

# Bridget Seaton - NEWSLETTER – 13 May 2020

## WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING IN THE STUDIO

Being out of work and confined to my studio for the past two months has not been so bad at all and I am grateful for the distraction that Art provides and feel lucky to have space for a studio at home. At the beginning of WA's Covid 19 restrictions I found it difficult to be productive and seemed to be doing a lot of gardening instead of painting. It took me a couple of weeks to adjust and then I made myself a routine and got back into painting. I set myself a few challenges....

- testing out my new printing press
- painting in a square format and trying to move a little further into abstraction
- doing some online teaching in the form of my previously mentioned "Curiously Creative Sketchbook Challenge"

### TESTING OUT THE PRINTING PRESS

This has been a lot of fun and very messy. It is only a small A4 press which has its limitations. I have been working on collagraph and stencilling techniques. I haven't produced any finished work yet, but I have a few ideas brewing and some printmaking puzzles to solve. Up until a year ago painting big was a daunting prospect for me – but I have since gotten comfortable with larger work so an A4 press seems very small to me. My current challenge is to make a large print work with an A4 press so perhaps I will have come up with a solution by the next newsletter



Testing out the press



### PAINTING IN THE SQUARE

My favourite shaped canvas is the long thin rectangle and I rarely paint within the square format. Painting within a square format has its challenges and it is interesting to note that the old masters rarely painted within a square. In a rectangle our eyes move naturally from left to right or up and down. But in a square our eyes move around it in a circular way. Apparently, the composition needs to be simpler in a square format and creating a simple composition is harder than it sounds. So I thought I would make life difficult

for myself and tackle the square. (I need to do this as I found a large square stretcher frame on the verge recently that I need to use.) I have definitely found it harder to work within a square, but it has been a good challenge and something that I will keep going with. Here are some of my efforts. *Hot Sun, Warm Earth* is based on the Wandoo woodlands that are found in certain patches of the Perth Hills. I particularly love the warmth of colour in these woodlands. The tree trunks are very prominent, and the woodland floor is less vegetated than that of the Jarrah forests causing the orange earth to be more visible. I was playing around with colour a lot in these paintings and am currently fascinated by how different colours can disappear into each other if they are the same value and intensity.



*Work in progress*



*Hot Sun on Warm Earth*

#### ONLINE TEACHING – THE CURIOUSLY CREATIVE SKETCHBOOK CHALLENGE

Making videos for teaching was something I thought I would never do. I am quite camera shy and really don't like putting my face out there on the internet. But the pandemic forced me to rethink things and led me to approach teaching in an entirely different way. I have been running a sketchbook challenge via a private Facebook page which involves me posting a demonstration video 2 or 3 times a week of a suggested task. I have been happily surprised by how many people have joined in with this and it has given me a structured routine and a way to keep in touch with people in the art community. I know that many of you have become involved in this – thank you – it has bought me much purpose and happiness in an uncertain time. It has been a challenge for me because I normally paint trees and more trees but in this project I decided to do something different and tackle unfamiliar subjects such as still life and aspects of domestic life to reflect the weeks that we have all been spending at home. My sketch book is nearly full, and I will wrap the project up at the end of May.

My 'Stay at home' sketchbook



some of the sketchbook pages





For the first few weeks I was using my phone to do the videos and that was quite tricky. However when my webcam arrived (due to shortages it took 4 weeks) things got a lot easier.

This is how I do my demos. I attach a web cam to my portable metal easel and link it to my laptop. I find that with this set up I can record overhead desk shots fairly easily. Things get much harder when I want to record things from different angles.

## BUSH TRAVELS

Obviously due to the travel restrictions we have not been able to get out and explore the bush which is something that I have missed very much. Bush walking and camping are intrinsic to my work as an artist and we had to cancel all the trips we had planned. Getting away from the city and into the bush acts as a kind of recharge for me – a way for me to charge up both my artistic and mental batteries. So apart from the occasional bush walk in the Perth Hills I have been staying put at home and relying on my memories for inspiration.

Despite not being able to venture very far, something very exciting has been happening behind the scenes in a workshop in Mandurah. We purchased a 4WD in February with the intention to convert it into a camper so that we could do more exciting self-sufficient trips into the bush. At the moment we are having a camping canopy made to fit on the back of the 4WD. It will be completed by the end of May and as the regional restrictions have just been eased, we are already planning our next adventure.

## EXHIBITIONS/EVENTS

I am hoping to facilitate a way for people involved in the Curiously Creative Sketchbook Challenge to showcase their work if they wish. This is still in its early planning stages and I need to approach one of the local community art centres to see if they can help facilitate this. I have a vision to use my book binding skills to collaborate different peoples work together into a giant book. More on this in the next newsletter.

### QUOTE

*"If I could say it in words there would be no reason to paint."* – **Edward Hopper**