

### **BAC re-energized and refocused**

The summer of 2006 has been an unusually busy one for members of BAC's Coordinating Group. Our first priority was to research and propose a definition of botanical art. As you are aware, the inclusion of zoological elements and background has been a controversial issue and one that we felt must be settled before we begin work for the Todmorden exhibition.

Faced with a number of research options, we decided to ask selected international organizations about their definitions and, if we found consensus, base ours on theirs. Irene Hunchak took on this work over the summer and in August presented her research to the Coordinating Group. We then presented the findings and proposed definition to members for a mail-in vote, feeling that such an important matter deserved very special attention.

I'm pleased to tell you that we had 27 responses (we currently have 53 members), 23 of whom were in favour of the new definition. Two people provided comments but abstained; two voted against. Several remain concerned about the inclusion of zoological subjects and backgrounds. Two observed that our definition does not recognize the aesthetic component in botanical art. We acknowledge this. You'll find full information in the Special Report of the newsletter dedicated to this topic.

We're looking forward to a busy, productive, creative and fun year for members. Recent events include the website launch, which was combined with a critique session given by Sheila Siegerman and Tasira Strimban. We've also been on the first of two discovery walks at Todmorden's wildflower preserve, in preparation for the Exhibition in October 2007. (See page 6.)

October and November bring a number of exciting events. We're hosting three Open Studio drawing and painting sessions in a spacious and light rooftop location. Celia Godkin's one-day workshop will be at the same location. Irene Hunchak is setting up photo sessions for BAC's exhibitions portfolio and for members who need digital files for the website. And members' galleries will soon appear on our website ([www.botanicalartistsofcanada.org](http://www.botanicalartistsofcanada.org)).

For 2007, we greatly look forward to continuing to build this strong and supportive community and to offering you many more worthwhile events. Don't hesitate to contact us with comments and suggestions.

– Gerry Jenkison, Chair, BAC, on behalf of the  
 Coordinating Group [gerry.jenkison@sympatico.ca](mailto:gerry.jenkison@sympatico.ca)

### **COMING EVENTS**

#### **OPEN STUDIO**

Opportunity to spend up to five hours on three Sundays in October and November painting in a bright light penthouse in downtown Toronto (Dundas / Church Streets) Only \$10 per session. See page 3

\*\*\*

#### **GETTING READY FOR TODMORDEN**

Attend Celia Godkin's workshop on Sunday November 12 and get a head start on your Todmorden work. See page 8



BAC members on a recent visit to Todmorden Mills - preparation for the October 2007 Exhibition.

#### **SPECIAL REPORT**

**Look out for the Special Report on Defining Botanical Art included with this newsletter.**

## [www.botanicalartistsofcanada.org](http://www.botanicalartistsofcanada.org)

Beginning this fall, BAC is pleased to offer all members their own gallery space on our new website. You can have up to three images on your gallery, as well as your biography and contact information. Visit Donna Greenstein's gallery at [www.botanicalartistsofcanada.org](http://www.botanicalartistsofcanada.org) for an example.

BAC has made it really easy for you! Here's what you need to have:

1. A biography of not more than **500 words**.
  - If you haven't written a bio before, or want ideas on how to improve your current one, consult this web page: <http://www.art-in-guelph.com/Pages/howtobiography.html>
  - Think about how much personal information you're comfortable disclosing – you may want to omit your address and phone number.
  - Include your email address and, if you have a website, its address.
  - For inspiration, take a look at bios on another professional association's website.
2. Each image should be:
  - In **JPG** format
  - Not less than **72 dpi**
  - Pixel size of about **700** width/height (Our web designer tells me that anything larger is fine [she can reduce it], but smaller is unworkable.)

3. Captions for each of your images, ie, the common and Latin name, plus the medium, eg, watercolour, colour pencil.
4. Send a cheque for \$20 to BAC's treasurer – Donna Greenstein, at 14855 Concession 10, RR3, Schomberg, ON LOG 1T0

If you're wondering how to turn your work into JPGs, you have several options. One is to find a friend with a scanner to help you. Another is photos – we can suggest a professional photographer to do this at a nominal cost. We may arrange a photo session if there's sufficient interest.

If you don't have a PC, but would still like a gallery page, please call Gerry Jenkison at 416 366 1735.

Please make sure you're happy with your choices and biography before you send them in. In a pinch, we could make minor updates to pages during the year, but it's time-consuming and there may be a cost involved.

Email Items 1, 2 and 3 to [gerry.jenkison@sympatico.ca](mailto:gerry.jenkison@sympatico.ca). Depending on workload you'll have your new gallery in about seven to ten days.

## RECENT EVENTS: CRITIQUE NIGHT

As part of the website launch on September 27, we were fortunate to have two fine botanical artists to critique members' work: Sheila Siegerman and Tasira Strimban. Thanks to both and to Hannah Levitt for hosting. As Emily Luks said "Mentors like them bring sunshine. The words we hear from them can only teach us to understand that, with their sensible advice, our paintings can become a great work of art."

**Sheila Siegerman** is an international member of the ASBA who came to botanical art after a varied career in the arts. As a jewellery designer with the Henry Birks Co. in Vancouver, she created a silver rose bowl given to Princess Elizabeth by the City of Vancouver. She was awarded the grand prize in a Canadian diamond ring design competition. Sheila has also worked as an actress and theatrical scenic designer. In 1971 she was the Montreal critics' choice for set designer of the year. She has played professionally as a freelance violinist with several Canadian symphony orchestras, as a member of the orchestra with the 1979 Canadian tour of the Russian Bolshoi Ballet as well as chamber music and string quartets.

In 1986 Sheila began her career in botanical art. Her paintings are now included in the Hunt Institute for Botanical Documentation, the Shirley Sherwood and many private collections. Sheila has had a number of solo exhibits in Ontario, and is one of the gallery artists with the McLaren-Barnes Gallery in Oakville.

**Tasira Strimban-Barishev** was born, raised and educated in Moscow, Russia. She received her Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from the Moscow Academy of Art and Architecture. Her work has been included in many exhibitions worldwide and her paintings are in private collections in Switzerland, Germany, Russia and Canada. Tasira continues to paint and exhibit her work in galleries across Toronto; including the Hummingbird Centre and McMichael Gallery.

Although Tasira loves being an artist, her biggest passion is teaching. She first began by teaching art classes in her home. The number of students grew and in 2001 the Barishev Art School opened its doors to all those interested in understanding and creating art. The school has flourished: the number of students has tripled and the general course outline has been enriched with new subjects like Art History and Animation. We are delighted that Tasira is a member of our Coordinating Group.

## What members want...

At the recent BAC garden party, members were asked to respond to a survey on which activities they would consider attending during the coming year. Of the members present, 15 completed a survey. Their responses and associated comments are reported below. If you were not able to attend and have any ideas or comments, please send them to Gerry Jenkison [gerry.jenkison@sympatico.ca](mailto:gerry.jenkison@sympatico.ca)

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Positive responses (%)</b>
Regular, informal group painting sessions	9 (60%)
Coaching sessions	12 (80%)
One- or two-day workshops given by professional botanical artists	13 (86%)
Critique evenings	11 (73%)

### Members' comments

Regular, informal group painting sessions:

- In winter, morning or afternoon. Fridays, or Saturday or Sunday morning are best.
- Would be interested in weekend mornings.
- Yes, although this is problematic because people won't want to drive long distances

Coaching sessions:

- The two-hour evening sessions – lighting is a problem for the aged. Good lighting is essential.
- It's important to be very clear about what material to bring to each session.
- These sessions should be at least three hours.

One- or two-day workshops given by professional botanical artists:

- Yes, if graphite or coloured pencils are acceptable media.
- Hold workshop at least once a year given by an internationally renowned botanical artist/teacher.
- Hold workshops maybe once a month. We have enough members considered 'masters' who could give the workshops. Not having to pay for their transportation or accommodation we could charge only \$25 per day. I consider that amount to be a modest contribution, but if we get ten participants it would be good compensation for the teacher.

Critique evenings:

- Four a year, suggest in March, June, September and December. Critique sessions are good for motivation. The June or September critique could be held after general meetings.

Other:

- Could do some of the above activities focussed specifically on getting ready for Todmorden Mills.
- Daytime events – hold on Sundays.
- Participation in events should be mandatory if members want to participate in the exhibitions.
- Demonstrations on specific items such as a leaf (eg, polyanthus), dewdrop, etc.
- Hold two exhibitions a year, with a different person in charge for each exhibition.

In response to this the Coordinating Group has already arranged an Open Studio, see below.

## BAC Open Studio – starting October 22

We are pleased to announce a group of three Open Studio sessions. Come and enjoy painting together and learning from each other. The BAC Open Studio is being held in a spacious rooftop location filled with daylight. Bring your supplies and current work, or begin that new piece you've been dreaming of, maybe for the Todmorden exhibition.

**Date: Sundays - October 22, November 5 and 26, from 10 to 3pm.**

Place: Rooftop party room at The Merchandise Building, 155 Dalhousie Street (near the Dundas subway station, one street east of Church, north of Dundas).

Cost: \$10 each session, pay at the door

Come to just one or all three: no advance financial commitment is required, but we do need a list of attendees before each session (for the building's concierge). Note: Celia Godkin will do a one day workshop at this venue on Sunday November 12. (See page 8)

Bring a brown-bag lunch; we'll provide tea and coffee. For further details and to book, contact Liz Tudor ([liztca@yahoo.ca](mailto:liztca@yahoo.ca)) or Gerry Jenkison ([gerry.jenkison@sympatico.ca](mailto:gerry.jenkison@sympatico.ca)).

## ***A PHOTOGRAPHIC OPPORTUNITY ESPECIALLY FOR BAC MEMBERS***

In order to secure space at prestigious galleries for future exhibitions, BAC urgently needs to assemble a professional, high quality portfolio of members' works of art. This portfolio will clearly demonstrate to prospective gallery owners and curators the high calibre of our work.

We have arranged for a specialized photographer to take photographs of 25 images – one could be yours. And this at no cost to you! The image will be produced in three mediums: slides, digital and hardcopy print. In addition to participating in the portfolio, you will be able to use the digital image of your work on your personal gallery page of the new website.

You may submit up to three works of art for consideration, however, only **one** piece per artist will be selected to ensure a broad range of work and artists.

Images will be used by BAC only for this specific purpose. If we want to use them for any other purpose, for instance a catalogue or poster, we'll require your further permission.

To participate, contact Irene Hunchak by email: [dandi@eol.ca](mailto:dandi@eol.ca) or (905) 338-9427 **by October 25, 2006**. We will ask you to bring your work, *preferably unframed for best results*, for a certain time slot on the day of the photography session. Please provide details: subject - common and Latin names, image size and medium

If you live out of town and are not able to attend the photography shoot, please contact Irene to arrange shipment of your piece.

If you are interested in having additional artwork photographed for your own personal use, at your own cost, please contact Irene.

<i>Sign up by:</i>	<i>Wednesday, October 25, 2006</i>
Photo Session:	Sunday, November 5, 2006 (same day and place as the Open Studio)
Time:	Sometime between 10 and 3. Your specific time to be advised.
Place:	155 Dalhousie Street, Toronto (downtown)

### **ARTISTS' TIPS FROM COLLEAGUES**

Q: Are there any methods to eliminate unwanted drops of paint on paper?

A. Try using a 'Fritch Scrub' brush, available from [www.cheapjoes.com](http://www.cheapjoes.com). These are sturdy brushes whose sole purpose in life is to scrub out mistakes. Try a test first on the separate piece of the same type of paper you've used for your painting. There could be some damage to your paper, so proceed carefully.

Another suggestion would be to take a brush, apply some water to the area you want to remove, let it soak for a few seconds, then blot any excess water. Then take a white art eraser, and rub the area very hard. It will lift a lot of paint. Again, experiment with this method. No guarantees!

## **“NATIVE PLANTS AT TODMORDEN MILLS” Exhibition, Oct. 7–28, 2007**

By Irene Hunchak

The sky was heavy and overcast with occasional drops of rain, but the threatening weather did not dampen the enthusiasm of 14 members of BAC who assembled on September 24 for a guided walk of the Todmorden Mills Wildflower Preserve. Paula Davies, Chair of the Wildflower Preserve Committee, and Steve Smith, urban forester and certified arborist, shared their knowledge with us about this most beautiful urban oasis.

We walked the Oxbow Trail, which is a 0.5 km loop around a section of the Don River that was severed during the construction of the Don Valley Parkway in the early 1960's. The trail started in an open meadow area filled with asters and golden rod. Many of us were surprised to learn that there is not one, but several varieties of *goldenrod* – *calico*, *panicked*, *zig zag* -- all with subtle differences in structure and colour. *Asters* were also plentiful, growing in groups as asters grow from underground rhizomes. Probably the most striking of the asters is the *New England aster*, with its intense purple petals and bright yellow centre.

We passed by a fallen tree that was heavily covered in *wild cucumber vines*, which flower in August and bear fruit in September. Cucumber vines are very prolific plants, an annual that grows from seed.

Forested wetland areas in the preserve have several ponds, which is habitat not only to specific plants such as the *native blue flag iris*, but also to a variety of wildlife. Earlier in the year herons are common.

The preserve is home to a variety of ferns, some of which were still present. The Christmas fern is an evergreen and is seen year round. We saw *ostrich* and *sensitive ferns*, both having a fruiting stalk which spread spores to reproduce. Speaking of homes, we were thrilled to see a raccoon fast asleep in its home – a hollow in a dead tree about 15 feet above ground. The raccoon paid no attention to us!

Another very fascinating plant we came across in the moist and shaded wetland habitat was the *spotted jewelweed bush*. The flowers on this bush are small and delicate, orange with spots (some are pale yellow). Apparently hummingbirds feed on them. The name 'jewelweed' refers to the way water beads up on the surface of the leaves, like jewels. Jewelweed is also known as 'touch-me-not' because of the way it disperses its seeds. There are small elongated seed capsules containing 3-5 seeds each that burst open at the slightest touch! This internal 'spring' mechanism is very efficient at dispersing seeds up to five feet away, which then propagate easily in the moist soil. Another interesting fact about the jewelweed is that the flowers are either male or female and must be cross fertilized by an insect or bee, thus ensuring genetic diversity.

Further into the preserve we came upon the upland forest area, where the soil is drier, and eventually opens up into meadow. Another unusual plant had us all stop in our tracks. The *cup plant* grows up to nine feet tall, with bright yellow daisy like flowers. It has coarse leaves that are paired and fused to each other at their bases so that they surround the stem. This forms a distinctive cup which holds rain water and dew. The stem of this plant is fascinating because it is distinctly square, not round!

Our walk came to an end, just as the sky opened up and started to rain. Perfect timing! We are all looking forward to our next discovery walk at Todmorden in the spring of 2007.

[For a list of the wildflowers of Todmorden Mills, see the BAC Newsletter, Summer 2006 on the BAC website]

### **HUNT EXHIBITION OPEN UNTIL DECEMBER 20**

The Hunt Institute for Botanical Documentation presents the exhibition "What We Collect: Recent Art Acquisitions" until 20 December 2006. This selection of 80 recently acquired artworks, ranging from the 17th century through the present, provides an overview of what is collected in the Hunt Institute Art Department. The exhibition will be on display on the fifth floor of the Hunt Library building at Carnegie Mellon University. Free of charge. For further information, contact the Hunt Institute at 412-268-2434.

## Other Events Calendar

Date	Event	Details	Contact
Dec 15	Canada Blooms Botanical Art Show deadline for entry		Margit Koritar 705-944-5695 <a href="mailto:margit@nexicom.net">margit@nexicom.net</a>
Sept – Nov	ABSA Exhibition	New York	<a href="mailto:ASBAExhibitions@aol.com">ASBAExhibitions@aol.com</a>
Oct 22, Nov 5, Nov 26	First Open Studio	The Merchandise Building, 155 Dalhousie Street. \$10 per session	Liz Tudor ( <a href="mailto:liztca@yahoo.ca">liztca@yahoo.ca</a> ) or Gerry Jenkison ( <a href="mailto:gerry.jenkison@sympatico.ca">gerry.jenkison@sympatico.ca</a> )
Nov 5	Photographic shoot (deadline to sign up October 25)	The Merchandise Building, 155 Dalhousie Street.	Irene Hunchak <a href="mailto:dandi@eol.ca">dandi@eol.ca</a> or (905) 338-9427
Oct 13 – Nov 26	ABSA Exhibition	Seattle	<a href="mailto:ASBAExhibitions@aol.com">ASBAExhibitions@aol.com</a>
Nov 12	Celia Godkin workshop	The Merchandise Building, 155 Dalhousie Street. \$120	<a href="mailto:celiagodkin@ripnet.com">celiagodkin@ripnet.com</a> or (613) 275-7204
Until Dec 20	Exhibition: "What We Collect: Recent Art Acquisitions"	Hunt Institute, Pittsburgh	Hunt 412-268-2434

### CALLS FOR CANADA BLOOMS ART SHOW

The Seventh Annual Botanical Art Show at Canada Blooms takes place March 7-11, 2007. Botanical artists living in Canada may enter up to five works, not previously exhibited at Canada Blooms. Selection will be made from professional quality standard 35 mm slides. The submission fee is \$50, plus \$25 for each work selected. Deadline for Entry: December 15, 2006. Works will be juried on March 2, 2007. The jurors are Robin Jess (Botanical Artist, Executive Director, ASBA) and Christine Maxwell (Professor of Botany). For complete information contact Margit Koritar, tel: 705-944-5695 [margit@nexicom.net](mailto:margit@nexicom.net)

### ***BAC 2007 Exhibition: Native Plants at Toronto's Todmorden Mills***

Exhibition date October 7–28, 2007

Native plants from the Wildflower Preserve at Toronto's Todmorden Mills are the subject of our 2007 exhibition. For more information, please contact exhibitions coordinator Irene Hunchak. [dandi@eol.ca](mailto:dandi@eol.ca)



## **BAC NOTES: Highlights of recent Coordinating group meetings**

Copies of meeting minutes are available from Margit Sampogna at any time, Meanwhile here is an overview of the BAC Coordinating group's deliberations.

The Coordinating Group held meetings on July 12 and August 16, 2006. Discussion topics and decisions were:

- **Planning for the website launch:** scheduled for September 27, 2006 – invitations, location, handouts, details about the website, writing biographies, submissions for a website gallery, etc., combined with a critique.
- **Planning for the midsummer social in Emily's garden.**
- **Addressing administrative issues, including:**
  - updating the contact list
  - membership surveys
  - reviewing the Constitution in preparation for the next AGM (2007)
  - newsletter content
- **The Todmorden Mills exhibit**, planned for October 7-28, 2007, to be named "Native Plants at Toronto's Todmorden Mills" in keeping with the wildflower preserve initiative. Information will be distributed on an ongoing basis to the membership regarding the entry process, selection of subject matter, entry fees, etc., including the dates of the discovery walks [the first occurred on September 24]. Details of the opening reception are still being worked out.
- BAC needs a professional portfolio for exhibitions: Diogenes Baena of Caledon Images was contacted regarding his costs for producing slides, electronic file formats and a 5 by 7 inch colour print for a professional BAC-owned portfolio. BAC is proposing to pay the costs for one selection per member for submission to this portfolio.
- **Survey Feedback** indicated that the CG has the mandate to proceed with:
  - a.) Group painting sessions
  - b.) Coaching sessions
  - c.) Workshops
  - d.) Critiques
- **Membership information, renewals and privacy legislation:** Various formats were discussed to ensure that systems are efficient, yet respect individual member privacy.

---

**Botanical Artists of Canada** is a not for profit organization serving botanical artists across Canada. We aim to promote the development and appreciation of botanical art, and encourage individual artists in the pursuit of excellence. [www.botanicalartistsofcanada.org](http://www.botanicalartistsofcanada.org)

BAC Coordinating Group

Gerry Jenkison – Chair  
Raquel Baranyai – Membership and Communications  
Coordinator  
Donna Greenstein – Treasurer

Irene Hunchak – Exhibitions Coordinator  
Margit Sampogna – Secretary  
Emily Luks and Lynda Bryden – Workshop Coordinators  
Liz Tudor and Tasira Strimban – Members at large  
Peta Lomberg – Newsletter Coordinator

Four newsletters are published each year. Deadline for the next newsletter is December 1, 2006. Please send submissions to [peta@lombergnetwork.com](mailto:peta@lombergnetwork.com)

To join BAC please send a cheque for \$30.00 (made out to BAC) to Raquel Baranyai, BAC Membership & Communications, 203 Shaughnessy Blvd #403, Toronto ON, M2J 1J9

For more information contact Raquel Baranyai at [raquelbaranyai@sympatico.ca](mailto:raquelbaranyai@sympatico.ca)

---

---

## COURSES

### ***One-Day Workshop with Celia Godkin***

**Date:** Sunday, November 12, 10 am to 5 pm

**Location:** Rooftop party room of the Merchandise Building, 155 Dalhousie Street, Toronto, ON M5B 2P7

**Cost:** \$120

You may use this as an opportunity to work on any of your current botanical pieces, including a wildflower painting for the Todmorden show. As wildflowers don't last, you will need photographic reference, so here's some advice on how to prepare YOUR reference material.

Specimens should be photographed in indirect daylight, using daylight film, against a plain white background. I prefer to work from slides at home, but in the classroom prints are more practical so ideally you should have both prints and slides. (Prints can be made from slides, but not the other way around.) Digital images are fine if of good quality and they should be printed both actual size and larger, to allow you to see detail. Take the same subject from different angles (back, front, sides). Even though you will only paint one view, this will help you to understand the structure. Be aware that, if you take the picture at too close a range, some of the image will be out of focus. To reduce this problem, set the camera to a small aperture and photograph from further away. The image can always be cropped and enlarged when printing.

In addition to photographic reference, you should prepare as many reference drawings as possible of the living flowers before they wilt. Also, before they fade, be sure to make a colour sketch as this is a better guide to colour than a photograph. Don't forget to make a note of how you arrived at each colour. Because it's difficult to duplicate mixtures of more than two colours, if you do have to use more than two colours to obtain the right shade, mix up a batch and set it aside for later. Lastly, don't forget to measure and make a note of the dimensions of the flowers, so you can print your images to the same size.

TO REGISTER, SEND A CHEQUE FOR \$120, MADE OUT TO CELIA GODKIN, TO:  
10 JAMES STREET, MOD. 6, COMP. 12, FRANKVILLE, ONT. K0E 1H0

Please include this form with your cheque:

NAME: .....  
MAILING ADDRESS: .....  
E-MAIL: .....  
TELEPHONE: .....

For more information, contact Celia at [celiagodkin@ripnet.com](mailto:celiagodkin@ripnet.com) or (613) 275-7204

---

### ***Botanical Painting Classes with Pamela Stagg***

- Botanical Painting on a Coloured Background (PG06F52) - at the Toronto Botanical Gardens, (416) 397-1340

Friday through Sunday, October 20 to 22 - 10 am to 4 pm

### ***Botanical Painting Classes with Margit Koritar***

- Botanical Painting - Intermediate/Advanced (PG06F51) - at the Toronto Botanical Gardens, (416) 397-1340

Fridays, Nov 3, 10, 17, 24, Dec 1 - 9:30 am to 3:00 pm

### ***Botanical Art Classes with Leslie Staple***

- Botanical Art: Drawing & Watercolour for the Beginner (PG06F50) - at the Toronto Botanical Gardens, (416) 397-1340

Thursdays, September 21 through October 26 - 10 am to 1 pm

- Botanical Watercolour Classes - at Northern Secondary, TDSB Continuing Education, (416) 338-4111. 851 Mount Pleasant (at Eglinton)

Tuesdays, October 3 to November 28, 2006 (9 sessions)

Thursdays, September 21 through October 26 - 10 am to 1 pm

- Private Classes - contact Leslie at (416) 421-5909

---



