



Botanical ARTicles

A Publication of the Botanical Artists of Canada

Exhibiting with pride

That's what the 18 BAC members who participated in the Fall Show at the Civic Gardens Centre were able to do. And it's the natural after so many hours of painstaking creative work to want to exhibit ones efforts and hopefully, sell ones work. That's why BAC provides not only information and support to improve your techniques but also help and information about framing, exhibiting, pricing and selling. The next big show is at Canada Blooms where we get to see the best of the best of current botanical art. It should make exciting viewing.

"When you take a flower in your hand and really look at it, it's your world for the moment." Georgia O'Keeffe

"Lines from the Chair"

A thoroughly enjoyable Fall Show - congratulations to everyone involved, and to those who sold their artwork. Comments in our Visitors Book certainly indicate that our efforts are worthwhile. We were particularly delighted to have a number of paintings from artists living outside the Toronto area, giving the 'C' in BAC more credibility!

The Allery Studio, on Front Street, in Toronto is currently showing work by Margaret Graeb, Margit Koritar and Leslie Staple. This gallery has a huge selection of prints, many antique and this is the first time they have shown contemporary botanical art.

On the opening evening we were treated to a brief talk by Elizabeth Vitek; The Revival of Botanical Art: A Science and an Art. Elizabeth took us from the birth of botanical art with the first herbal drawings, through woodcuts, travellers and explorers (all this largely dominated by men) to the likes of Margaret Mee, and on to our own artists. She managed to give us a lot of information in a very brief time - fascinating. This exhibit, on until the end of December, is well worth a visit.

The Coordinating Committee continually tries to think up new items of interest to members. So this newsletter introduces a new column - 'New Books'. If you have any special finds, do let Peta Lomborg know for future editions.

Remember the last date for your Canada Blooms entry is December 6. Good luck!

As this is the last newsletter before Christmas - have a good holiday, and hopefully find time to do a bit of painting! We are arranging a get together early in the new year - a 'Show and Tell' of current work!

- Deborah Morrison

EXHIBITION ALERT

BAC member Emily Luks is exhibiting at Periwinkle Flowers, 1961 Avenue Road, Toronto. Tel: 416 322 6985. They have originals and prints for sale. The exhibition continues until the end of the year.



Margit Koritar, Peg Graeb and Leslie Staple, all BAC members, have an exhibition on at the Allery Studio, 145 Front Street East, Toronto. Gallery hours are Monday to Saturday 10 - 6, and Sunday 12 - 5. The exhibition continues until December 29.

EXHIBITIONS COMING UP

Deadline for **Canada Blooms 2003** is **December 6**. Remember that beginning botanical artists are encouraged to enter as their work will be considered by the jurors, too.

Newsletter items

If you have information about up-and-coming exhibitions or other events of interest to BAC members, contact Peta Lomborg, 416 778-9911 or email at lomborg@pathcom.com. Next newsletter is the Spring edition and will be compiled during February 2003.

Curating your own show

By Pamela Stagg

When you've been painting for a while and you've created a body of work, you'll probably want to exhibit your work.

So how do you choose the work for your show? That's easy, you may think – you just frame and hang everything. But that may not be the best strategy.

There are two purposes to a selling show:

- to show your viewers where you are in your artistic development, and
- to make money.

It's easier to meet both those goals if you have chosen your work very carefully. Don't be afraid to be too critical. Better to exhibit a small group of exceptional work than to cram the walls with a large number of paintings, some of which are not your best.

To arrive at a small group of top paintings, review your portfolio several times. Each time, look at your work from a different point of view.

- **Is the subject matter consistent?** You may be really good at painting, say, botanical subjects and action paintings of hockey players, but limit a show to one or the other. That way, you'll attract the people who really appreciate the subject.

- **Is the style consistent?** A show should capture a stage in your development as an artist. If your style is evolving, or if your painting has improved significantly in the past few years, include only recent work.
- **Are all the paintings of equal quality?** Look at composition, plant anatomy and painting quality. You may not be the best judge of your own work, so try soliciting feedback from other people. If there are no botanical painters in your area, show your portfolio to a figurative painter and a keen gardener or a horticulturist. And if you work in different media, make sure the quality of each medium is equally good – or limit yourself to your area of strength.

After you're been through these three steps, put your portfolio away for a week or two, then go through the whole exercise again. Be ruthless.

Curating your own show is tough, yet the end product makes it worthwhile: a solid show of consistent artistic merit that will – hopefully – reward you with strong sales.

© Pamela Stagg

NEW BOOKS

Here's a story from Celia Godkin about a wonderful new book. "A couple of years ago, my friends in the Botany Department at the ROM had me over to look at some paintings of fungi done by Betty Williamson. They wanted my advice on getting them published. As they were wonderful paintings, I naturally encouraged them to go ahead, and the book is now available."

Williamson, Betty L. (2002): Reflections on the Fungaloids. Algrove Publishing Ltd., Ottawa. 143 pp. Available from Lee Valley Tools, Steeles & Warden, or through their catalogue. The price is just under \$40.

FABULOUS FINDS

Celia's favourite gardening hand tool is the Homi digger, available from Lee Valley for something under \$20. The digger is a Korean design, thousands of years old, with a wooden handle and an iron blade which curves back toward the handle in a U shape. The business end is in the shape of a heart cut in half and it can be used for making a furrow, and then for pushing the soil over the furrow, once the seeds have been sown. It's also her favourite implement for weeding grasses though it's less effective for taproots like dandelions. Individual diggers vary, as they are hand made, and the best ones have a generous distance between the handle and the blade.

Let the newsletter know of your Fabulous Finds

WORKSHOP WATCH

A NEW U of T CONTINUING STUDIES COURSE FROM CELIA GODKIN

OPEN STUDIO

SCS# 0501 Saturdays 2 - 4:30 pm from February 8 to April 12 : \$350 (\$335 later life learner)

Celia's primary objective in offering this course is to separate the newcomers to botanical watercolour from those who have taken this course several times and who are bringing their own subjects to paint rather than following the class. This will enable her to devote her full attention to the group she affectionately calls the "repeat offenders". Botanical watercolour will still be available on Saturday mornings, and Botanical Drawing has been moved to Thursday evenings. On the first day of class Celia will present a selection of possibilities and ask the students to choose the topics they would like to explore. These may include subjects other than botanicals and media other than watercolour, but those who wish to continue with botanical watercolour will be free to do so. Students will be encouraged to refine their drawing and painting skills in whatever way they feel is best suited to their individual needs.

NOTE: Watch this space for more U of T course offerings in 2003/04, including water soluble oils, drawing from nature and part 2 botanical courses!

- **March 2003** – put it in your calendar now. Margit Koritar is arranging two workshops to coincide with Canada Blooms March 12-16, 2003. The workshops will be for three days - March 14-16. They will be given by **Dick Rauh** and **Robin Jess**, who ran a very popular workshop earlier this year where among other techniques, we learnt how to paint watercolour with #4 brushes! The workshops are being planned around the critique of the slides and plant morphology. The latter is Dick Rauh's area of expertise and he teaches it at the botanical school in New York. He was one of the jurors from last year and will be familiar with our work. The workshops will be offered at an intermediate and advanced levels.
- **June 2003**, the University of Athabasca has a special **plant identification** course each June in Kananaskis, Alberta. Contact Dr Lochan Bakshi at 1-888-205-8133 or lochan@athabascau.ca

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BAC logo competition

A number of entries have been received for the BAC logo competition. They will be judged by the BAC Coordinating Committee at its next meeting in January and the winning logo will be introduced in the Spring newsletter. A sneak peek at the entries indicate it will be a tight race.

Keeping in touch with members

Thanks to Mary Rose Woodbridge for answering our call for a volunteer to spare four hours a year helping with mailing to you, the BAC members. Luisa Klopchic is also setting up a 'phone tree' so members can be kept informed of events and activities.

Thanks to all the volunteers who keep BAC running

- **A personal touch:** If you know of any members who are ill, or just having a tough time and need a cheerful note, let Hannah Starke know and she will send greetings. pehan@rogers.com
- **Member directory:** The BAC membership directory will be published shortly. Queries: mclean@sympatico.ca
- **Banking note:** New treasurer John Eedy, reports that the BAC bank balance is healthy. As of November, 2002 it was \$3602.76.

Workshop watch continued:

Pamela Stagg: Tuesday evenings in the University of Toronto Continuing Education program (Advanced Botanical Painting in Watercolour) and Friday mornings at Avenue Road Arts School (Botanical Watercolour)

Thoughts on the B.A.C. Fall Show

I felt that the show was successful in that we had 18 artists participating rather than the usual 10. Some of these artists are new to the group so I was pleased that they came out and got involved. There were also people asking to join BAC so we are doing something right! We sold four paintings and informed the public about our group. Mounting an exhibition is a great deal of work, and we had a lot of help with this show; with everyone working hard to make it all happen. One member made the labels, the hanging crew did a great job and another group did all the planning for the Opening night: buying and preparing food, creating the flower arrangement, and setting up. The one hundred or so people who attended the opening only had positive things to say about our beautifully laid out tables, and of course, our paintings.

We still need help with the PR, so we can more broadly let the public know about our exhibitions. Considering the amount of work and number of people involved in the planning and setting up of this exhibit, I felt it went quite smoothly. Thanks to all who helped to make this show a success. – *Leslie Staple*

Events Calendar

| Date | Event | Details | Contact |
|----------------------------------|--|--|--|
| December 6 | Deadline for Canada Blooms entries | Slides are required | Margit Koritar (705) 944-5695 margit@nexicom.net |
| Until February 28, 2003 | A retrospective of Anne Ophelia Todd Dowden's work coinciding with her 95th birthday. Hunt Inst. Pittsburgh | The Hunt Institute will display her sketches, finished paintings and final publications. If you are a Hunt member and received the catalogue, you will know what a worthwhile exhibition this is. | Hunt Institute www.huntbot.andrew.cmu.edu BAC members could travel together. Volunteer to coordinate this outing. Email mclean@sympatico.ca |
| March 12 – 16 | Canada Blooms | Visit Toronto’s premier garden and flower exhibition. Don’t miss the third juried exhibition of botanical art, as well as booth displaying botanical and floral art items. | Margit Koritar |
| March 14-16 | Workshop by Dick Rauh and Robin Jess | 9.30 – 4pm. Civic Gardens Centre. Both presenters are jurors for the 2003 Canada Blooms Botanical art show. | Margit Koritar |
| MONTHLY PAINTING SESSIONS | | | |
| The last Tuesday of every month | Monthly Painting Sessions – Patricia Bermiller’s Studio | Hours – 9 AM to 5 PM Fee \$10 per session Capacity – 8 people | If you are interested in painting once a month at a studio with other botanical artists. Patricia Bermiller at 416-483-3367. |

Member resources

- If you have suggestions or can recommend a resource or supplier of materials, framing, etc, please let the newsletter know by emailing lomberg@pathcom.com.

| BAC Steering Group | |
|---|---|
| ▪ Chair: Deborah Marrison (416) 221 5849 | ▪ Secretary: Louise Chernier (416) 690 4698 |
| ▪ Treasurer: John Eedy (416) 769 7140 | ▪ Membership communications and data: Karen McLean (416) 449 7251 |
| ▪ Workshops: Emily Luks (416) 441 1992 | ▪ Exhibitions: Leslie Staple (416) 421 5909 |
| ▪ Newsletter: Peta Lomberg (416) 778 9911 | ▪ Public relations / external communication: vacant |

“Botanical Illustration – Spring in Canada ”

Lecture and Workshops 2003

Friday, Saturday and Sunday, March 14 –16, 2003 9:30/10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

At

The Civic Garden Centre

777 Lawrence Avenue East (to be confirmed)

Registration Deadline Date: February 1, 2003. Space is limited - First come first served. You are registered the day I receive your cheque

Day 1: 9:30 a.m. to 12:00 noon.

All participants – Critique of selected slides submitted to Canada Blooms with Robin Jess. Lecture only – no materials needed.

Break for lunch

1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. - All participants – Introduction to plant morphology with Dick Rauh.

Lecture only – no materials needed

Day 2: 10:00 a.m to 4:00 p.m. Half of the group will go with Robin Jess and the other half of the group will go with Dick Rauh.

Day 3: 10:00 a.m to 4:00 p.m. The instructors will exchange groups.

The workshop with Robin Jess will feature watercolour techniques focusing on establishing a sense of three-dimensional form while at the same time creating textures. Robin will give an assignment to be done prior to the workshop. The assignment will be discussed at the beginning of the day, you will then paint, and finally an assignment will be given (for those who wish) to finish. You may send the completed project to Robin for comment and she will ship it back.

The workshop with Dick Rauh will provide expertise in about four or five major families of plants. Through the use of microscopes and direct observation, Dick will guide students in accurately understanding the plant's morphology and then translating that knowledge into a clear drawing.

Lecture Fee (Friday only): \$125 non-refundable payable upon registration to:

3-Day Lecture/Workshop Fee: \$315 non-refundable payable upon registration to:
Margit Koritar, 10 Maple Tree Crescent, RR1, Fraserville, On.
K0L 1V0

If you have any questions please contact Margit Koritar at: (705) 944-5695, e-mail: margit@nexicom.net

Both Robin A. Jess and Dick Rauh were Canada Blooms Jurors for 2002 and Robin. We are fortunate to have Robin as juror again for 2003.