - 16 December**

## **Red Cross Christmas Trees**

A charity event of inventive Christmas trees and wreaths fill the Art Centre to celebrate the festive season.



Les Elvin *Rings of Fire* 2006 spp on canvas  
(© courtesy of the artist) featured Koori artist for NAIDOC Week 2007

## **Muswellbrook Regional Arts Centre**

Corner of Bridge & Market Streets  
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Email: [artscentre@muswellbrook.nsw.gov.au](mailto:artscentre@muswellbrook.nsw.gov.au) Web: [www.muswellbrook.nsw.gov.au](http://www.muswellbrook.nsw.gov.au)  
Opening hours: 10am - 5pm Tuesday to Friday, 10am - 1pm Saturday, 2pm - 5pm Sunday  
Muswellbrook Regional Arts Centre is owned and operated by Muswellbrook Shire Council

