



PORT COMMUNITY ARTS CENTRE

**BLACK DIAMOND GALLERY,
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NEWSLETTER

FROM THE Garden Bench

Welcome to 2025!

FEBRUARY 2025

It's an exciting year ahead, and I'd like to start by expressing my gratitude to each of you for all you bring to the Port Community Arts Centre. Taking over as Chairperson from John Ford OAM, who has served with such dedication for many years, is both an honour and a challenge. Fortunately, I'm surrounded by a fantastic Board whose dedication ensures that PCAC remains a place where artists can create, exhibit and connect.

This morning, I sit on my garden bench with a coffee in hand, before I go off to do the things that add to the day. Sitting on the bench, I see paintings everywhere: flora - the striking bird of paradise or the surrounding verdant jungle; fauna - the birds splashing in the birdbath, my cat stretched out in the sun. As I shift my view, there's a whole seascape in the distance, the horizon stretching endlessly. Even the simple, now empty coffee cup, the spoon and potted flowers on the table, illuminated by the morning sun, could make a wonderful still life. My thoughts drift to landscapes with expanses of parched plains and hazy, distant mountains. And, of course, there are people - family, friends and those we pass by - I see portraits waiting to be painted.

We are surrounded by inspiration and thanks to you, our members, this inspiration is transformed into art and shared with the community. Our exhibitions continue to receive wonderful feedback. That is entirely because of your creativity, effort and passion.



I know it's hard to find much free time for anything these days and we need to thank ourselves for making the time to read this newsletter, paint in the corner of our living space and attend a class or exhibition. By making time for these things, we enrich our lives and contribute to the richness of the community.

Last year, we closed with Exhibition 100 which was a huge success, regarding member participation, visitor attendance and positive feedback. Congratulations to all involved. Here's to another year of creating, sharing and enjoying art together. Thank you all for being part of PCAC!

Andrew Streeter, PCAC Chair

EDITORIAL February 2025

mail@portcommunityartscentre.com.au
by Rose Harasym, Editor

As artists, reference photos are invaluable tools, offering a foundation to build our creative visions. However, it's easy to fall into the trap of copying them exactly. Photographs can be distorted and when copied lead to inaccuracies. Artwork based wholly on a photograph can often appear static and lifeless.

It helps to see your reference as a starting point, not the final destination. Use it to spark ideas rather than dictate them. Be open to shifting elements in the composition, amplifying a detail, cropping the image, or playing with colour to express your interpretation. For instance,

imagine the grey sky in your photo awash with the warm hues of a setting sun. The more you infuse your work with personal insight and imagination, the more dynamic and compelling it becomes.

Departing from the reference and taking risks in your art can be daunting, but it's through experimentation that your unique voice emerges. Embrace the challenge, explore, tweak, and reimagine to create original artwork that is vibrant, engaging, and expresses your artistic vision. Let your creativity breathe life into your art — it's worth the effort. Happy artmaking.

OUR FEATURED ARTIST: Graham Benson-Smith



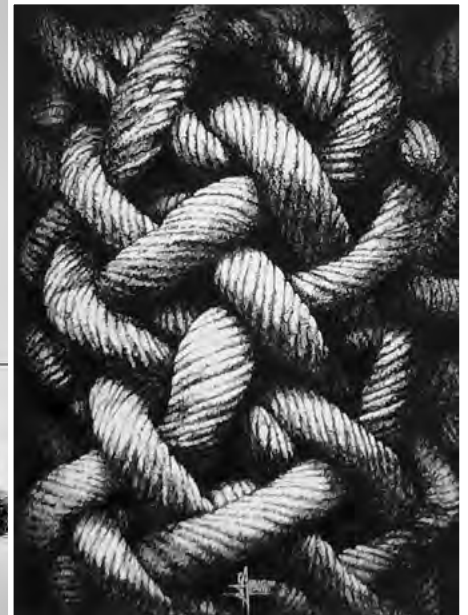
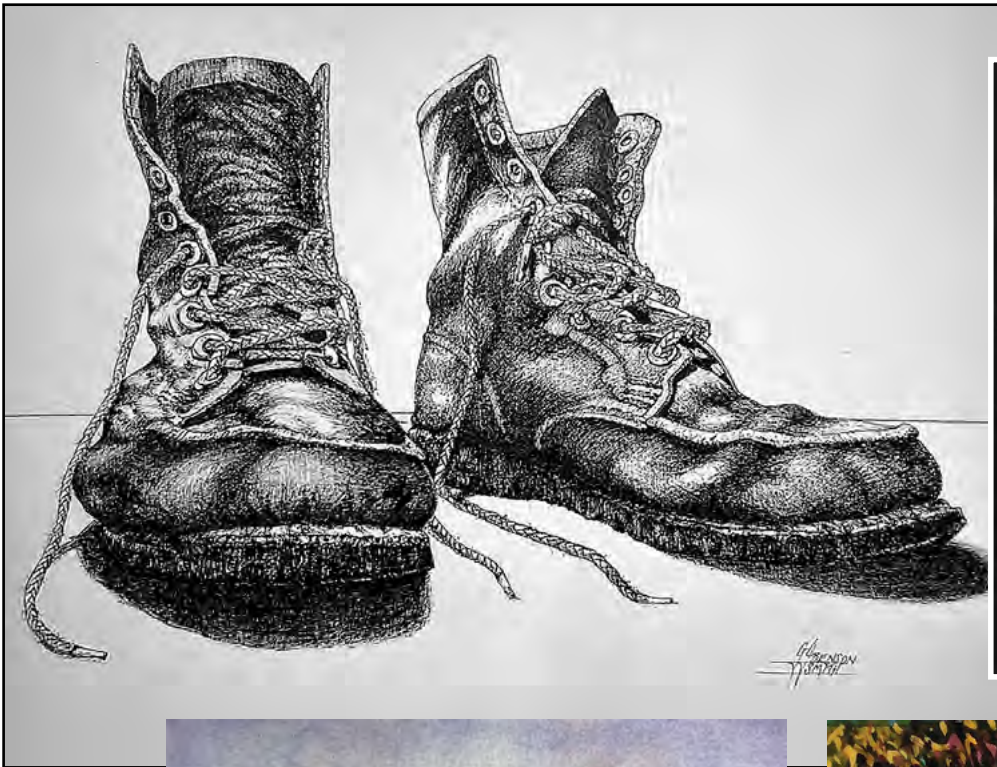
Graham Benson-Smith

Graham Benson-Smith's artistic journey began in high school, where he explored carving, jewellery making, and material design.

Though he hasn't had formal training, he has studied under renowned artists such as Nan Muirhead (watercolour), Alvaro Castagnet (watercolour), Arthur Phillips (oils) and Andreas and Ivars Jansons.

Realism has always been his preferred style, and he has worked with pencil, pen and wash, oils, acrylics, charcoal, and pastels. These days, he's especially drawn to watercolours for their expressive effects and pen on canvas for its fine detail.

When a subject captures Graham's interest, he is immediately drawn to exploring its artistic possibilities. His passion and dedication have earned him multiple awards, including recognition for his watercolour and pastel work at the Goolwa Art Exhibition, for pen on canvas at the Clare Art Exhibition, and various awards at PCAC. [Continued p3](#)



OUR FEATURED ARTIST: Graham Benson-Smith From p2

Graham has shared his knowledge and enthusiasm as an art tutor for over 40 years. When reflecting upon this he mused, 'It doesn't seem that long when you're doing something you love.' Graham's classes align with school terms, enabling him to balance teaching with spending holidays with his grandchildren.

Students of all levels are welcome to join the classes and Graham encourages them to experiment with different mediums. His philosophy is simple: "Yes, you can! Let's try this!"—a motto that has led many students to surprising and rewarding discoveries. There are no rigid lesson plans - just a supportive space where students choose what they want to create, learn by doing, and grow confident about their creativity.

Above all, Graham believes that art is about exploration and personal expression. His classes foster a welcoming environment where students learn not just from him, but from one another, free from judgment.

He is proud to showcase both his work and that of his students, celebrating their artistic journeys together.

Graham Benson-Smith Art Classes, Thursdays 7-9 pm, during school terms. PCAC Workshop, 66 Commercial Road, Port Adelaide. Cost: \$15 per class, paid by term. Enquiries: 8268 3273.



In September 2024 Louise Davies tutored a Felting Masterclass for members. Louise's organisation and tuition were exceptional. Participants made a rectangular sample, a three-dimensional container, and they had a choice for their final piece. Most chose to make a notebook cover. It was a most enjoyable masterclass providing participants with hands-on experience of a process often considered a craft but can and is used to create artwork.

ANSWER TO P7: It is a paper weighing device. As you know, art paper sheets are sold by weight i.e. 300grams per square metre (gsm).



EXHIBITION 100 26 October - 10 November 2024

Exhibition 100 was PCAC's final members' exhibition for 2024. It was a milestone event celebrating 20 years of PCAC and 100 Member exhibitions. Established artist and Ngarrindjeri man, Thomas Readett, whose artistic practice includes drawing, painting, murals, video, and music, judged the exhibition.

There were close to 150 people in attendance. This is likely to be a record exhibition opening attendance. The gallery and Queen Charlotte Square were filled with friendly chatter as visitors milled about viewing the artwork or partaking in refreshments.

Andrew Streeter kept the official opening light-hearted and running smoothly, introducing speakers and announcing the prize winners. The first speaker was Erin Roud, who thanked John Ford OAM for his 20 years of service as PCAC Chair. Erin read a humorous 'Dear John Letter'. John announced that he was stepping down from the Chair but staying on as Treasurer. He acknowledged that the support of numerous volunteers, artists, sponsors, and collectors was integral to the success and longevity of PCAC.



Erin Roud & John Ford OAM

The Honourable, Susan Close MP, Deputy Premier of South Australia and Member for Port Adelaide, officially opened Exhibition 100 and presented the prizes to the winners of the Best in categories.

Refreshments were served in the courtyard, Queen Charlotte Square, and visitors were invited to socialise there after the opening.

During and after the exhibition many people commented positively on the high standard of the artwork as well as the hanging of the exhibition. There were 110 entries and 58 participating artists. We had 496 visitors to the exhibition, averaging 35 per day. Twelve artworks were sold, two of which went overseas and one to a regional town.



Exhibition 100 opener, Hon. Susan Close MP, Deputy Premier of South Australia with Partha Bala, winner of Best in Exhibition Prize 'A Foggy Day' (below).



Adelaide Dunn, Merit Award for 'Fantasy'.



Paul Burnett, Highly Commended for 'Wallaroo Wharf 1906'.



'Moored No.5' by Larissa Rogacheva, awarded the Best Artwork In the Seascape Category.

EXHIBITION 100 cont.



▲ Marilyn Sims, Highly Commended for 'Crimson Reverie'.



Hon. Susan Close MP, Deputy Premier of South Australia & Naomi White awarded the Best artwork in the People Category 'Liam'.



Thomas Readett selected the following artworks for prizes:

BEST IN EXHIBITION:

Partha Bala 'A Foggy Day', Watercolour (Prize sponsored by PCAC)

LANDSCAPE

Highly Commended: Alan Ramachandran 'Franklin St. Cityscape', Ink (Prize sponsored by PCAC)

Merit: Erryn Munchenberg, 'Smouldering Landscape' Watercolour (Prize sponsored by Port Mall Newsagency)

SEASCAPE

Best Seascape: Larissa Rogacheva, 'Moored No.5' Watercolour (Prize sponsored by Flinders Port Holdings)

Highly Commended: Paul Burnett, 'Wallaroo Wharf 1906' Oil (Prize sponsored by PCAC)

Merit: Sandra Lea, 'Windswept', Watercolour (Prize sponsored by Altaire Arts)



▲ Sandy Lee, Merit for 'Windswept'.

FLORA AND FAUNA

Best Floral/Fauna: Lucy Rowe, 'I've Got Your Back', Photography (Prize sponsored by Tick Tax & PCAC)

Highly Commended: Rose Harasym, 'Floral Fantasy', Acrylic (Prize sponsored by PCAC)

Highly Commended: Margaret Contibas, 'Competition', Mosaic (Prize sponsored by PCAC)

Merit: Heather Milhench, 'Beak to Beak', Acrylic (Prize Sponsored by PCAC)

PEOPLE

Best People: Naomi White, 'Bust - Liam', Pottery (Prize sponsored by PCAC)

Merit: John Ford OAM, 'Camelot', Watercolour (Prize sponsored by PCAC)

'Buckles', by Graham Benson-Smith, awarded Best in Still Life & Abstract-Fantasy



▲ 'I've Got Your Back', by Lucy Rowe, awarded Best Work in Flora & Fauna Prize.

STILL LIFE, ABSTRACT/FANTASY COMBINED

Best Combined: Graham Benson Smith, 'Buckles', Ink on Canvas (Prize sponsored by Adelaide Brighton Cement)

Merit: Adelaide Dunn, 'Fantasy', Watercolour (Prize sponsored by PCAC)

JUDGE'S CHOICE

Highly Commended: Marilyn Sims, 'Crimson Reverie', Coloured Pencil (Prize sponsored by PCAC)

Merit: Hal Robertson, 'Sebastian', Mosaic (Prize sponsored by PCAC)

HANGERS' PRIZE

Overall: Fay Jeans, 'A New Day', Pastel and Ink (Prize sponsored by PCAC)

PEOPLE'S CHOICE AWARD – selected by visitors

Alan Ramachandran, 'Colour of Barossa', Watercolour (Prize sponsored by PCAC)

Photo Credit: Lucy Rowe



▲ Hon. Susan Close MP, Deputy Premier of South Australia, with the prize winning artists.

Reflections ON DAILY PAINTING

Daily painting is an incredible practice that has taught me so much, not just about art, but about myself. During October 2024, I completed over 30 acrylic paintings, each 8x8 inches. Here are some key lessons I've learned:

- How to simplify and not get distracted by the details
- How different underpainting colours influence the painting
- How to select colours based on values
- More about colour theory and its impact
- How to choose better compositions or alter elements to improve them
- To give subject matter that doesn't appeal a try
- To avoid overthinking and embrace spontaneity
- To paint faster without sacrificing quality
- That missing a day isn't a failure—I can catch up or simply move forward
- To be persistent and keep showing up
- To be consistent in my efforts
- To be kind to myself when things don't go as planned
- To build confidence in my artmaking
- Not to worry about the outcome
- Viewers often like pieces I'm not fond of myself.

Completing a month of daily painting was a big commitment. I did experience painting fatigue afterward. Daily painting for a month has taught me to draw scenes faster, understand values and compositions more intuitively, and be prepared to repeat the same painting multiple times to refine my techniques. The process of making art has become even more meaningful to me.



In 2025, I shifted gears and started alla prima style online watercolour tutorials. I've continued working small for economic reasons, using high-quality paint and paper. Despite it being only mid-January, I already have 18 small paintings. Some are successful, some less so, but each teaches me something new. I've learned to challenge myself and work outside my comfort zone, improving my art practice significantly.

A month of painting offers a range of benefits that will vary for each artist. The key is organization, consistency, and letting go of perfectionism. I highly recommend daily painting for a set period. It's challenging and simultaneously immensely rewarding.

Rose Harasym



Dear Rose,

I congratulate the PCAC Board on a smooth 'hand-in' process for exhibition artwork for SALA. After the exhibition, a highly successful afternoon tea was held in the gallery for PCAC Members.

The Board and helpers were friendly and accommodating when I entered my paintings. Hal made herself available to refresh my memory about gallery duty, taking anyone interested step by step through opening and closing the gallery. The 'tour' was interesting.

While on gallery duty, I easily contacted the gallery coordinator by phone thus allowing an interstate visitor to purchase an artwork and remove it, to take with her on the day. Everything went seamlessly for the collector.

I thoroughly enjoyed the August Members' afternoon tea. Tables were arranged in groups to facilitate conversation. During the event, Board members circulated, genuinely connecting and conversing with attending members. I found it was a wonderful opportunity to interact with fellow PCAC Members.

When interacting I found the Board members friendly, relaxed, and knowledgeable. The atmosphere in the Black Diamond Gallery was uplifting. Congratulations to the hard-working Board for a successful SALA exhibition and afternoon tea. Well done.

Carmen Liddane

LETTER
TO THE
EDITOR



PRICING YOUR ARTWORK

PART FOUR

An experienced artist can charge more for their time even though it may take them less time to do a piece of work. If your canvas and paint cost approximately \$20 and you charge \$5 an hour because you are a beginner then something that took 10 hours will cost \$70. Once you have that price you can then look at what others are charging for similar paintings and accommodate your hourly rate to suit. If your piece is framed then you need to add those costs in.

If you have been painting for many years, have a degree in art, are represented by galleries, or have an online following of thousands or any one of these things, you need to up your hourly rate. Time, skill and experience are reflected in the price you set; the lower you set the price the lower you value your skill. This is moderated by comparison to prices out there so you don't overestimate or underestimate your value.

Pricing your work consistently comes with a wealth of benefits. It allows you to build credibility and establish an excellent reputation among buyers and collectors. Buyers like understanding how art is priced.

Personally, I price my work on the size, previous sales, and experience. If the work is a complicated piece, I also put that in as part of the formula. A good starting point I feel is that you multiply the price of the framing by three. If you've had a piece framed extravagantly and then do the calculation you might get an inflated surprise as a beginner! If you have a 'spare' frame and use that instead of a new purchase, look back to what you have previously charged for that size.

In regards to commissions, I always paint to the client's budget and then balance that against what I would normally charge for comparative works. For example, I had a client, whose budget was \$1,000. I told them I could create a work for that price and it would be size X. They actually wanted a smaller piece so I created one of my \$750-sized paintings and everyone was happy.

Do not have a 'SALE' or 'SPECIALS' of your work, if you do, you will devalue all the work you have sold previously. That will make your previous customers really happy!

In our organisation we are fortunate to have artists who have had quite a lot of experience in creating and selling work, ask them for some pointers.

John Ford, OAM 

QUOTES

"Don't think about making art, just get it done. Let everyone else decide if it's good or bad, whether they love it or hate it. While they are deciding, make even more art."

ANDY WARHOL

"The world always seems brighter when you've made something that wasn't there before."

NEIL GAIMAN



Do you know what this is?

Photo Credit:
John Ford OAM



PCAC EXHIBITION SCHEDULE 2025

EXHIBITION TITLE	HAND IN DAY	OPENING EVENT	CLOSE
Members' Exhibition Title: "ON THE EDGE"	22nd February 11am to 2pm	1st March Doors open 1.30pm for 2pm start	16th March
Members' Exhibition Title: "FOR COLOURS SAKE"	3rd May 11am to 2pm	10th May Doors open 1.30pm for 2pm start	25th May
Members' Exhibition Title: "EXPERIMENTAL"	26th July 11am to 2pm	2nd August Doors open 1.30pm for 2pm start	17th August
Charity Exhibition Open Title: "TITLE TO BE ADVISED"	25th October 11am to 2pm	1st November Doors open 1.30pm for 2pm start	16th November
Members' Exhibition Title: "COLOUR MAGIC" Maximum Size: 60cmx45cm	22nd November 11am to 2pm	29th November Doors open 1.30pm for 2pm start	14th December

PCAC TUTORED ART CLASS SCHEDULE 2025

A diverse range of art classes are available for both Members and the wider community in the PCAC workshops. Classes are held in the workshop areas behind the Black Diamond Gallery at 66 Commercial Road, Port Adelaide. Led by experienced private tutors, each class is tailored to suit the needs and skill levels of participants. There are options for all age groups with class fees varying based on subject, duration and other factors. Many fee structures are very reasonable.

MONDAY

WATERCOLOUR/ACRYLIC: 9.00am - 12noon and/or 12.30pm - 3.30pm Tutor: John Ford OAM, Mob. 0400 593 987

CHILDREN'S ART — School Terms Only: 4.00pm - 5.00pm Tutor: Penny Mortimer, Mob. 0438 458 936

TUESDAY

GENERAL ART: (Painting, Drawing, Pastels, Scratchboard, Mixed Media, etc.)

9.00am - 12noon and/or 12.30pm - 3.30pm Tutor: Claire Colbey Mob. 0412 211 007

FELTING — Held on 2nd Tuesday of each month: 1.00pm - 4.00pm Tutor: Louise Davies Mob. 0413 548 770

WEDNESDAY

WATERCOLOUR/ACRYLIC: 9.00am - 12noon Tutor: John Ford OAM, Mob. 0400 593 987

***MEMBERS PRINTMAKING COLLECTIVE (No Tutor):** 1.00pm - 4.00pm

***MEMBERS POTTERY COLLECTIVE (No Tutor):** 1.00pm - 4.00pm

CHILDREN'S ART — School Terms Only: 4.00pm - 5.00pm Tutor: Penny Mortimer, Mob. 0438 458 936

THURSDAY

CLAY WITH PENNY: 12noon - 3.30pm Tutor: Penny Mortimer, Mob. 0438 458 936

SUBURBAN ART: 7.00pm - 9.00pm Tutor: Graham Benson-Smith Ph. 8268 3273

FRIDAY

WATERCOLOUR: 10.00am - 1.00pm Tutor: Alan Ramachandran Mob. 0431 289 133

SATURDAY

***MEMBERS POTTERY COLLECTIVE (No Tutor):** 1.00pm - 4.00pm

***COLLECTIVES ARE FOR PCAC MEMBERS ONLY Enquiries: Contact Tutors directly.**

Collectives are by application. Both collectives are currently at capacity.

OUR SINCEREST THANKS TO OUR LOYAL SPONSORS:

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