

**NEWSLETTER SEPTEMBER 2019**

Editor Judith McCulloch

**DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE**

Once again, our annual exhibition on the weekend of 24 and 25 August was a great success with over 500 people attending the two-day event. We received many favourable remarks on the high standard of the arrangements and the set-up of the Auditorium.

Many thanks must go to our Exhibition Chairperson, Vernisher Wooh, who spent many months leading up to the exhibition, thinking and planning for this event. Even last year, whilst in the middle of cleaning up after that exhibition, Vernisher mentioned to me her ideas for the 2019 exhibition. Vernisher's mind is always thinking ikebana and how best to spread her love of it. Vernisher is the current recipient of the Norman and Mary Sparnon Endowment Scholarship and headed off to Tokyo at the beginning of September for her three-months intensive studies. We wish her well.

Also, thanks to the Convenor of the Front Door, Nicole; Masako on the Trade Table, and Ingrid in the Kitchen, and their teams. Of course, those areas could not function without the enthusiastic support that they received from all the members. Thank you!

Masako made comment that the sales at the trade table were made a little easier with the use of the EFTPOS machine. Thank you, Nicole, for sorting this out. Also, Ingrid wishes to thank everyone who contributed by bringing along home-made goodies and sandwiches for the kitchen.

Mention must also be made to those who provided the demonstrations on both days, and did so with skill, confidence and humour. A couple of these demonstrators were first timers but handled themselves well on the big stage.

Our "hands-on classes" were very popular again this year, with both Michelle and Sandra, and their many helpers, assisting and encouraging the enthusiastic groups which included women, men and children.

As expected, Pat and Chieko were once again very informative and entertaining Tour Guides, thank you both.

Thank you to Greg Killoran, with the assistance of Jan, for being the chief photographer of our beautiful arrangements. And thank you to those people behind the scenes, such as family members and friends.

Let's continue our journey that the love of Sogetsu ikebana brings.

Catherine Purdon

**BEST WISHES TO VERNISHER!!****WE HOPE YOU HAVE A WONDERFUL THREE MONTHS IN JAPAN AS THE CURRENT RECIPIENT OF THE NORMAN AND MARY SPARNON SCHOLARSHIP.**

This year our Annual Sogetsu Ikebana Exhibition was opened by Mr Tarun Nagesh, curator of Asian Art at QAGOMA.

I'd like firstly to thank and Sue Poole, Secretary, Queensland along with the open this year's exhibition.

It's a great pleasure and Sogetsu Queensland annual is the 45<sup>th</sup> year exhibiting such an incredible feat in

As many of you have a much Sogetsu ikebana in this would share some of my own the same kind of appreciation.



Catherine Purdon, Director, of Sogetsu Ikebana members for the invitation to

honour to be here at another exhibition, in what I believe at Mt Coot-tha which is itself.

longer experience of context, I thought I experiences that motivated

As many of you know Sogetsu Queensland also provide weekly arrangements at the Queensland Art Gallery. It's one of the great benefits of working at the Gallery, one that many of the staff admire, with a fresh arrangement every week. And I often get approached from staff all across the organisation asking 'have you seen the ikebana this week?' I often tell interstate and international visitors about it very proudly, and it's incredible that we have an artwork that changes every week. We know the arrangements are for the visitors, but I can promise you the staff get a huge amount of enjoyment from them. So while I may be far from the local Sogetsu expert, I feel I'm one of its most regular audience walking past an arrangement almost every day.

My own introduction to Ikebana taught me a lot about Japanese aesthetics which has since become a great passion, it was particularly an entry point into appreciating seasonal natural forms, about considering balance and negative space, about the beauty of arrangements that are temporary with the ability to respond so directly to a particular time and space. It was particularly the Sogetsu school that taught me that ikebana could come from a discipline but be inherently experimental with material, form and scale, as well as being personal while remaining part of a long and vibrant tradition. I felt it could challenge the notions of what constitutes art, and while doing so challenge artistic conventions through being living, adaptive and impermanent. I've encouraged many colleagues and artists to learn more about ikebana, and indeed many celebrated Australian artists have drawn enormous inspiration from Sogetsu ikebana.

While working in Melbourne some years ago I was able to meet many passionate Ikebana practitioners, and for me I found the Sogetsu group was the most active and exciting, which showed me the great diversity of flower arrangements that could truly be experimental and cutting edge artworks.

It was only a matter of a couple of weeks after I joined the gallery here that I started asking around about the incredible arrangements I would see weekly. And over the years have had the great privilege to meet so many of the Sogetsu Queensland members, many of whom have become good friends, and I often bump into and talk about the arrangements, as well as a chance to talk about art, exhibitions and Japanese culture from a different perspective. Not to mention to be able to appreciate the materials of a much more favourable

climate than Melbourne.

A number of times I asked around how long there had been weekly arrangements, and it seemed so long ago no one could quite remember. I have come across records of arrangements going all the way back to 1983 and weekly arrangements at least since 1993, with people like John Massy and Nora Dyer being instrumental in reaching an ongoing agreement with the Gallery that has proven to have such a legacy loved by so many.

Even earlier in 1967 Sofu Teshigahara visited Brisbane and a couple of years later the Japanese Consul donated one of his sculptures to the Queensland Art Gallery. This is a substantial artwork that we were able to put on display next to current Sogetsu Queensland member's arrangements a couple of years ago to celebrate the 50 year anniversary of Sogetsu Queensland. So I think there are so many long and strong links between Sogetsu Queensland and the broader local and international arts community to be celebrated.

I was excited to hear this year's theme would take a premise of Innovation, a subject that for me is truly fundamental to the Sogetsu school and something that I think is reflected so strikingly and diversely through innovation in concept, form, material, scale and through collaborative approaches.

The annual exhibition is something I look forward to every year as well as I'm sure you all do. It's always a celebration of colour, of carefully collected natural and found materials, of individual personality and style as well as collaboration. And always a reflection of people working within the established school of Sogetsu, but finding the space to be expressive and experimental. The space to be innovative.

I would like to congratulate the members for the arrangements in this year's show, which is a great pleasure to experience and I'm sure will give great joy to many visitors over the next few days.

So it's my great honour to officially open the 2019 Sogetsu Ikebana Queensland annual exhibition.

Thank you.

(This is a copy of the opening address given by Tarun Nagesh)



Committee members Ingrid, Nicole, Catherine, Chieko, Sallyanne, Vernisher in the photo at left; Christine and Sue in the photo on the right



## BAMBOO INSTALLATION AT THE BRISBANE EKKA—a great experience.

Firstly an early start to select and collect bamboo.

During the cutting and cleaning of our bamboo, there were many of our senses in play. Between us comments of "Feel this, it is so smooth!" "Look at the beautiful green stripes in this one!" "Oh, we have to have this one!" There was immediate beauty oozing from the bamboo - quiet, smooth and strong. We were excited.

The 'ute' was loaded up and Julie navigated our way to the EKKA.

On arrival we found that our intended space was occupied and another space was designated to us. Considering the new environment required that some changes in design had to be made. I think this is called 'thinking on your feet'. Now, for Vernisher, Julie, Michelle and Chris it was down to the serious business of making this creative structure stable and satisfying Workplace Health and Safety. With Vernisher as our leader we began. This was a great learning experience and refresher for us.

Once the bamboo structure was stable, completing four individual arrangements to sit within the bamboo structure became the easy part. Final cleanup, photos taken, a maintenance roster in place, we left feeling satisfied after our day-long experience.

Christine Wyer

Left: with their arrangement—Michelle,  
Chris, Vernisher and Julie



Below: ikebana in the Japanese Garden on 18 August.

Top—Chris and Sandra; Below—Chieko and Michelle



Ikebana by Michelle in the  
Mt. Coot-tha Gardens Visitor  
Centre



## HERE ARE SOME VIEWS OF OUR EXHIBITION



Jan and Wendy at the welcome table

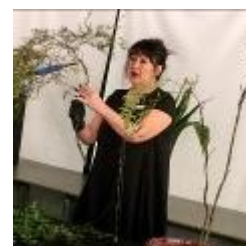


Pat attending to her arrangement



Nicole, Wendy, Julie and Belinda-lee demonstrated ikebana on Sunday.

The finished arrangements are below



On the trade table—Vernisher and Masako at left; Masako and Michelle at right



Amanda, Gillian and Karen at the refreshment counter. Below Judith, Jan and Ingrid are serving delicious morning tea.



Pat with friends





# MORE VIEWS OF THE EXHIBITION



Jan, Joy and Julie setting up



Catherine admiring Wendy's arrangement



Close inspection



Michelle at the trade table



Prior to the exhibition Catherine put a display of her ikebana in the glass case at Toowong library.



At the closing of the exhibition Vernisher presented certificates to her students Michelle, Esther, Jo-Anne and Masako





## Were you at the General Meeting on 27 July?



Above: Masako, Carolyn, Fay, Julie, Nicole, Ingrid, Sallyanne, Pat, Del, Belinda, Vernisher and Catherine. Above right: Christine and Nicole.

Below L to R: Fay, Ingrid, Julie, Del, Pat, Judith



## GENERAL MEETING held on Saturday, 27 July

The General Meeting was attended by 15 members most of whom did an arrangement beforehand, the theme being *one kind of material*.

## PAT'S IKEBANA STUDENTS ENJOYING THEIR IKEBANA:

Top left—Ann with “plants on a wall”

Top right—Carol, Nicole and Julie with a construction of frangipani branches.

Below left—Amanda having fun with her work after class.

Below right—Wendy Hoskin carrying bamboo in her new convertible.



## DEMONSTRATIONS AT THE FERNY GROVE GARDEN CLUB

I was invited again by the Secretary of the Ferny Grove Garden Club to demonstrate Sogetsu ikebana before one of their monthly meetings. At these meetings, they have a "show and tell" plant and flower competition as well as floral art displays, which are also judged by those attending.



As on the previous occasion, I was warmly welcomed by the President, Secretary and members of the group when I arrived on Friday afternoon, 26 July.

Those 25 or so who were in attendance listened intently to my brief talk on Sogetsu Ikebana and seemed to enjoy my demonstrations.

Catherine Purdon

The photos below were contributed by Vernisher



Pat, Wendy and Nicole did ikebana arrangements on 27 July 2019 at the Camellia Show at Mt. Coot-tha. Below are photos sent by Nicole.





## Introducing Children to Ikebana: A Class Approach

It has been my pleasure on four occasions to introduce children to the wonders of Sogetsu Ikebana. I am Principal at a Brisbane primary school. We teach Japanese as our Language Other Than English and in 2019 we extended the Japanese Program to all students at the school, from Prep students to Year 6 students. As part of our program



we have weekly Japanese language lessons with two teachers and a Japanese Language Assistant. We host Japanese school visits and hold a Japanese Festival. As a reward for the best performing Japanese classes in Years 5 and 6 I teach two Sogetsu Ikebana lessons.

Lessons start with a theory based power point presentation that looks at

- ◆ The history of Ikebana and the founding of the Sogetsu School
- ◆ Angles and symmetry
- ◆ Line, colour and mass
- ◆ Length and depth
- ◆ Ratio in relation to Shin, Soe and Hikae
- ◆ Containers
- ◆ Materials
- ◆ Less is more and
- ◆ Room for the butterflies

I then demonstrate basic upright styles in both Moribana and Nageire, asking students to participate by assisting with the placement of various materials. I was disappointed in one lesson as a student was using his I-pad during the lesson. When queried he replied, "I am looking at ikebana photos. There are heaps of them".

Sogetsu Ikebana is to be shared with others. Those classes who have their lessons in August, display their work at the Peg and Line Art Show hosted by the school. This sees 600 people visiting the show.



The children whose lessons are held in December display their work on the tables that are set for the Principal's High Tea. The High Tea is a reward for 25 children, and their families celebrate the wonderful semester each child has had.

I was also asked by the school's environment group to do something with them. We joined together to create an installation using bamboo triangles and palm stems grouped to form tripods. This was then displayed on assembly, where two of the children proudly spoke about the activity.

For me the joy of sharing Sogetsu Ikebana was verified when listening to the children talk to their parents about what they had learnt in their special lesson. The pride with which they spoke was wonderful. The feedback they wrote says it all.



- ♦ *I learnt that when you put flowers in a vase, less flowers are more. What I enjoyed was being a part of the class and doing it. (Issac 9)*
- ♦ *what I learnt from the lesson was leave room for the butterflies. The thing I enjoyed most was how peaceful it was to do. To relax with flowers is really nice. (Eva 10)*
- ♦ *what I learnt was how to use a kenzan and that it is really useful to hold up plants and flowers. Genius idea using dry and dead plants as stands. We also learnt to cut flowers underwater. It stops the air going in and the flower survives! (Martin 9)*

In Book 5, Lesson 30, *What Ikebana can do Today*, Iemoto Akane urges us to showcase ikebana to the world.

*"If that is put into practice, you will be able to feel how much happiness and pleasure Ikebana can give people".*

This sentence summed up how I felt in sharing my love of this beautiful art form.

Wendy Hoskin

### BAMBOO SOCIAL DAY

A day out with fellow members cutting and constructing with bamboo sounds like a very pleasant way to spend Saturday 28 September.

Meet at the Ellen Grove property at 10.00am.

Bring bamboo saws, splitters, battery drills, wire, branch cutters.

And don't forget your lunch and a blanket or chair, as well as sunscreen and hand sanitiser.

For handling bamboo, gloves, preferably leather should be worn.

Refer to Catherine's emails.

### DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

- Saturday 28 September—Bamboo Social Day
- Wednesday 4 December—Sogetsu end of year lunch
- 22, 23 August 2020—Annual Exhibition

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- Tuesday 24 March 2020—60 year celebration lunch, exhibition, demonstration for Lismore I.I.
- November 2020—Visit by Iemoto Akane Teshigahara to Sydney