

## Presidents Report



Hello and goodbye. No, the Beatles aren't writing this today, but it's a very odd scenario I find myself in. My five-year term as President is about to come to an end, albeit extended by one month due to these strange times we live in.

Come the AGM on June 11, I will step down having served my time and will hand over to a new President to guide BVAC on its very successful and creative journey.

It has been a very enjoyable time with a steep learning curve about art in Brisbane. The one thing that stands out above all else is the commitment to the art that our members make. Not every piece would be at home in the Louvre or Tate Gallery, but that makes no difference to the effort, love, patience, imagination and joy (along with the obligatory blood, sweat, and tears) that is poured into the work.

I knew nothing of Pop-Up Shops in May 2015 and if I can compare that one to our last, they have come a very long way. A far better lay out, much better assortment of goods and an electronic sales system that has saved many a wrist from hand-writing receipts. We also moved to an on-line accounting system that made payments quicker and more accurate as well keeping us informed in real time as to the state of our finances.

During my Presidency, I was extremely fortunate to have been invited to Government House to represent BVAC at an art appreciation evening where members of non-profit art groups from all around Queensland were asked along to be personally thanked by the Queensland Governor, Paul de Jersey.

I was also lucky enough to have had a meeting with QAG/GoMA director Chris Saines. Although we didn't quite fit into his sphere, he was full of encouragement for BVAC once I had informed him of what we were trying to achieve. He was very proud of a group of people willing to get together and share rather than be ego driven and try to succeed on their own.

One aspect of BVAC I'm glad I was involved in was to upgrade our website. I'm sure you'd agree that it is now quite informative with all our members web pages accessible in one spot and the calendar clearly showing dates and times of when workshops, meetings etc are being conducted. I can't recall how many "likes" or followers we had on Facebook back then, but we have worked hard to build that up and spread the word about who we are and what we are up to.

In closing I want to thank Lena firstly for calling me out of the blue to offer this position. She had never met me, but took the gamble to find a non-artist to take up the role as President. I'm glad you did. I bet you still can't believe I said yes. Lastly, a huge thank you to Judy Hamilton, you kept me laughing through some tough times and got me to the end.

So, it's goodnight from me, and it's goodnight from him.

**Peter**

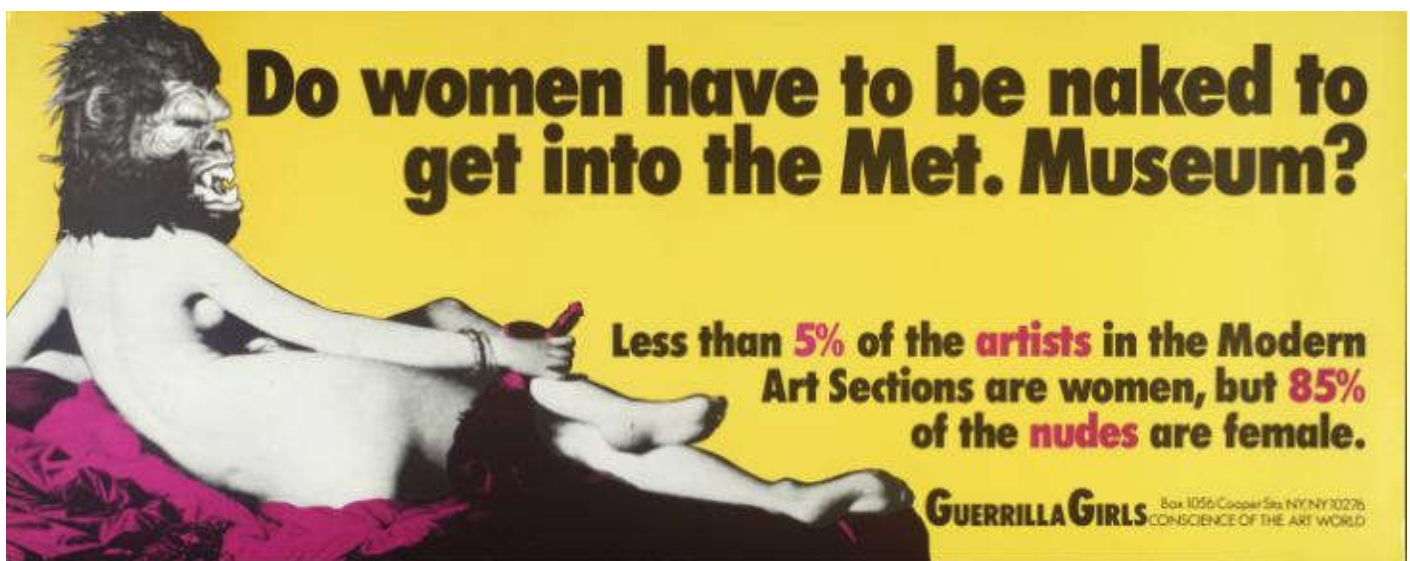
## History/Herstory of Art

The “History of Art”, as most of us know it, opens with the Ancient Egyptians, Greeks and Romans, moves on to names like Michelangelo, Rembrandt, and Picasso, before arriving at Andy Warhol’s canned soup in New York in the 1960s. And then it gets really confusing. The history of art is essentially that—his story. It is essentially a story about a bunch of white, male artists.

Where were the women artists or artists who weren’t white? Was it just that everything these artists did just not very good in comparison?

Art history is clearly on the side of the dominant race and gender, and all other art was carefully written out for being “just craft”, “primitive”, “provincial”, “derivative”, or just plain “bad”. Women artists have not fared well in the “History of Art”, and even the Women’s Liberation Movement of the 1960s did little to redress the inequality experienced by women artists. At that time, women did not fill positions in museums where decisions on what was shown, how objects were described and displayed, and most importantly what was acquired by the museum, were made.

In 1989, an anonymous group of female artists donned gorilla masks in New York in an attempt to bring attention to the problem. Known as the Guerrilla Girls, the group formed in 1984 in response to the exhibition, *An International Survey of Recent Painting and Sculpture* at MoMA. The show was intended to be a survey of the most influential contemporary art and artists in the world. Of the 169 artists presented, only 13 were women.



After doing a survey of the ratio of male to female nudes in the works on display at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, the group found that 85% of the nudes were female but only 5% of the artists were female. Their landmark poster was updated in 2005, but sadly the numbers had not improved much in favour of female artists.

Like our contemporary world, today’s art is not fixed, but always shifting and growing. Contemporary art articulates our present and women are part of it—mostly. Women are now part of the art world infrastructure and are making a difference. Betty Churcher was the director of the National Art Gallery from 1990 to 1997 and artists like Fiona Foley, Fiona Hall, and Tracey Moffatt have shown that our lived experiences can be approached from many different perspectives. Art, at its best, appeals to our emotions and taps into a shared consciousness among members of our society even if we all have differing life experiences.

Artists of all eras—even Michelangelo and Rembrandt—are products of their time and culture.

## When You Lose Your Way with your Art

I think this is a phenomenon that probably happens to most artists at some time or another. When you become familiar with an artist's work, you can usually tell when something is really out of the box, while another piece can be seen to be the artist just going through the motions.

I'm interested in this because I have just come out of an extended slump and am really excited because I feel the work I am doing at the moment is some of the best I have ever done. At this time last year, I felt like clearing out my studio and never touching clay again.

Our creativity is not pre-set at a certain level—it fluctuates. “Painter’s Block” or “Creator’s Drought”, where we are unhappy with the work we are making is common enough even though others looking at the work still think it is good.



Vipoo Srivilasa

*Mythical Crustaceans Tea-set*

Vipoo Srivilasa, an internationally renowned ceramic artist, recently admitted that he had lost his way in ceramics and could not work out what to do next. He had tried his hand at making functional pottery, but he describes the episode as a disaster. His assessment was that he was not good at making functional pots noting that making functional pottery is hard but making it well was even harder. He says that his artistic sense does not fit well with it at all. From this experience, he learned that he should make what he loves to make, is uplifting and creates positive energy and makes people (and himself) happy. His Mythical Crustaceans tea-set is completely unusable but he reports that they sell well.

Julie Stirling from Art West Community Gallery is another who has recently suffered a bout of “Painter’s Block”. She says that her head wanted to paint but her heart didn’t know what to do. Julie is a regular exhibitor at Art West Community Gallery.



Julie Stirling

*Untitled*

My own experience came when I embarked on a series of animal sculptures that proved to be very marketable. So marketable that that is virtually all that was wanted. My hands could make them, but my heart was less and less in them. But what to make instead? Like Vipoo, I tried my hand at functional pottery to fill the financial void, and like Vipoo, I quickly came to the conclusion that other people did this far better than I did. For about six months I did nothing but think.

Australian artist Margaret Preston once commented that in her art



Judy Hamilton

*Pick Me Mr Khan!*

“she has a think, and then puts a line around her think”. I like to think that I put some clay around my think. I looked at the work of one of my favourite ceramic sculptors—Robert Burton. Like Julie Stirling I experimented with different techniques, and I think this is an important part in over coming a slump. Present yourself with a challenge rather than lapsing into the same old, same old.

Have you experienced “Creator’s Drought”? How did you feel while you were there? How did you bring yourself out of it? Did you trawl the internet for hours looking inspirational ideas?

## A Favourite Painting



*The Road to Berry* is a tiny picture I remember painting from under a copse of trees ... and I just remember a small canvas and a sort of rhythmical movement that just happened; I was always amazed at the attraction it had ... I was never able to repeat that little picture, and that's a good thing." - **Lloyd Rees** 1987.

## Mural Artist Wanted

### Everton Park State High School

Has a commission for an interested artist to paint an **ANZAC** mural in the playground.  
Contact Peter Rayson for details if interested.  
Personal Message on Facebook



## International Potter's Day—May 28

Having been a potter for more years than I care to remember, the term “potter’s field” has always intrigued me. Sadly, as part of the Covid19 pandemic, we saw mass burial of victims on Hart Island—New York’s Potter’s Field. Why a “potter’s field”?

I think the idea comes from ancient Greece. The suburb Kerameikos (Ceramicus) was the site of the potter’s quarter in Ancient Athens, and it was surrounded by a public cemetery that took the same name. The potters made special vessels—the lekythos and kraters—for funerals.

There is also a biblical story about the “potter’s field. When Judas returned the thirty pieces of silver the high priests gave him in exchange for betraying Jesus, the priests could not return the silver to the temple coffers, as it was blood money. They used that money to buy a field to bury paupers in. As the story goes, the field they bought was the area in which *potters* dug their clay.

Whatever the story, it is interesting that the work of potters has been associated with the rituals of burial of the poor since the seventhth century BC. On that note—happy International Potter’s Day for May 28 to our potters.



Lekythos



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## Are There Any Exhibitions Planned for Later in the Year?

It is difficult to know what to do about exhibitions that were planned for this year.

**Western Suburbs Clayworkers** are hoping they will still be able to hold their annual exhibition at the Randall Gallery over the weekend of October 10 and 11.

The **Scattered Arts/BVAC Art Competition** has been rescheduled for the Jolly Centre for October 23—26.

And of course, we hope that the **BVAC Christmas Pop-Up Shop** can be held at the Auditorium, Mt Coot-tha Botanic Gardens over the weekend of November 21 and 22.

The newsletter has taken up little of my time over the past two months, and I have been able to spend a lot more time making stuff for when the world turns back to normal-ish.

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