

Arts Council Toowoomba Inc.

What is

BLUE?

to you...

Inaugural Members Exhibition Catalogue

9 March to 10 April 2011

Opened by Arthur Frame AM

CEO Queensland Arts Council

Toowoomba Regional Art Gallery
531 Ruthven Street Toowoomba

- * Deb Beaumont * Kim Bessley Scott * Ros Billingsley * Beverley Bloxham *
- * Jean Cameron * Denise Chard * Victoria Cooper * Anita Marie Flynn *
- * Helen Hancock * Mary-Kate Khoo * Karl Matthews * Dana McCown * James McDade *
- * Chelle McIntyre * Judy Rafferty * Range Artists * Pixie Roediger *
- * Doug Spowart * George Szerensci * Brendan Timperley * Des Verdon * Kim Walmsley *
- * Maryika Welter * Women in Harmony * Jennifer Wright (Summers) *

'Blue, darkly, deeply, beautifully blue, in all its rich variety of shades...' (Robert Southey, Madoc, pt. I, canto 5.1.02).

What is **BLUE?** to you...

The painter, Wassily Kandinsky said in his book 'Concerning the Spiritual in Art', that the power of profound meaning is found in blue. He also added that when it sinks almost to black, blue echoes a grief that is hardly human.

The question: 'What is blue to you?' may be read as a personal inquiry, yet, if we separate the words slightly: 'What is blue ... to you?', the query offers a two-pronged approach that takes in the universal complexities of the nature and meaning of 'blue', as well as a subjective response with its application to our own experience.

There is something infinite about blue. The blue dome of the sky meeting the arc of the ocean suggests a sense of continuity. Blue is calm and cool, yet it can be turbulent, moody, and storm tossed. Blue associates with the spirit in truth, purity, faith and loyalty. It is a peace keeper. Blue is royal and religious, and the most popular colour for denim. It is intellectual and introspective. Artists use it to achieve a sense of depth and distance, and singing the 'blues' uplifted the spirit of the oppressed. Blue is a feeling and an argument. It is the colour of Wednesday.

The artists in this exhibition have seized the notion of blue 'in all its rich variety of shades' to interpret, express, and share something of personal significance.

Sandy POTTINGER 2011

References:
Kandinsky, W. 1977. Concerning the Spiritual in Art. Dover Edition. Constable and Company, London, p. 38.

Southey, R., 1812. Madoc, Third Edition, Longman, London, p.48.



Photo: Don Hildred

One wet day
Ink on used newspaper printing plate
91.0 x 57.5 cm

I am something of a bowerbird, collecting materials and tucking them around me in my studio. These materials are gathered from print waste that is created during the printing processes of local newspaper production. Primarily I am drawn to the cyan of print; this for me is the purest and most energising of blues. In this work the cyan newspaper printing plate only partially reveals its stories and histories; the identity of the man in the picture is masked by the residues of ink and is devoid of the other process colours that would fill in the information gaps.

Identity unknown (detail)
Ink on used newspaper printing plate
91.0 x 57.5 cm



Photo: Don Hildred

Blue nude
Pastels on paper
70.0 x 55.5 cm



Blue to you
maybe a colour,
an emotion,
a stretch of ocean,
an expanse of sky...

Blue to me
is calming, comforting,
providing and frightening,
ice cold, searing hot,
eternal...

Kim BÈSLEY SCOTT

Poem: 'A patch of sky'. The precious things that we are given fade away only too quickly in our minds. Blue brought back memories that spanned my whole life.

Painting: 'Once in a blue moon' is an expression that I enjoy. It conjures up something remarkable that could happen. I explored this 'once in a blue moon' experience and this is the result.

The happy farmer: once in a blue moon
Acrylic on canvas
50 x 50 cm



Photo: Rosalind E Billingsley

Coding the rose triptych
Limited edition 1/5
Giclee print (archival inks on Hahnemuehle photo rag paper)
40 x 120 cm



Photo: Beverley Bloxham

A truly blue rose has been the Holy Grail of rose breeders since 1840. Blue roses traditionally signify mystery or attaining the impossible. This artwork from the exhibition 'The Quest for the Blue Rose' asks the questions: Is a blue rose necessary? Why improve on the perfection of the rose? And what is wrong with a world that lacks blue roses anyway? 'Coding the rose' is a digital intervention of a photograph of a rose: an artist's interpretation of the experimentation and RNA interference carried out to elicit the secrets of the rose in order to 'invent' a blue rose.

Beverley BLOXHAM

Depression (detail)
Acrylic on canvas
27 x 52 cm

Most young children who are molested grow up with the curse of depression, brought on by a life of personal self-hidden torture, never telling their stories for fear of judgement and non-belief. These children are survivors, isolated and detached, not trusting anyone.

Growing up with almost two personalities: the one you see on the outside is a chameleon, happy, charming and outgoing. The one inside, you don't see, fights the resistance to hide in a dark cupboard, like living in a void, a vacuum that has sucked all the energy and positivity away. Nobody knows.



Photo: Don Hildred

Jean CAMERON



Wave (detail)

Glass copper foiled, soldered and attached to roofing iron
120 x 100 cm

The ocean is blue to me.

The ocean is not always blue, however that is the colour I always see.

It is sometimes a dark and mysterious blue which may evoke feelings of fear and trepidation or this depth of colour could bring a feeling of deep knowing.

It is also a light and frivolous blue which can represent a light heart, fun and joy.

The ocean is a 'feeling being' capable of the roar of rage and destruction to the gentle song which can lull one to sleep in no time.

It is the colour of emotion - blue.

Blue to me brings images of Greece straight to my mind. When I see pictures of the Greek islands, I marvel at the deep blue of the ocean, coupled with the blue sky that seems to be reflected onto the white buildings.

Many of these buildings have blue doors and blue domed roofs. The buildings with domes may be churches and have crosses on top.

The island of Santanini is one of the most popular places for tourists and is actually the rim of an extinct volcano.

The movie Mama Mia was made on the island of San Scatho.

City of churches (pictured)
Acrylics 20.0 x 25.5 cm

Mediterranean meal
Acrylics 10 x 10 cm



Photo: Don Hildred

■ Anita FLYNN

CLUBHOUSE ARTISTS

This group of talented artists meet at Toowoomba's Clubhouse on Sundays and have produced work specifically for this exhibition.

Photo: Don Hildred



The approach I always use is symbolism. The arrangement of chairs symbolises my place in the Toowoomba Clubhouse Association. I painted the Club's chairs with very deep indigo blue. On the centre chair I painted the image of a chameleon with phthalate blue to symbolise the 'blue' mood I feel when I'm depressed or unwell. The chameleon uses its ability to change colour not only for camouflage but for displaying mood. I painted only one chameleon as I am an individual and my analogy may differ from other members and this is a personal analogy.

Moody blue (detail)
Acrylic on canvas
59 x 49 cm

■ James McDade

CLUBHOUSE ARTISTS

This group of talented artists meet at Toowoomba's Clubhouse on Sundays and have produced work specifically for this exhibition.

This painting is an attempt to recreate an aspect of the artist's mind, both with the use of space and compositional elements, and show there is a universal connection between the thought processes that go on in the human mind and the natural environment around us.

The colour blue can be seen as being the environment of the mind, the colour that saturates the mind while it is working. The mood, the atmosphere that constitutes the area of cerebral activity, the colour blue is an evocation of human personality that is also universal in the natural environment.

Evocation
Oil on canvas
30 x 25 cm



Photo: Don Hildred

■ **Brendan TIMPERLEY**

CLUBHOUSE ARTISTS

This group of talented artists meet at Toowoomba's Clubhouse on Sundays and have produced work specifically for this exhibition.

For some blue means depression
Others see it in the sea or the sky
A few know it as the reverie of 'blue sky'
Our Australian flag bares the imperial notion of blue
For us Blue means all of these.

Across Australia on January 26, people consume food in celebration of a free and dynamic Australian culture.

This work comments on the 'turning of the page' in Australian history that Australia Day represents. One day, 25 January 1788 Aboriginal people feasted on a diverse banquet of bush tucker (as they had for thousands of years). The next day, a new paradigm arrived with the table setting of the First Fleet.

Australia Day importantly is a time to re-examine the status of the Indigenous perspective and their knowing of land, culture and history and how it underpins all that is celebrated in the diversity and identity of contemporary Australia.

Photo: Doug Spowart & Victoria Cooper



Australian banquet, January 25/26, 1788
Cyanotype image on rice paper
37.6 x 78.4 cm



Victoria COOPER & Doug SPOWART

Floods, January 2011
Copper and oil paint on canvas
50 x 96 x 48 cm



Photo: Don Hildred

Splashes of colour filling the dams and droplets of blue create puddles and bluebells. When I painted the drought, the landscape consisted of purple, yellow and oranges. With the rain and changes on the landscape, blue is being added to the palette. Rain falling like blue paint on the parched paddocks turning the landscape green. The celebration of the rain turned to trauma. The rain into floods, heartache blue.

Photo: Don Hildred



Blue into green
Oil on canvas
90 x 120 cm

In 2007 in response to the region's crippling drought, the ACT initiative of Avant Garden was born. I was fortunate to contribute the ephemeral sculpture 'Bed of Roses' to this project. It was situated in an empty pond in Queens Park and consisted of recycled Toowoomba City Council shower roses and scrap metal. In 2008-9 Avant Garden continued to bloom in our local parks, bringing inspiration and hope. In 2010 I became involved with ACT in an attempt to keep this wonderful project alive albeit with disheartening results.

The 'Still life with old rose/s' pieces lament the demise of the innovative Avant Garden project. Defeated, my work returns to the traditional walls of the art gallery, somewhat ironically as 'still lives'.

In 2011 joy and relief brought by drought-breaking rain was quickly followed by widespread flooding and heartache. The light which shines from the top right of both images suggests there will always be some hope amongst devastation.

(Son D'Optermism)



Photo: Don Hildred

Still life with old rose (pictured)
Acrylic and ink on canvas 30 x 30 cm

Still life with old roses
Acrylic and ink on canvas 101.0 x 76.5 cm

Mary-Kate KHOO

Photo: Don Hildred



Evolving: bluetiful blooming blooper (detail)
Paintable expandable foam
51 x 61 cm

Blue = Evolving:- Broodingly Bluetiful Blooming Bloopers

This artwork forms part of 'The Great Wall of Emotion' collection. Artist KarMa initiated 'The Great Wall of Emotion' project in 2008 to stimulate human emotional maturity through the viewer's resonance and appreciation of emotional symbols. It is hoped that the viewer will connect / resonate with these emotional artworks to appreciate the universality of human emotions, and thus gain empathy for global diversity in race, rank, religion and richness. The aim of the collection (now over 500 works) is to further evolve the emotional maturity of individuals, united toward sustainable futures.

These handwoven pieces address the theme by exploring the idea of Indigo Alchemy. Indigo, one of the historically oldest vegetable dyes found in numerous places around the world, produces a myriad of blue shades, utilized in what seems like a magical process. Unlocking the secret of how to obtain the dyestuff from the plant material is equally amazing. To me the colours produced are the most beautiful in the world.

Indigo alchemy (detail)
Raw silk, mulberry silk, indigo dyestuff and madder root
a. 198 x 24 cm, b. 195 x 24 cm



Photo: Don Hildred

Dana McCOWN

Photo: Don Hildred



...waiting (detail)
Recycled house timber
38 x 38 cm x 3

Blue is the sky stretched far across parched country. Sparse clouds bring little relief for the distressed land long overdue for a break in drought conditions... Before the artist's relocation to Toowoomba, blue horizons signified days devoid of climatic inconvenience. The process of cutting and reassembling house timber implies an understanding that personal perceptions may be altered by challenges new environments expose. Made late summer 2010, '...waiting' reflects a region idling desperate for a weather change. The catastrophic rains that drenched the Darling Downs barely a year later, give rise to the adage be careful what you wish for.

Poem: 'Alone'. Poetry is like a revolving door to the heart. It allows the poet to share inner thoughts, feelings and experiences and it gives the reader entrée into the poet's heart space. This poem invites the reader into the bleak and lonely place that is grief.

Photograph: 'Which way?'. I express my thoughts about the inner landscape of the mind through photographic form. For me blue evokes a mood state. In this photo I have spoken about the journey of depression. The ladder represents this journey. The water speaks of immersion into depression and of the fear of being submersed by its unknown depths. The ladder reminds us that there is a way out, a tough steep climb, where there is only room for one person to take one step at a time. It tells us not only of recovery but of possibility.

Which way?
Photograph
88 x 62 cm



Photo: Don Hildred

Judy RAFFERTY

The **Range Artists** are a vibrant group of real friends who capture this vibe in one great celebratory work. The artists united in 'colour and paint on canvasses' to create a collage. Each member contributed a very small canvas painted mostly in shades of blue. These canvasses were then bolted together as one work.

Enjoy the vastly different styles and subject matter from traditional landscape, through contemporary abstracts, to computer art.



Photos: Ros Billingsley

Blue horizons
Mixed media
(detail above)
190 x 93 cm



Rod Angood
Elma Beezley
Ros Billingsley
Rosemary Cuskelly
Diedra Drysdale
Jocelyn Girle
June Higton
Jocelyn Hunt
Shirley Langevad
Lynette Lewis
Bill Morton
Peggy Nobes
Pat Rixon
Judy Ross
Maxianne Simpson
Betty Tan

Photo: Pixie Roediger



Kitchen blues
Acrylic
61 x 76 cm

To me the colour blue is tranquillity, harmony and nostalgia. For generations, blue has been traditionally used in kitchens. The blue 'Willow pattern' dinner services, depicting the Chinese story have been displayed on many tables, both as utility and decoration. Blue complements various colours; it blends beautifully with the patina of natural timbers, of cupboards and benches.

Blue in our kitchen is a haven of peace and harmony.

Pixie ROEDIGER

'The new condition of the object must be between in an imaginable sense as well: it is something which is almost this, or almost that, but not quite either. The displacing experience is uncertainty of partial knowing.' Peter Eisenman

Due to my experiences and social background, I am interested in creating moments of displacement, through the use of contradictory logic, paradoxes and broken narratives. My sculptures reference recognisable architectural details, but the slippage of scale and the manipulation of space create an illusion of irrationality and impossibility, resulting in an alienation of the familiar. What emerge are unknown spaces and illusions, which force us to confront multiple possibilities and ultimately acknowledge the space of transit between the object and the viewer.

Jacob's ladder number 3 (detail)
Timber, flocking powder, fluorescent paint and black light
100 x 75 x 35 cm



Photo: George Szerencsi



Pablo
Acrylic on paper
84 x 62 cm

'Pablo' is based on an image of the famous Spaniard Pablo Picasso (age 74) taken by photographer Arnold Newman in 1954. At the beginning of the twentieth century, while still in his early twenties, Picasso produced a series of works, which we know as the Blue Period. Similarly the artwork Pablo is painted with cold shades of monochromatic blue, depicting a man at the pinnacle of his fame and fortune.

Change or cease
Acrylic on paper
84 x 62 cm

Brett Whiteley is one of Australia's best-known artists. 'Change or cease' is based on Graham McCarter's famous photograph of Whiteley. In this image Whiteley appears sombre and exhausted but still conveys a sense of confidence and arrogance.



Blue to me could be an emotion, a state of consciousness, a moment or reaction in action. To transition from one emotion to another, energy is required. The transition utilises energy and requires enthusiasm to support the change. The first work explores this transition and the second work, the resolution.

A reaction in action (pictured)
Mixed media, acrylic, string and tissue
76.0 x 101.5 cm

I get it
Mixed media, acrylic and wire
76 x 76 cm



Photo: Don Hilldred

Kim WALMSLEY

Photo: Maryika Welter



Blue is hollowness, a feeling of emptiness that voids the heart of love and joy though the grief of bereavement.

Blue strips the soul of any connection or identity through this loss.

Shadows

Mixed media on canvas

62 x 62 cm

Maryika WELTER

When racist crimes rocked Toowoomba, these women came together to build community connections, lift spirits, celebrate diversity and learn about each other's culture.

The choir's rainbow spectrum includes songs of African influence, Arabic, Australian Folk, Bantu, Brazilian Portuguese, Canadian French, Czech, Cook Islander, Danish, Early American, English, Fijian, Filipino, Finnish, French, German, Hawaiian, Hebridean, Hebrew, Hiligaynon, Hindi, Hungarian, Indigenous Australian, Indonesia, Irish Gaelic, Italian, Japanese, Kenyan, Korean, Latin, Mandarin Chinese, Maori, Polynesian, Russian, Scottish English, Scottish Gaelic, Sicilian dialect, Spanish, Sudanese, Swedish, Tagalog, Tahitian, Torres Strait and Welsh languages. A member might come to choir practice at Toowoomba West Special School on Saturday afternoons with the blues, but will go home singing with joy.



Photo: Zelida Richardson

Blue is just another colour in Women in Harmony's rainbow DVD

Toowoomba's WOMEN IN HARMONY choir

Once I saw blue sea and sky as endless, but this comforting view of the infinity of our atmosphere and sea is a delusional fantasy. The thin miracle of life on planet Earth is fragile and we as a species can no longer treat air and water as dumping grounds.

'Limits of blue' represents our fragile, blue biosphere.

Limits of blue (detail)
Oil over acrylic on canvas
120 x 148 cm



'Lavender blue dillies' acknowledges the first people with woven 'burden baskets'. Once used to carry food, medicinal herbs, tools and sacred objects these are placed at the front door. People can leave their burdens/blues in them rather than bring them in.

Lavender blue dillies (detail)
Lavender and rosemary woven with hand-painted silk
300 x 110 x 30 cm



Jennifer WRIGHT (Summers)

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