



**SOGETSU IKEBANA QUEENSLAND INC.**

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## Director's Message-September 2020

**Catherine Purdon**

As to be expected, it has been a relatively quiet three months ikebana wise since the last Newsletter in June.

We were fortunate to be able to hold our *General Meeting* on Saturday, 25 July, by taking into consideration all the COVID-19 Guidelines put out by the Brisbane City Council regarding the hiring of Community Halls. Eighteen members attended the meeting and prior to its commencement, enjoyed a presentation by Vernisher Wooh, who is the most recent recipient of the Norman and Mary Sparnon Endowment Scholarship. Vernisher spoke about her three months in Tokyo (September, October, and November 2019) and shared some of the photos of the arrangements she did at the classes she attended during that time. A more detailed report of her talk is covered further in this Newsletter.

After quite a lengthy period restructuring and modernising our previous website, I am happy to report that the new website, which was launched on 22 July, is now up and running.

Fingers crossed now that the teething issues have finally been sorted, it should just be the uploading of new photos and the usual maintenance as ongoing issues. This project was expertly handled by Nicole Dorner-Scales, our Web Manager.

It is very exciting indeed that QAGOMA is now taking photographs of our Sogetsu Ikebana arrangements, installed each Friday at the Queensland Art Gallery, and uploading them onto their social media sites under the #IkebanaFriday hashtag. The arrangements continue to receive many favourable comments from the public as well as from staff who work at the Art Gallery, from the Director down! As an example I saw a comment recently about one of our member's Queensland Art Gallery arrangements: "it did make me stop for a few moments and just soak it in. I found it both incredibly beautiful and very calming".

As you'd be aware, the annual Sogetsu Ikebana exhibition which was scheduled for the weekend of 22 and 23 August at the Brisbane Botanic Gardens Mt Coot-tha Auditorium had to be cancelled due to the restrictions imposed to contain the effects of COVID-19.

Queensland members of Sogetsu Ikebana have been exhibiting at the Auditorium continuously since 1974 so it was a huge disappointment that this event was unable to go ahead this year. Instead, a "Virtual Exhibition, My Ikebana" for 2020 was developed and overseen by Vernisher, the Exhibition Chairperson. Thirty-eight members took part and presented some wonderful arrangements. For the viewer's pleasure, photos of these arrangements have been uploaded onto our new website.

I recently came across an article about hydrangeas and I thought I would share these few sentences that were contained in it:

*In their native Japan, hydrangeas are associated with heartfelt emotions. The origin story tells of an emperor who fell in love with a local girl but was unable to marry her. In lieu of a life together he gave her a hydrangea.*

Take care.

Catherine Purdon

## Extract from Kadensho

The below is from **Kadensho** *The Book of Flowers* by Teshigahara Sofu  
***Ikebana and me.***

I wish people would always be close to flowers. People should never deny their presence. Those who do so cease being human.

People who don't carry within them something which sets them free are not really alive. What sets us free? It is the things we love. By devoting ourselves to the things we love, we become free and live fulfilled lives.

The highest expression of human nature is the joy of creating. There is a huge difference in whether one realises this joy or not. Those who don't lead unhappy lives.

Ikebana is born from the encounter of nature and humans; it is the coming together of nature and human life. Ikebana can be done anywhere by anyone. There are no national or ethnic boundaries. Like flowing waters or drifting clouds, ikebana spreads throughout the world.

The special quality of hand-made things is being lost in the modern world. Only ikebana remains entirely hand made. Flowers - impossible to make by machine - are set by human hands into a hand-made vase.

Ikebana is an art of the moment. Sometimes the settings get better after an amount of time has elapsed and then a certain moment is reached when the setting no longer looks good.

In other words, there is a significance in each moment. The moment of budding is wonderful, but so is the moment of blooming. The moment when the flowers become just a little too

heavy is also quite special. Think in terms of the moment: there is no need to constrain your imagination.

As the years pass and we grow older; we realise that no moment repeats itself - they are all unique. Ikebana gives life to the moment. Whether the material be plants, metal, or stone, I feel fascination and wonder toward its physical makeup, and all I can do is give life to this sense of wonder through my artistic works. I do this through my own style and methods. I don't necessarily change my method according to the material, and no matter what material I choose to use, the result is always an expression of me, not the material. I have always done exactly what I've wanted to do and will continue to do so.

The moon is often referred to as a dead, barren world, but I think this is not necessarily the case. The moon has a life of its own. Seen from the viewpoint of the earth, the moon might be lifeless, but I have the feeling it contains a different kind of life. What would I do if I went to the moon where there were no flowers? I think I would do all right. Man doesn't need flowers to create. We set flowers because we have them, but the joy and hope we receive from flowers doesn't mean that we are helpless without them.

There is blessedness in crying for beauty.  
There is blessedness in yearning for beauty.  
There is blessedness in serving beauty.  
There is blessedness in creating beauty.

## **Vernisher Wooh- Recipient of 2019 Norman and Mary Sparnon Endowment Scholarship**

I am very honoured to have been awarded the 7<sup>th</sup> Norman and Mary Sparnon Endowment Scholarship in 2018. As it was a very enriching experience for me, I wish to share my experience and moments with all members.

I left for Japan in September 2019 to commence the scholarship (after the Sogetsu Ikebana Queensland's annual exhibition) and after much consideration on which months best to go. I began the planning since early 2019. On information provided by Barry De Crummere and Christopher James, I decided to stay at a serviced apartment in Nishi-Shinkuku. It was a convenient location with a 24 hour supermarket and 7-11 family mart nearby. There was also easy access to public transport, including 2 subways (Odeo Line and Marunouchi Line), which are 5 minutes away and do not require any change of train line. In May 2019, I negotiated with the headquarters on the lesson timetable for the 3 months. I also booked the flights with travel insurance and paid upfront for the accommodation myself.



While at the headquarters, I attended the Iemoto classes, teacher's workshops, special workshops and international classes. The lessons were attended for 5 days on a weekly basis, which included day and night classes. I experienced a few typhoons while I was there and lessons were cancelled after states of disaster were experienced.

The Sensei strongly recommended that every teacher should practice Ikebana every week and strive to continue to take lessons. For members who have 3<sup>rd</sup> grade teachers' diploma, they are encouraged to sketch their arrangements and designs before starting their arrangements. Sensei also encourages regular practice of the lessons in the textbook and with the aim to change their design. At the Teachers' workshops, a key take home message was that Ikebana teachers should not just focus on specific types of arrangements but should strive to work towards a range of different arrangements and expand their creation. If not, it can hinder their progress in teaching their students.

I also had the opportunity to attend a photography course. This was a very useful course, which helped me learn how best to position the arrangements for photo-taking and the use of appropriate lighting techniques to bring out the best in the arrangement. The combination of lessons certainly broadened my perspective on doing the arrangements.

During my spare time, I used every opportunity to attend a number of art museums, visited Sogetsu exhibitions in various districts and viewed different arrangements done by teachers and students. In October 2019, I travelled to Nagoya, Kyoto, Okayama and Naoshima Island (Art Island).

For more than 10 years, I have attended the annual exhibitions and lessons in Japan.

However, I have never participated in the Sogetsu Ikebana exhibitions in Japan. I had the opportunity to exhibit my arrangement at the Spiral Garden located at Omote-Sando. Through this experience, I have learnt a few things through the strict criteria set for the exhibit arrangements.

I still have endless experiences I would like to share with everyone. Given the limitation to share all my experiences in this article, please feel free to visit my website [www.ikebanavernisher.com](http://www.ikebanavernisher.com)

It will show many photos that share my scholarship journey in Japan which will be enjoyable to all. Lastly, I also like to thank everyone for their wonderful support!





# General Meeting



The General Meeting was held on 25<sup>th</sup> of July at Perrin Park.

To begin the day we had the pleasure of listening to Vernisher reflect on her time in Japan last year.

This was followed by a meeting that included:

- information about the virtual exhibition which was uploaded in late July
- the new website which is now operational
- Roster Guidelines for exhibiting at the art gallery
- upcoming workshops
- storage of the organisation's assets
- a reminder that the Christmas Lunch is on December 2<sup>nd</sup> 2020 at a venue to be decided
- and closed with a vote of thanks to Vernisher.



## Zoom Workshop with Mr Ken Katayama

Victorian Sogetsu Branch member, Dr Shoso' Shimbo, organised a 'Zoom' ikebana class with Mr Ken Katayama in Fukuoka.

Two members of our association participated, Michelle Wong and Julie Lumsdale.

### Zoom Lessons come to Sogetsu Ikebana by Julie Lumsdale

On Tuesday 25 August 2020 I was invited to join six other Ikebana Teachers to present our arrangements on Zoom. I was pleasantly surprised to be successful as initially they indicated only one person from Queensland would be included. Mr Ken Katayama was to give advice on the arrangements and pre- and post-arrangements were to be uploaded to the Ikebana Dojo site.

Becoming familiar with Zoom I considered was prior learning with my desktop computer. However I needed to use an iPad I thought for best results. This meant I had to resolve previously ignored stumbling blocks to make this happen. Finally this was achieved after calling Telstra and then sourcing Apple help and finally arranging for the link to the Zoom meeting to be sent to my husband's gmail account. (This was no small feat I can assure you!) Next we were required to view Mr Katayama's work, including at Auckland's anniversary conference (remember when we could do this - travel overseas, meet new Ikebana people, wine and dine etc), or on his website for arrangements to copy or be inspired by. I chose an arrangement involving fruit (apples) in front of a traditional Japanese painting.

Fruit trees may be easy at certain times of the year yet I struggled to find any, except some wild oranges in a remote location. I practiced my arrangement after collecting a container from Pat Mackie, my teacher. Pat made comments about my arrangement and I went home with the container in preparation for "the event". It would appear I have performance anxiety whenever I need to produce work for others. And this was Mr Katayama who was going to comment on the arrangement!

So when the Monday arrived (we had to send our arrangement photos to Dr Shimbo 24 hours prior to the Zoom meeting) I realised the fruit I had collected were not in pristine condition. So there was last minute panic to return to the orange tree location to find the bats or possums had acquired a taste for the oranges and very few fruit were left!

Back at home with the photo sent and the technology working I had the arrangement set up in the room as requested ready for the meeting to go ahead. We had to include one question with the photo of the arrangement like "How can I



disguise the back stem of the Strelitzia?" I was third in line to have my arrangement reviewed and Mr Katayama indicated that the flowers needed to be in water and bent for correct placement. He also commented that the container was too dominant and more leaves were required to balance the arrangement with the container. I completed these two tasks and uploaded a new photo to the Ikebana Dojo site as requested.

So a few lessons I had from this event:

- 🌈 Always put your name into the barrel even if you don't think you will be selected.
- 🌈 Don't leave technology issues pending - you may need them to work in a short time frame.
- 🌈 Don't panic about the experience - everyone is human even Mr Katayama.
- 🌈 Opportunities like this are great for learning - from your own arrangements and others.
- 🌈 Try something different - you might be surprised how much you really know and RELAX!

Julie

I was so excited to participate in the workshop. I learned more about design and flower arranging when Mr Katayama shared his comments on our work (See below)

My before photo (adjacent) was submitted with Mr Katayama subsequently suggesting that my firestick branches needed to be elongated and perhaps I didn't need the sunflowers.

Alexander Evans, (a participant from NSW, see below), has a good work. Mr Katayama told him to change the flower position to become mass. It made a big difference to his arrangement. I enjoyed the workshop. Michelle



The feedback I got from Katayama Sensei was that it would be good to bring the three dahlias together to form a single cohesive mass rather than having them with a little space between them. It was only a small change but significant.

Alexander Evans [www.hanakuma-ikebana.com](http://www.hanakuma-ikebana.com)

Thank you to everyone who has made this newsletter so interesting. Please consider making contributions as it is your contributions that add to the connectedness of our newsletter. Our next newsletter is due out November.

Wendy Hoskin, Editor

