

panorama



Official Newsletter of Brighton Art Society Inc.

Issue
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August

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Members and Friends,

I hope you are enjoying the start of Term 3 and are back in the swing of BAS life.

As mentioned in our last newsletter, the Brighton Town Hall will be closing for the heating and cooling system upgrade in October 2024. The Committee and I thank the Bayside Council who have arranged a temporary location for the Society while the works are undertaken.

The site that we will use for Term 4 has recently been renovated, there is a large studio area, a kitchen, parking and is located next to a park. The address is 2A Francis Street Brighton East. I am personally looking forward to our change of location, and view this opportunity as the BAS summer holiday home. Our Term 4 timetable will be arranged in the next few weeks and will be issued with our next newsletter.

I'd like to thank all our volunteers. Your contributions are greatly appreciated. Your actions give the Society its community spirit and I am inspired and equally humbled by your ongoing support. As Coretta Scott King wrote, "The greatness of a community is most accurately measured by the compassionate actions of its members."

Kindest of Regards

Charmaine Cachia
President

GAUGUIN @ the ANG

The French artist Paul Gauguin is grouped with the so-called “Post Impressionists” along with Paul Cézanne and Vincent Van Gogh, both of whom he personally knew and painted with. Gauguin was born in 1848 and died in 1903, at the relatively young age of 54. His artistic life however, was unconventional in its path for one who ultimately became so eminent.

Although he had an early interest and began painting in his spare time from his mid 20s, it was not until 1882, when the financial crisis of that year impacted his successful and well remunerated career as a trader on the Paris Stock Exchange, that he decided to turn to painting full-time.

The prominent Impressionist Camille Pissarro, was an early mentor and supporter and Gauguin painted with him, both in Pissarro’s garden and on location outdoors. I will attempt to articulate, some aspects which distinguish “Post Impressionism” from its antecedent trend “Impressionism”, for it is these differences, which ultimately lead in Gauguin’s mature period, to the breakdown of his relationship with Pissarro.

The prompt for my present attention to the work of this painter, is a splendid exhibition currently on display at the Australian National Gallery in Canberra, which will continue until early October. It comprises a total of approximately 150 works, including drawings, prints, some ceramic pieces and a number of wood carvings. However, most of the works included are paintings, and it is indeed rare to see such a generous collection gathered together in one place and time.

Many of the works are on loan from the Musée D’Orsay (the adjunct of the Louvre which houses work from the mid C19th to early C20th) and other important French collections. However, there are also works from major American as well as other international public and private collections. An advantage of such an expansive display, is that inevitably, even with a painter of Gauguin’s calibre, there are stronger and weaker pictures and attentive examination of them, enables us, not only to better understand the artist’s interests and priorities, but to gain insight into what makes the best of his work so powerful.

As many of us would know, for the Impressionists, painting ‘en plein air’ and directly from the motif, was a common practice, which both prompted the criticisms from more academic artists that these works were just transitory “impressions” (and hence of lesser value than considered studio produced paintings), but it also gave the works a freshness and immediacy, combined with a new and adventurous use of colour, that has ensured an unquestioned position for them within the story of western art history.

For Gauguin, as for Cézanne however, their aims in painting had already shifted from the goals of the Impressionists. Gauguin had early connections with the “Synthetist” movement, which held that the painter should attempt to bring together, or “synthesise” the three important aspects of:

1. *The outward appearance of objects.*
2. *The artist’s feelings about the subject.*
3. *The purity of the aesthetic considerations of line, colour, form.*

In 1890, the artist Maurice Denis, who was also a follower of Synthetism, made the following observation: *It is well to remember that a picture, before being a battle horse, a nude woman, or some anecdote, is essentially a flat surface covered with colours assembled in a certain order.*

The more time I spent with the paintings in the current exhibition, the more I became attuned to the fact that these pictures are constructions or contrivances, rather than just the results of observation. Certainly Gauguin collected material from the environment about him, he was a skilled observer and draughtsman. At times he undoubtedly worked directly in front of his motif, if only for preparatory study, but ultimately he was grappling with the challenges of building the picture as an end in itself and looking at his pictures through this lens, we can discern the instances of brilliant triumph, over those which are more perfunctory.

At his best and I certainly think there are twenty or thirty works falling into this category here, the paintings are transformative, lifting us to a domain beyond common experience. But they are the result of considered design and following the Synthetist principles, purposefully bring together the outward appearance of the subjects with the feelings and priorities of the artist and the judicious organisation of the elements of design: line, colour and form.



Gauguin painted a number of pictures on arc-shaped formats which were intended to be made into folding paper fans. The enthusiasm for these in France in the late C19th, resulted from the influx of such fans from Japan at the time. Centrally placed in this still life, is a depiction of one such of his paintings.

All the works on display in the exhibition, are of modest, easel-sized scale, which is characteristic of Gauguin's work. This jewel-like still life, is perhaps no more than 40 x 50 cm in dimension and the compact size adds to its intensity. The upper half of the format, has a clearly defined layout, with a strong red/green complimentary colour

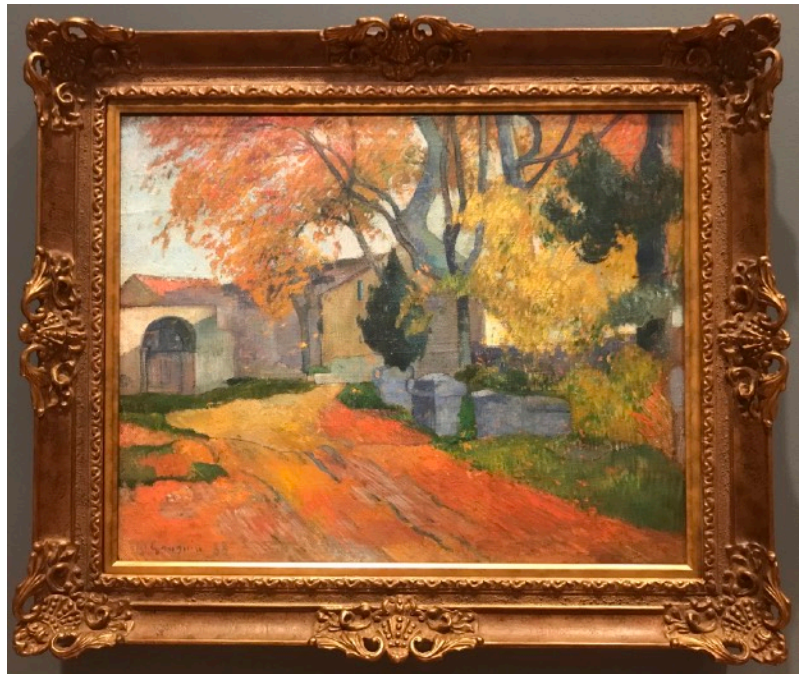
composition. It's interesting, that where the pink wall surface meets the table edge on the left hand side, Gauguin has pushed the colour of the table top, very close to the wall colour. The impact of this is to accentuate the optical flattening of the picture space.

I'm not sure exactly what the dark ornament on the picture's right hand side is, perhaps one of his own ceramics, but in the design of the picture, it is essential in establishing the spatial relationship between the table surface and the wall behind. If we momentarily cover it with our hand, the compositional balance of the picture is altered. All objects and surfaces here are delicately rendered. They are not however, *naturalistic* in their handling. For me, there is an almost collage-like quality about the picture, where the independent subject ingredients are shuffled around until a satisfying balance is achieved, whilst each maintains its independence.

Early in his career, Gauguin became associated with a style, referred to as "Cloisonnism", where bold, flat forms and colours, were surrounded by dark defining contours. The origin of this is found in a practice used in metal enamelling, where thin wires are placed on the metal surface to create the design and hold the differing coloured glass powders in place for firing. We can see some evidence of this approach here. For example, if we look at the point where the central bunch of apples meets the cast shadow to their left, a firm linear boundary line separates the fruit from its shadow. In a naturalistic treatment, this edge would be lost. Other examples of this can be found across the picture.

I stress this, simply to highlight the sense in which these paintings are designed and constructed as pictures, rather than just painted as an observation of the objects depicted. This became a defining difference between the Impressionists and Post-Impressionists.

This brilliantly hued painting depicts a scene in the town of Arles, from the period when Van Gogh and Gauguin were working there together, often side by side. The brushwork is finer and more cautiously laid down than that characteristic of Van Gogh, but the almost surreal autumnal palette would not be out of place in the latter's work. Again, compositionally, the picture is considered, elegant and well balanced.



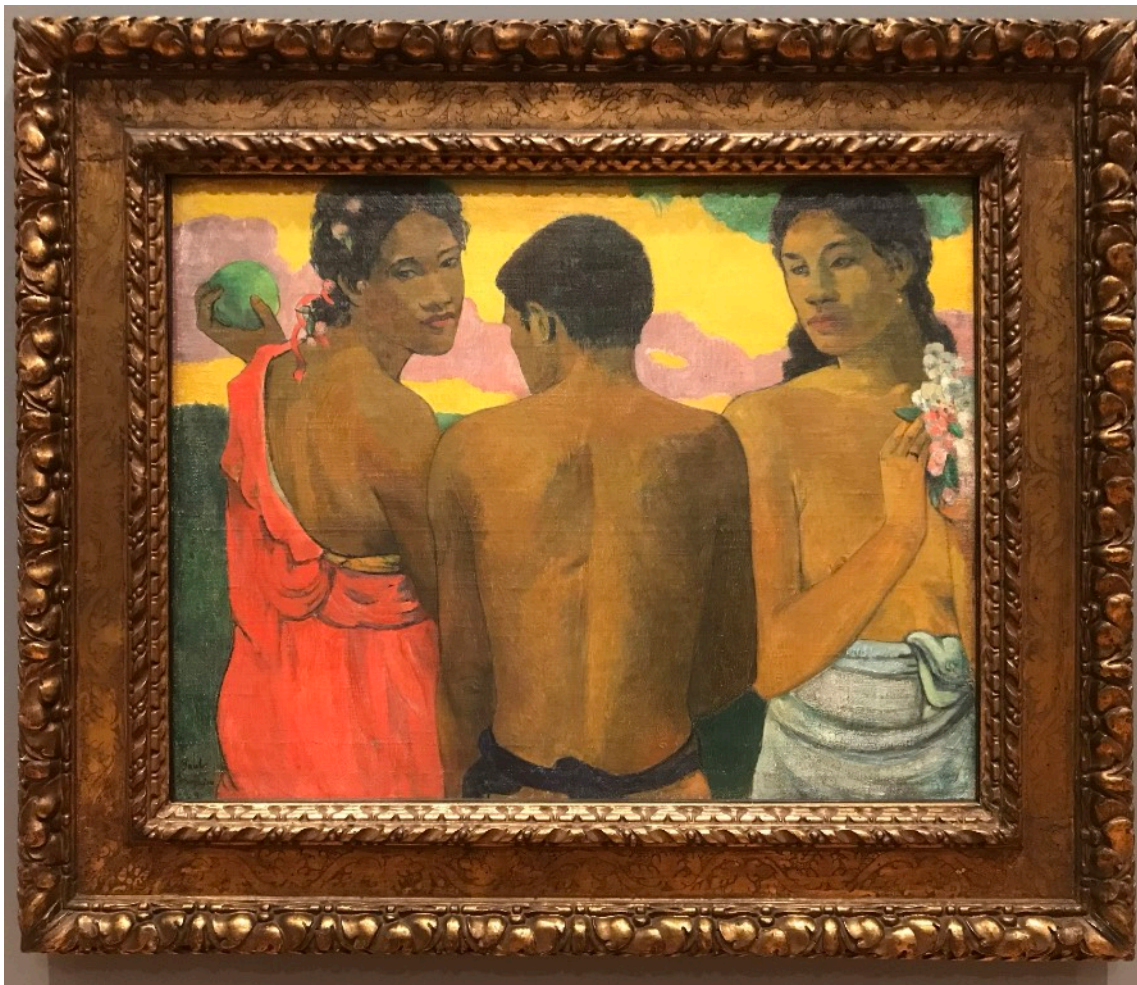
Le Pouldu is a small coastal village in the Brittany region of France, where Gauguin had spent time painting prior to leaving France. Rugged rock-strewn coastline is found there, with opportunities for elevated overviews which he has taken advantage of in this picture. Again, the painting is modest in scale, but fresh and engaging in its composition and colour usage. It is unlikely that the beach sand has the redness depicted, but in combination with the strong dark of the rock forms and lighter tones across the water, a powerful and alluring drama is achieved. The information panel beside the painting, notes a connection with Japanese woodblock prints in the heightened colour palette, the absence of an horizon line and the stylised swirls in the water and wave treatment. Japanese woodblock prints were familiar in France at the time and became a common source of inspiration from the Impressionists on.



This picture dates from the first months of Gauguin's initial stay in Tahiti. I would think it likely that he made drawings or studies of the two figures and subsequently assembled them for the finished painting. There is a sense of flatness and compressed space. We register that the women are seated on the sand, with the ocean in the further distance, but because the horizontal bands behind the two figures, are painted with a similar treatment to the surfaces and objects closer to us, we know that the picture's components are first and foremost functioning decoratively.

If we look at the figure on the left, the pose is powerful, with a strong curve travelling down from the head and around the back, before sweeping out horizontally on the brightly covered legs. The boldly positioned arm, extending skin tones down from the face and coming to rest at the large flattened hand is assured and assertive. The figure on the right, has a counterbalancing, inter-linked curve created as our eye travels down her left shoulder, arm and around the base of her pink dress. One foot projects playfully from the fabric on each figure.

For me, all ingredients of this picture come consummately together. The colour balance is rich and judiciously organised and the composition is assured and delightfully lyrical.



The date of this picture places it toward the close of Gauguin's second stay in Tahiti. The figures are strongly sculptural, but again, the depiction of space is compressed. The brilliant high-keyed bands of colour wafting behind, effectively silhouette the three figures, though the saturated red dress of the figure to the left, balances the intensity of the yellow behind. An underlying curve, sweeping down from the shoulder of the leftmost figure, across the lower back of the central male figure and up again along the forearm of the right hand figure, is firm and compositionally unifying. Perhaps surprisingly, this picture is held in the Scottish National Gallery in Edinburgh, but the accompanying information panel indicates that it is "Widely regarded as one of the artist's most important paintings....".

A trip to Canberra simply to see an exhibition, may require a certain dedication, but for any of us with an affection for the work of this artist, it is a rare opportunity. The ANG's permanent collection, also has many strengths and will compliment the visit. I would not hesitate to recommend it.

Member Only
Untutored Life & Portraiture
Drawing and Painting Groups
Model Sessions

Attendance is on a casual basis, so you pay only when you attend. The fee is to cover the cost of the model, please pay the convenor of the group at the start of each session. Brighton Art Society current membership is required to attend these sessions.

Life Drawing

Changing poses from 2 - 20 minutes duration

Mondays 7:30pm - 9:30pm

Convenor: Lyn Stephens 0400 008 058

\$20 per session

Life Drawing & Painting

Nude and/or draped model studies – one pose set for three weeks.

Tuesday 3:30pm - 6:30pm

Roz McQuillan 0413 918 486

\$25 per session

Life Drawing & Painting

The main pose is set for three weeks, preceded by short poses (of five to ten minutes) each week.

Thursday 1:30pm - 3:30pm

Linda Campbell 0417 021 770

\$15 per session

Portraiture Painting & Drawing

Clothed or costumed models – pose set for three weeks.

Thursday 4:00pm - 7:00pm

Convenor: Rod Edelsten 9525 7036

\$25 per session

Portrait Painting/Drawing

Develop your portrait painting skills with a new model every three weeks
- set pose of three weeks.

Saturdays 2:00pm - 4:00pm

Convenor: Ann Black 9598 7626

\$15 per session



Brighton Art Society Inc

Term 3 Starts 22 July 2024 - Class Bookings Open Now

New Members Welcome - All Skill Levels

www.brightonartsociety.com.au

Phone: 0494 118 601 (Message Service)

Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Workshops/Short Courses
9.00 am							
9.30 am	Untutored Group Conv - Eddie Moses 9.30 - 12.00				Class Painting Oil/Acrylic Vivi Palegeorge 9.30 - 12.00 Selected dates refer to website	Short Course - 4 Wks Introduction to Portraiture Michelle Zucolo 10.00 - 12.30 Saturday 31/8 to 21/9	Short Course - 4 Wks Introduction to Watercolour Vivi Palegeorge 10.30 - 1.00 Saturday 20/7 to 10/8
10.00 am				Class Life Drawing Michelle Zucolo 10.00 - 12.30			
10.30 am							
11.00 am							
11.30 am							
12.00 pm							
12.30 pm							
1.00 pm							
1.30 pm							
2.00 pm				Untutored Group Life Drawing & Painting Conv - Linda Campbell 1.30 - 3.30		Untutored Group Portrait Painting & Drawing Conv - Ann Black 2.00 - 4.00	Workshop - 1 Day Painting in Watercolour Maxine Wade Sunday 11 August 10.00 - 4.00
2.30 pm							
3.00 pm							
3.30 pm		Untutored Group Life Drawing & Painting Conv - Roz McQuillan 3.30 - 6.30					
4.00 pm							
4.30 pm							
5.00 pm				Untutored Group Portraiture Painting & Drawing Conv - Rod Edelsten 4.00 to 7.00			
5.30 pm							
6.00 pm							
6.30 pm							
7.00 pm	Untutored Group Life Drawing Conv - Lyn Stephen 7.30 to 9.30	Class Acrylic Painting Paul Anderson 7.00 - 9.00	Class Oils and other Media Elizabeth Paszko 7.00 - 9.00				
7.30 pm							
8.00 pm							
8.30 pm							
9.00 pm							
9.30 pm							

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2024 Committee

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Immediate Past President - Lynton Daehli
Treasurer - Joanne Roach
Secretary - Elly Abrat
Committee Member --Paul Anderson
Committee Member - Eddie Moses
Committee Member - Ron Vanderburg
Panorama - Vladimir Tsyskin

BAS OFFICE 0494 118 601

Dates to remember:

Term 3 - Mon 22nd July to Fri 20th
September

BAS Annual Exhibition - Wed 13th
November to Thur 21 November

Email your contributions to:
brightonartsociety@icloud.com