



WATERCOLOUR
NEW ZEALAND

President's report

2007 – 2008

An exciting buzz is continuing with Watercolour New Zealand. This is partly attributable to the growth in popularity and appreciation of watercolours not only in New Zealand but internationally and new WNZ initiatives including education. It is also due to great dynamics within the WNZ membership and the direction given by your superb committee. As a result I will be taking the opportunity later in this report to pass on a special thanks to those people who worked particularly hard to help make this happen.

Exhibitions

Another great year lies behind us with a further two successful exhibitions *Splash 3 & 4*. These *Splash* exhibitions just continue to grow in quality, popularity and success. Being aware of the current economic atmosphere, your committee put in that extra effort to make *Splash 4* a success and it paid off. The name '*Splash*' is becoming increasingly recognised by the public and art followers, proving that the branding is becoming very effective and a valuable asset to WNZ. These successes are also raising public awareness of Shed 11 as a great venue to hold these exhibitions and of the art of watercolours. The Wellington City Council has given favourable consideration to the New Zealand Portrait Gallery to become the key tenant at Shed 11 and negotiations on their tenancy are ongoing as I write. WNZ looks forward to working together with the New Zealand Portrait Gallery and our continued use of this venue.

Both *Splash* exhibitions were financial successes and covered all costs. An innovation at *Splash 4* was a book signing ceremony and demonstration by Nancy Tichborne as she celebrated the release of her latest book. Established features of *Splash* exhibitions are the daily watercolour painting demonstrations which are highly popular with the public and the guest artist exhibitions which featured works by Shirley Sutton and Dana Jackson at *Splash 3* and Judith Trevelyan at *Splash 4*. The winner of the inaugural Gordon Harris / Watercolour New Zealand Award was Joy De Geus. The French Art Shop Peoples' Choice Awards are highly popular with the public who voted for Nick Shield's painting 'Jessie' at *Splash 3* and Anthony Prout's painting 'Rouen Café France' at *Splash 4*.

Activities

On the activities front, in the year just past, WNZ has provided a number of exciting activities for its members. Last December saw a fun *Pirates & Mermaids*, Christmas function, held again at Avis Higgs place in Karaka Bay, - photographic evidence proved that king Neptune met his red haired mermaid maiden. In May we had the special and enjoyable 'Four Artists In One Day' tutorial session. In early July we arranged a backroom tour of Te Papa for a very interesting insight into some of New Zealand's famous watercolour artists. In early April a number of WNZ members ventured across the ditch to Flock Hill. Organised by our Littleton member Adrienne Pavelka, this was really a great fun weekend, Thanks Adrienne.

Painting classes

Opportunities for formal and informal painting classes have also been introduced. Recently we saw the start of the new weekly painting classes commencing with an 8 week course tutored by Jacky Pearson. Martin's MPG (Monthly Painting Group) Sunday morning painting sessions have continued to be well supported and lots of fun. The numbers attending have doubled and even trebled with the recent addition of a demonstration from Jacky Pearson to start each session followed by Jacky circulating and giving advice to members as they are painting. The Lion Foundation has provided the financial support for the tutoring and members have really appreciated this initiative by turning out in great numbers in all weathers. Clearly the demand amongst members for tuition is now growing at a healthy rate. Just as a note on activities - classes and activities have been full so in order to secure a place in any future activity be sure to book your place early.

Membership

There has been an unprecedented growth in membership of about 60% in the past two years with approximately 100 new members. Membership growth has come from all areas including an increasing number of established artists from all over New Zealand, watercolour art students and an increasing number of supporters and art followers. We would like to offer a special welcome to all members who have joined us in the last year.

WNZ website

The new WNZ website has been an exciting new development and is now up and running. Thanks are mainly due to Marie Riberio and Pavithra Devadita for designing and seeing this through. For a modest annual fee, the WNZ website will give members a new opportunity to have a small profile on their art through this website. The website is already gaining in popularity amongst New Zealand and overseas artists and has already fielded enquires from other international watercolour groups.

Newsletter

Members continue to give praise for the newsletter and the colour centre fold is now hopefully here to stay. Feel free to add to take digital photos of painters in action and send to the Newsletter Editor Phil Dickson for consideration. Also if you have a good watercolour story to tell, put pen to paper and email to Phil. It is your newsletter and we'd love your stories, tips and reports on exhibitions. Don't forget if you are having a watercolour exhibition be sure to email the dates to the Editor.

Thanks

Finally I would like to take this opportunity to pass on thanks to some special people who have helped make things happen for WNZ. Firstly thanks to your two vice presidents, Martin Jenkins and Claire Clark for their superb efforts. Martin, in addition to being VP and our secretary, has introduced many new people to the pleasure of watercolours and worked with foresight and determination to develop tuition activities for new and beginning artists. He has secured sponsorship for the Jackie Pearson painting demonstrations on the MPG Sunday morning painting sessions, set up the new weekly Monday evening painting workshops and found storage space for WNZ to hire at the Wellington Arts Center. Claire has again given us her wonderful and energetic support in all areas - your enthusiasm and energy is amazing Claire. Since Michael Bain joined us we have come to know him not as our treasurer but our treasure. Michael has worked tirelessly in his role, setting systems in place and has kept everything in clockwork order and running smoothly. With the growth in membership, two major exhibitions a year, member links to the new WNZ website and activity accounts, his has not been an easy task. Our next mission is to get him some spare time and a set of watercolours.

I would like to pass on thanks to your dynamic committee as a whole. They have all worked super hard and put a lot in to the society. Thanks to Phil Dickson as our wonderful newsletter editor and for his logistics support for exhibitions and Grahame Harris and Helen Wilson for their wisdom on WNZ matters. A special commendation for Helen for the style she brings to the wonderful food laid out for exhibition openings. Thanks to Sue Wild for setting up so many new systems for WNZ and her organisation skills. (PS. Don't forget Sues '*Wild About Martinborough*' weekend in September 2008). Thanks Tetyana for your wonderful graphic skills particular with the invitations. Over the past year we welcomed new faces to the committee, Pavithra Devadatta, Jan Thomson and Richard Gordon and we welcome back our hard working John Macdonell, our exhibition workhorse.

I also wish to record our thanks to the Exhibition support team. John Rundle lead the team hanging paintings, Phil and Sue catalogued and so many more helped out at the desk, preparing food and providing demonstrations. A big thank you to you all, our members, for all your enthusiasm and support as the *Splash* Support team. Your assistance is much very much appreciated and also helps build the exciting vibes that bond our group, particularly during exhibitions. Last but not least many thanks to Brian Ranford, our honorary solicitor, David Underwood for auditing our accounts and to Nancy Tichborne for her gracious presence and the support that she gives as our patron together with the support of her husband Bryan,

For the year ahead WNZ will endeavour to continue on the exciting journey we are on, raising the profile and awareness of the art of watercolour in New Zealand as well as promoting our artists. It is our aim to continue to introduce the art to more people so that more can enjoy the pleasure of this wonderful art form.

Alfred Memelink

August 2008