



SOGETSU IKEBANA QUEENSLAND INC.

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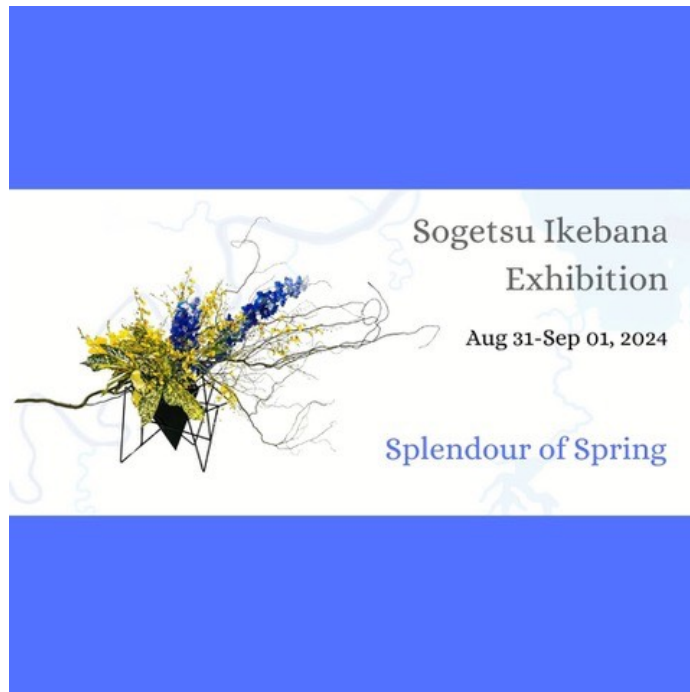
Newsletter July 2024

Editor Amanda Terblanche

Director's Message

Wendy Hoskin

The Director and Members of Sogetsu Ikebana Queensland Inc. have pleasure in announcing our annual exhibition of Ikebana - the elegant art of Japanese flower arranging.



When - **Saturday 31 August and Sunday 1 September, 2024** from 10 am to 4 pm daily.
Where - Brisbane Botanic Gardens, Mt Coot-tha Auditorium, Mt Coot-tha Road, Toowong, Brisbane.

The exhibition will be opened by the Consul-General of Japan, Mr Junji Gomakubo, on Saturday 31 August at 10:15 am.

Admission \$5

Free ikebana demonstrations 10:30 am and 1 pm daily

Guided tours of the exhibition 11:30 am and 2:30 pm daily

Hands-on workshops at 2 pm daily (\$10.00)

Light refreshments available for purchase

Ikebana containers and related materials available for purchase from 11:30 am.

For more information please contact The Secretary on HelenCook8@bigpond.com

Letter from Wendy Hoskin, Director

As many of you know, Rob and I are presently in the South-East travelling in our van.

A highlight of our trip has been visiting the Japanese garden in Cowra. It stands apart from others in the world in that it is a potent symbol of goodwill, reconciliation, and peace. During World War 2 more than 1000 Japanese prisoners of war were held in camps in Cowra. In an attempted breakout 231 Japanese soldiers were killed. These soldiers are buried in the Japanese War Cemetery in Cowra, the only Japanese War Cemetery outside Japan.



Over time the bond between Cowra and Japan has grown and has culminated in the Japanese Garden, designed in 1979 by the Japanese architect, Nakajima Takeshi. The Principles of the Cowra Japanese Garden, taken from the Japanese way of tea (Chado), are:

- Harmony (Wa) is about balance and peace among different garden elements
- Respect (Kei) shows appreciation for nature, traditions and others
- Purity (Sei) means keeping the garden clean and fostering a calm state of mind
- Tranquillity (Jaku) encourages a serene atmosphere for relaxation and contemplation

In Sogetsu Ikebana, we use mass, line and colour as our featured elements, but surely the principles of this Garden are also at the forefront of Sogetsu Ikebana.

Organising a Sogetsu Ikebana Exhibition - by Ilse Beunen

Amanda Terblanche (Editor):

Hoping to find known information from a fresh perspective, I approached Ilse Beunen about "Organising a Sogetsu Ikebana Exhibition". Ilse is a very active and passionate Belgian ikebanist known to many of us, as some of us have read her ikebana books, or follow her Newsletter, among other things.

Ilse Beunen:

Indeed, I haven't done anything on my online platform about exhibitions yet, but I can share some of my insights and experiences.



Ilse Beunen

There are many aspects and reasons why you do an ikebana exhibition with a group, but whatever the reason, it should be joyful, comfortable, without too much stress and a rewarding event for everybody.

Guidelines, rules, and expectations should be communicated well in advance. When a group has already organised exhibitions for many years, like the Queensland branch, most people know what is expected from them and what they need to do. Still, it is never wrong to communicate guidelines and rules before an exhibition, to remind new and old members about what is expected.

*Without exception, every participant puts their best into an arrangement. From experience, **participating in an exhibition helps you grow as an ikebanist**. This is true for those still early in their journey and those who have been doing ikebana for a long time. As you mentioned in your email, students have their teachers to guide them. As a teacher, it is essential to guide but not tell what a student should create. Maybe some students feel comfortable when a teacher tells them what to make, but **my experience is that you get unexpected results when you give students the freedom to experiment during classes before the exhibition**. They can work out their idea in the comfort of the classroom. The teacher can help by steering the concept into an executable arrangement when necessary. This approach can be fulfilling for students and teachers, because it reduces stress during the exhibition set-up.*

Right from the beginning of my ikebana journey I had a teacher who gave me plenty of experimental freedom. Part of that is what makes me the person I am today.

*Over the years of preparing and organising exhibitions, I learned that **one must also think from the visitors' perspective**. When we design our ideas, of course, it shows our experience level; we want to create something special and unique. Since Sogetsu can be done with any material, once our Belgian Sogetsu Azalea Study-group presented an annual exhibition with almost no fresh material. This was a surprise and puzzled many visitors.*

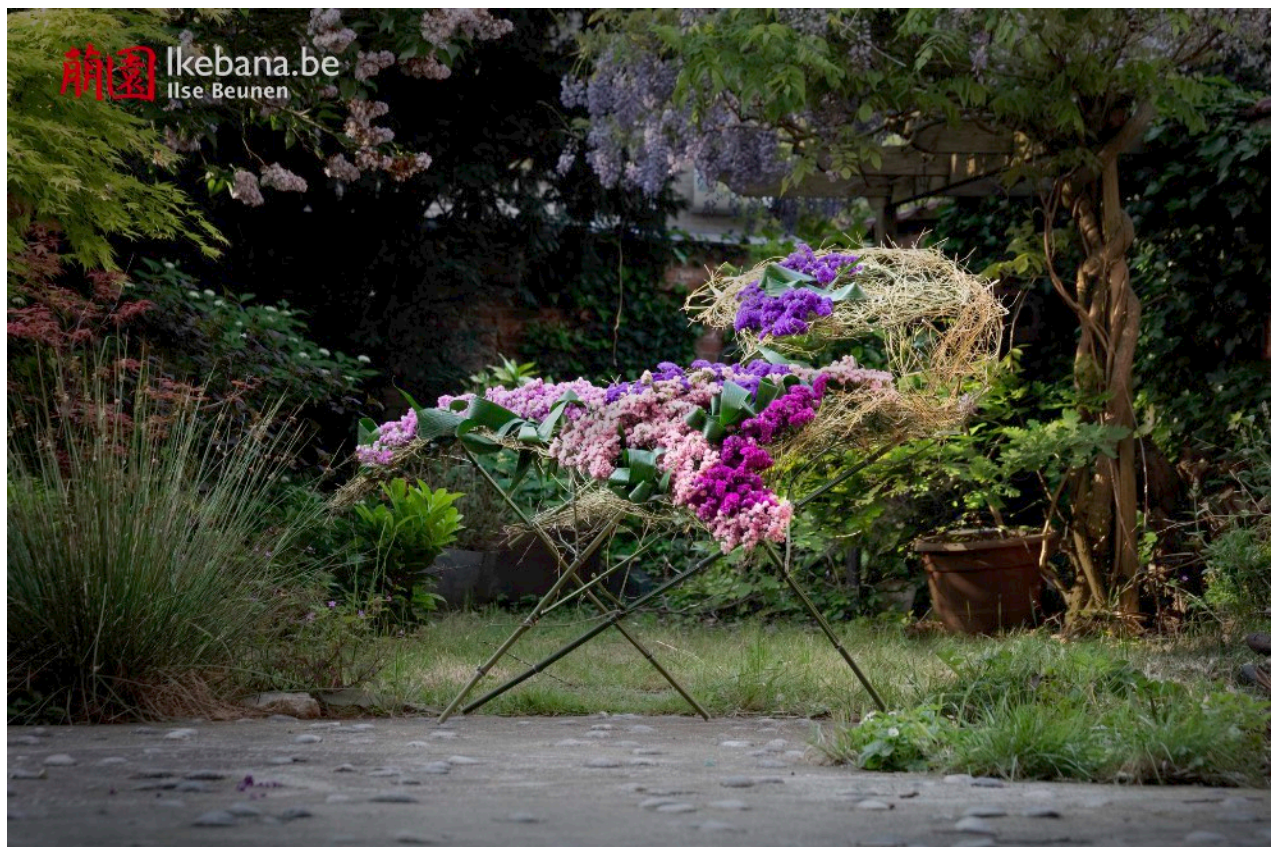
*We often design with other ikebanists as viewers in mind, but **an exhibition is also in the first place to show ikebana to people not yet familiar with it**.*

*If we want to attract people to become future students, we must show Sogetsu Ikebana's diversity. Don't be afraid to show easy-to-understand arrangements. For this reason, the Belgian Sogetsu Azalea Study-group has asked some advanced students and teachers to make a second arrangement, specifically from the curriculum textbooks. **We display these curriculum textbook arrangements in a particular corner where we explain and show the evolution a person can make through the Sogetsu curriculum.***

*This offers an overview of Sogetsu ikebana to people interested in learning more. **This corner has a lot of success because most people understand those arrangements and get an idea of the evolution.***

The result is that they express an interest in learning or sign up right away with one of the teachers present. While the reaction to most other arrangements is "Oh, wonderful" or "Wow, this is artwork," not many people get the feeling of "Wow, I want to learn this also."

An exhibition should showcase the passion and love each participant, and the group as a whole have for ikebana, which is, I think, the most important.



Here are a few pointers about the practical steps we follow in organising an exhibition:

- *A form is sent out to members to register to participate*
- *Information such as theme, dates, venue, size of the venue, stand sizes, help needed, etc., is provided*
- *A time schedule is provided and covers info about the Ikekomi (preparation) = days, times, rules of the venue, etc.*
- *Reception = time, day(s), rules, help, how many people can be invited*
- *Exhibition = days and times, help needed, refreshment corner = rules and help, etc.*
- *Tekkya or Agebana (taking down and cleaning up) = day, time, rules, help, keys, etc.*

I don't know if there is something new or seen from another perspective, but this first came to mind.

Ilse Beunen

Sogetsu Ikebana Artist, Komon degree

Vice-Chairperson Sogetsu Azalea Study-group, Belgium

Reporting back on four Ikebana Workshops held on 12 and 13 July 2024

Members participated in four highly stimulating and enjoyable workshops presented by **Ray Bywaters**, the most recent recipient of the Norman and Mary Sparnon Scholarship to study ikebana in Japan. To enjoy photos of each arrangement, see instagram: [sogetsu.ikebana.qld.inc](https://www.instagram.com/sogetsu.ikebana.qld.inc). This is what participants experienced:

Workshop 1: Size Matters and Size Does Not Matter - Miniature Arrangements

- by Christina Chen

Size matters and size does not matter, contradictory? No, the statement is true for the miniature ikebana arrangements; that is one of the things I learnt in a workshop led by Ray Bywaters. The size of the container matters. Ray advised that a Yakult container (65 ml) is normally the size of the largest miniature container. The size of the arrangement does not distract from the beauty of miniature ikebana arrangements – size does not matter.



Miniature ikebana by Christina Chen

Ray demonstrated two miniature arrangements. The first one was placed on 3 different mats, showing both hard and soft textures. The second arrangement, using a few blue bottles and a few white perfume bottles (one bottle without material to show space), was placed on a round mirror. The arrangement reflected in the mirror, adding another dimension to the arrangement – **what you place the arrangement on matters, another learning point for me.**



Miniature ikebana by Riana Holliday

Just like normal size arrangements, we need to be careful in material selection, consider colours (not too much), size of the material (maybe just use one petal of a flower) and balance of the arrangement. To fix the material in the container is equally challenging. Everyone was concentrating so much in creating their own arrangement, that, at one point, it was so quiet in the room you might be able to hear a needle drop on the ground.

With Ray's guidance and critique, the arrangements were beautiful and unique.

Workshop 2: Homage to ikebana teachers **- by David Shield**

I first met Ray Bywaters in Japan while she was doing her Norman and Mary Sparnon Ikebana Scholarship. Ever since seeing her dynamic arrangements there, I always wondered what taking a class with her might be like. So it was with great delight and anticipation that I signed up to do her recent classes in Brisbane. **What followed was a wonderful and gentle day of learning.** It was a real pleasure to focus on the theme, Homage to teachers. In my case I paid homage to my two teachers and challenged myself to combine their two styles into one arrangement after hearing the stories of Ray's own teachers, which was very moving. I particularly liked Ray's use of purple in her homage arrangement and I am inspired to try and be a bit bolder with my colour choices in the future. It was also interesting to hear her talk about how the instructions for certain areas like mass have changed over time.



Arrangement by David Shield to pay Homage to his two teachers

My other big takeaway was Ray's sense of 和(Wa): Her arrangements felt like intrinsically Japanese, which can be difficult to achieve when it's not easy to get typical Japanese branches and flowers here.

Thank you to everybody responsible for organising these Workshops. All in all it was a wonderful day and I definitely hope that Ray visits Brisbane again, because her class was what I think all ikebana classes should be: **A warm, caring, creative space free of judgement or competition.**

Self-made container using unconventional and/or recycled material

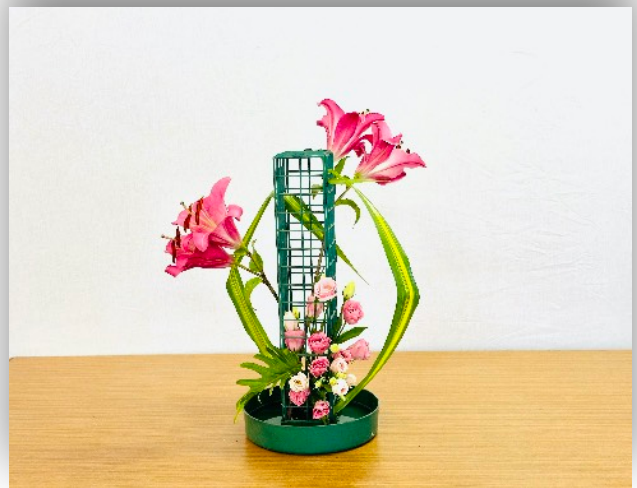
- by Allison Whiting

Participants were tasked to make a container out of recycled and/or unconventional material prior to the Workshop. In the Workshop we were to create an arrangement that complemented the colour of our new self-made container.

Ray demonstrated two different designs. In one she combined moulded resin pieces with a collapsible drink bottle as a water source. In her second self-made vase, she took an old DVD storage frame and manoeuvred a clear water hose into the DVD storage frame. Ray created colourful arrangements in both self-made vases.

The imagination and creativity of the participants was on display with an incredible range of materials used. These included a variety of cardboard packaging structures, a diverse range of tubes and hoses, Christmas baubles on legs, metal and plastic cage formations, moulded resin in multiple colours, malleable aluminium foil, a chamois cloth and lengths of bamboo.

For complementing the colour of the container, some participants choose floral material that flattered the container's colour, while others used colour theory consulting the colour wheel to determine the complementary colours to identify their



Arrangement in self-made vase by
Allison Whiting



Arrangement in self-made vase by
Jill Simon

colour scheme. Depending on the container's construction the finished arrangements varied from traditional to minimalist and right through to an industrial feel.

Points from Ray's guidance included reminders about how to position large flowers such as gerberas, sunflowers, lilies, etc. These should not be facing direct to the front, as it would dominate the eye and stop the visual flow through the design. **These flowers should be placed obliquely to lessen their impact or have petals removed to decrease their actual size.**

Another interesting discussion with Ray was about **the use of black and white in arrangements, especially when colour is the theme, as neither white nor black actually appears on the colour wheel - so are they colours?**

Workshop 4: Frame it **- by Jill Simon**

In this workshop Ray asked us to think about how when we look in textbooks, online or at photographs of ikebana works, the arrangements appear in an invisible frame. This frame is decided by the camera. She mentioned that framing occurs in other contexts as well: in the traditional tokonoma; in garden rooms used to frame gardens and in architecture where columns, windows or even entry doors frame our view.

Ray challenged us to create ikebana arrangements where the frame was obvious and a deliberate element. She emphasised that framing was an idea open to individual interpretation. She mentioned that there were different ways to use framing in an arrangement, each depending on what view the creator wanted to highlight. These could include: a perspective focusing on the front, middle or back of the frame; framing a particular aspect of the arrangement; or where the frame is empty with the arrangement outside.

This workshop really showed another aspect of creativity from each of the participants, where they used a large variety of materials to create a frame.

These included plant, unconventional material and vases.



"Frame it" arrangement by Allison Whiting



"Frame it" arrangement created by Catherine Purdon

As it has been throughout her workshops run over the two days, **Ray's feedback was always positive, very instructive and supported participants to create amazing arrangements.** It was also relaxed and fun.

Presenting Ikebana Workshops to Queensland members

- by Ray Bywaters, Director ASTA - South Australian Branch

A most sincere thank you. It was indeed a privilege and a pleasure to work with the Queensland Sogetsu Branch on 12 and 13 July 2024. I knew that the Queensland Branch comprised highly talented and experienced members and when approached by Ann Downey, I was a little daunted by being asked to present four workshops to such an accomplished group.

When I commenced planning the workshops one of the master's insightful pieces of advice from my recent experience in Japan echoed in my ears " – **Always challenge yourself, never opt for the familiar or elect to do something that is easy**".

As a presenter you hope for successful outcomes, but my expectations were completely surpassed. To begin, each participant ensured that I felt most welcome. Everything ran so smoothly. A special thanks to Ann Downey for her behind the scenes meticulous organisation and particularly for sourcing such fabulous material, Pat Mackie for the use of her glorious containers and all of the attendees who shared their passion for ikebana so eagerly and openly. I felt incredibly fortunate to be among such creative individuals.

However, my greatest reward was to see what amazing ikebana arrangements each participant presented. I am still in awe at the interpretations of the workshop themes and the variety, skill and understanding that each member invested in their work.



Ray Bywaters



Catherine Purdon, Ray Bywaters and David Shield

The results reinforced how ikebana reflects each person's individuality and interpretation of the lesson and marries it with true creativity. And what marvelous results emerged.

The room was overflowing with wonder, exuberance and camaraderie as we moved around each of the finished arrangements. We were transported to ikebana paradise.

Thank you for sharing such a truly memorable time and every best wish as each of you embraces the challenges ikebana presents.

Workshop Words of Appreciation

- by Pat Mackie

Thank you Ann Downey for running an excellent workshop with Ray Bywaters presenting. It is always an exciting event for both the workshop attendees and the moderator. You coordinated very successful workshops in previous years, and as recent as June this year. To then run such a great 2-day workshop when a visiting Norman and Mary Sparnon recipient was present, **gave an added level of success.**

Thanks also to all our members and in particular Karin Power, Akemi Dunn, Sallyanne Scott, Christina Chen, Ingrid Kivikoski and Masako Morrison who helped Ann and all of us over the two days. Also thank you for the photos and media coverage Amanda Terblanche and Nicole Dorner-Scales.

Annual Camellia Show

- by Mandy Nguyen

It was an honour to participate with my teacher, Pat Mackie in the Annual Camellia Show at the Mt Coot-tha Auditorium.

It was a great experience using Camellias in my arrangement for the first time. Big thanks to Ann Downey and Wendy Hoskin for the beautiful camellias from their gardens. Thank you, Pat Mackie for all the support and feedback.



Arrangements by Pat Mackie and Mandy Nguyen

I was overwhelmed by the wide variety of beautiful Camellia flowers. Meeting the members of the Queensland Camellia Society and other members from ikebana schools has deepened my insight into the art of ikebana and floriculture.

Love of ikebana ... and the journey of continuous learning ... congratulations



**Certificate 2 Sankyu:
Rachel Lin, student of Pat Mackie**

Save the date 2024

17 August 2024 General Meeting at Kenmore Uniting Church

31 August & 1 Sept 2024 Annual Sogetsu Ikebana Exhibition at Mt Coot-tha Auditorium

