



Welcome to ESBA Autumn Newsletter!

Slowly life is getting back to sort of normal. The feeling of a mole coming up for air and blinking in the sunlight. Our newsletter reflects these positive changes, with plans for our ESBA exhibition in March, ESBA Calendar 2022 in production and individuals participating in exhibitions, courses and outdoor community projects. Who knows, we might even have 'An Opening'! That would be 'Something to Celebrate'!

Thank you to everyone who has contributed, Happy Painting!

Jessica Langford

Something to Celebrate*

ESBA 10th Annual Exhibition
Dundas Street Gallery
29th March – 4 April 2022

I will be sending out an Artists Submission form to all ESBA members shortly. This will include details of arrangements for dropping off and collecting work and so on.

For our *New Growth* Exhibition everything was online. This was a success and, going forward, we would like to have a parallel online Exhibition to support the Dundas Street Gallery Exhibition. To make this possible, we would like you to send good quality images of up to 4 of your paintings submitted for the show by **Monday 7th March**. The online exhibition will appear on the ESBA website about a week in advance.

If you can have your images professionally scanned, that would be great. Several ESBA members use Giclée UK Ltd:

<http://gicleeuk.com/how-to-find-us/>



© Rosemary Patchett, *Rosa moyessii caerulea*
ESBA Calendar 2022, August

Once you have a scanned image, it is easy to commission prints and cards. Of course, you can photograph your work instead, with careful lighting to avoid background shadows.

The Dundas Street Gallery is an ideal space to display botanical art and I look forward to seeing the beautiful images ESBA members have been creating. It's a great opportunity to display your work to the public and I hope that you will want to take part.

Bill Phillips *ESBA Chair*

*provisional title: happy to hear alternatives!

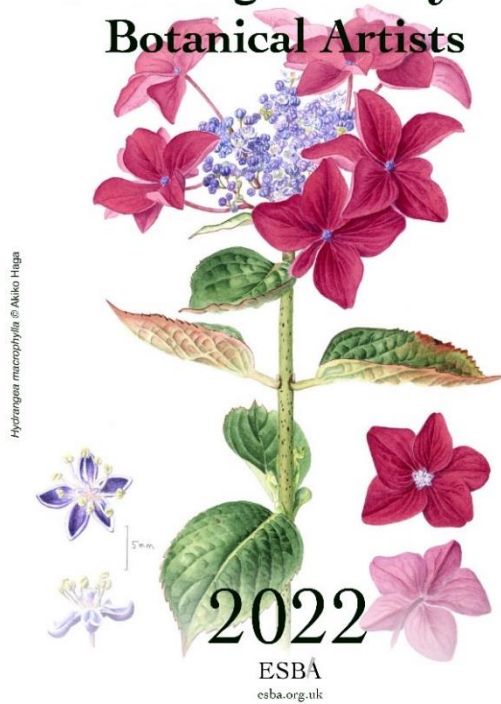
ESBA Committee

Chair: Bill Phillips *Treasurer:* Jeff Banks
Secretary

Members: Nicola Adams, Karyn Dalrymple, Nicola Macartney, Mhorag McDowall, Jacqui Pestell, Sarah Roberts and Jill Sievwright.

Help! We need a secretary! Please can someone take on this essential role!

Edinburgh Society of Botanical Artists



The 2022 ESBA Calendar

The 2022 ESBA Calendar has been sent off to the printers and will be available for dispatch shortly. The calendar is priced at £10 + £2.50 postage and packing to UK addresses, that is, £12.50 per copy.

The calendar looks great. There is a beautiful cover image of *Hydrangea macrophylla* by Akiko Higa and wonderful images contributed by other ESBA members. Nicola Adams, Nicola Macartney, Sarah Roberts and Jan Miller worked on putting the calendar together.

You will be able to order your copy/copies from Bill Phillips: doctron@btinternet.com

Further details about ordering and payment will be forwarded to all ESBA members when the calendar is available.



Drawing on Green Spaces Jill Sievewright

My five diploma plants were chosen from a favourite walk, the Neilson and Earnock Community Woodland in Hamilton, South Lanarkshire, known as the Nature Trail.

I completed the Diploma in 2019 and in Spring 2020 applied to Creative Scotland for funding to undertake a year-long COVID recovery project based around the trail called *Drawing on Green Spaces*. As part of this I engage with the local community running health and learning walks, in collaboration with South Lanarkshire Rangers, to help raise awareness and use of the local area. In parallel I am illustrating various plants, and producing other botanical art works, throughout the year and am supporting local artists to explore too. The project will culminate in an Exhibition in Hamilton Low Parks Museum during Spring 2021.

© Jill Sievewright, Rosehips including *Rosa pimpinellifolia*, *Rosa rugosa* and *Rosa canina*.





© Fran Thomas, *Cladonia diversa*

RHS 2021 London Botanical Art Show Fran Thomas

Having just exhibited in this year's RHS show I wanted to share some thoughts on how it differed from the usual set-up. Delayed by over a year for obvious reasons, there were various changes – first and foremost the venue. Instead of the Lindley Hall it was in the Saatchi Gallery, King's Road, Chelsea, which is a huge and impressive gallery specialising in contemporary art.

They did the hanging themselves and framed all the paintings to match so it all looked very beautiful around the walls of the gallery (no boards within the room). Still six paintings each, these were couriered down to London weeks in advance, so there was no need to struggle with huge packages on the train!

The exhibition ran for a lot longer too – billed as two weeks, but then extended to three due to the amount of interest. The photography show was there as well (in a different room), which was a bonus.

But...there were disadvantages too: there were fewer exhibitors (15), and most of the overseas ones hadn't been able to travel here in person. Due to COVID and the length of the exhibition, artists were not able to sit with their exhibits and were only there for the Private View. It was difficult to find an artist to chat to at the reception. There were no extra stands or displays and I missed the manic intensity of three days manning your exhibit and talking to every artist and visitor, and the hall crammed with hundreds of paintings!

The most memorable exhibit for me was "Tomatoes: flower and fruit development" by Francesca Ross. The stunning cut sections of different shaped tomatoes looked so real

My six paintings were the ones I showed at BISCOT 2019: "*Cladonia* lichens of the Black Wood of Rannoch". I am fascinated by the fact that lichens are a symbiosis between an alga and a fungus. The *Cladonia* genus includes species in which the fruiting structures have beautiful cups (pixie-cups), or weird and wonderful shapes. Some have pillar-box red blobs on top, which (although tiny) are a pleasing find amongst rotting wood and rocks. These are the actual fruiting tissues. Others are like inflated sausages, or animals with tentacles. My fruiting bodies were only two or three centimetres high but I enjoy revealing details you can only see through a microscope.

I was awarded a Silver-Gilt medal. The judges' main criticism was fair in that, being an ecological subject, I should have included a bit of the substrate the specimens were growing on instead of them looking like strange creatures floating in mid-air!

It will be interesting to see whether the RHS show stays at the Saatchi Gallery or reverts to the usual place in 2022.



© Babz Runzie *Helleborus* Colour pencil

Small and Smaller at the Exhibitions **Babz Runcie**

This year I was lucky enough to have a painting chosen for the UKCPS (UK Coloured Pencil Society) exhibition held at the Derwent Pencil Museum in Keswick. After holding an online exhibition in 2020 the Pencil Museum opened again with this popular and varied show.

The UKCPS is holding their 20th Anniversary Gala Exhibition in London (14 – 24 October) and I am fortunate enough to have a tiny piece included in the Artist Trading Card display. Hopefully the majority of members will have contributed and the wall of 2.5”x 3.5” pencil gems will pack a punch. After the show there will be a big swap and there will be a nice surprise when I receive something completely different in the post. I wonder if I’ll ever know who gets mine.

Regarding the show in Keswick, I was able to deliver and pick up my, sadly unsold, work because I was passing on the M6. However even if I had work chosen for inclusion in the London exhibition, the increasing expense and logistical difficulties of transporting or posting framed paintings has put off myself and many potential contributors.

However, there are times when the art communities all pull together and perform a “pass the parcel” delivery system. Hurrah!

Jean Craig

Living far down in the South East of England can feel a bit remote from all that is taking place in Edinburgh. Covid 19 put paid to two workshops that I had planned to attend with Fiona Strickland and Robert McNeill.

Painting became a solitary pursuit especially during ‘lockdown’. Consequently, I enrolled in three Zoom classes with botanical artist Elaine Searle. The first session was painting a pineapple. Not easy, but after getting my own fruit I have been able to make a satisfactory drawing. I learned a lot regarding how to paint the darkest shadows and how to get what Elaine calls ‘the sparkle’ on the fruit. The class I enjoyed most was called ‘nature table’. I learned a good technique for painting a feather, using a ‘grass brush’, which I had not used before.

The classes were enjoyable in themselves and allowed a sense of involvement with other participants, people I had met whilst doing my RBGE Diploma and artists from across the world.



© Jean Craig *Hyacinth orientalis*

© Jessica Langford
Honesty, *Lunaria annua*

Last year I painted the fragile silvery dried seed heads of Honesty. I thought they would look more delicate and dramatic against a black background. Having seen the Australian artist Susannah Blaxill's amazing Pomegranate painting I contacted her and asked how she did it. She kindly sent me the instructions and has given permission to include them in the newsletter.



© Susannah Blaxill, Pomegranates
Watercolour, 280mm x 389mm

Susannah Blaxill on how to create a black background.

"I create the black backgrounds by masking out the area to be painted and then I use my spray gun to create layers of paint that will after many applications turn the paper black. The spray gun has a compressor, so it produces really a mist. The instructions for the gun are to spray about 12 inches away from the paper, but I find that this often sprays the black paint under the mask. So, I place the watercolour paper on the floor on newspaper and then stand above it and spray directly down onto the paper.

Some black paint will get under the mask no matter how hard you try not to let this happen. You need to use a watercolour paper from which the unwanted paint can be removed from the white paper. It is a clean-up job.

It is all a bit of a trick and I find it quite hard to do. Go very slowly - you may need 20 layers and spray up and down and sideways to cover the paper evenly. Leave the paper to dry fully before putting on each layer and don't let the paper get wet - thin layers are the way to go. It can take me a full day to get all the layers down. (Shirley Sherwood has a painting of mine of Camellias, now at Kew - I remember spraying on 32 layers of black paint which took me 3 days, and then the internal clean up with a soft synthetic brush took me another 4 days.)

After you have successfully "painted" on the black, make sure this is well covered when you come to paint the image onto the watercolour paper. I have had disasters when a drop of water has fallen onto the black paint by accident and the imperfection that this creates cannot be corrected.

Good luck and I hope that this helps."

For inspiration see Susannah's website:
<https://blaxill.com/>



Having read the complexity of the process, I'm afraid I wasn't brave enough to try it, although I wish I had!

© Karyn Dalrymple

Bird of Paradise *Strelitzia reginae*

Strelitzia is a flower that has great significance for me with a much loved member of the family. Trying to do it justice was hugely important to me.

It's not the first time I've painted it. I did a large scale, multimedia version before I fell in love with watercolours. In that version, I included the full length of the stem. Dissatisfied with the empty space created by that composition, probably had a great influence on my choice to go for a cropped stem and focus on the patterns and colours on the upper part of the flower.

Several layers of washes were built on with dry brush applied to get the effect I was looking for in the main body of the flower. One of the areas I enjoyed most, was working on the stem. Its pattern detail reminded me of illustration days at art college. I still seem to be drawn to colour and pattern in most of the things I choose to paint

The structure of these dramatic flowers is amazing and the strong palette helps to create a bold statement. I loved the slightly clashing colours which were surprisingly harmonious when completed. It goes to show that nature truly reigns supreme and it's better not to tinker with it too much.



Jeff Banks



© Jeff Banks

Tomatoes *Lycopersicon esculentum*,

But it hasn't escaped the mania for re-classifying everything so, now

Solanum lycopersicum

The painting is a 'pot-boiler,' though the fruit may be best eaten raw in a salad.

Bought not grown; I lack the devotion and energy to produce my own. But if I can't apply some practical science to the benefit of my garden and health, here is a bit of science theory. Read on.

Lycopene is the principal red pigment in the fruit (a carotene), the name comes from the genus; the outer layer contains the highest concentration of the pigment, in chromoplasts, and the concentration decreases towards the centre of the fruit. A chromoplast is a plasmid, a cellular inclusion similarly to chloroplasts, which have outer membranes and contain their own DNA, originating from the engulfing of another microbial cell. Lycopene is produced by a number of genes, which may be either in the tomato's cell nucleus or that of the chromoplast.

I see the Japanese have developed, and are selling, a gene-edited tomato. The gene-edited tomato produces less of an enzyme that breaks down GABA (gamma aminobutyric acid) resulting in tomatoes

that may contain 5 times the concentration of GABA as normal ones. GABA is a neurotransmitter present in our brains and nervous system - and is sold as a dietary supplement, with the claim that it may have beneficial effects on stress and sleep. It seems to me to be a lot of effort to apply the latest scientific breakthrough to produce a product of dubious worth.

Bill Phillips

'*The Climate Change Tree*' was named by Chris Knapman from the Ancient Tree Forum, who put it forward for the Woodland Trust's Tree of the Year 2020 competition. The tree is a sycamore growing strongly, if precariously, on top of the spoil heap from an old coal mine, symbolising the hope of a green future rising from the remnants of the fossil fuel industry. It was voted second in Scotland, the winner was '*The Survivor*' rowan at Carrifran.

I was commissioned to create a painting which will be exhibited locally as part of an exhibition to raise awareness of the effects of climate change.



© Bill Phillips

**U3A (University of the Third Age),
Fusation, and Branklyn Garden
Jan Miller**

In this strangest of times Botanical Illustration has been a happy constant. For me, as well as being a member of ESBA and helping with this year's calendar (thanks for fabulous contributions from members), it has been lovely to facilitate and be part of the Perth U3A Botanical Illustration group and to belong to Fusation. Fusation is an eclectic group of Perthshire artists working in a variety of media and dimensions ranging from botanical illustration and textile art to wood carving and stained glass. For both the U3A and Fusation it was a shock and a struggle to keep going on zoom during most of 2020 -2021 but we have happily emerged to meet up again in person. You can see some of the work of the U3A group on our website:

<https://u3asites.org.uk/perth/page/86276>

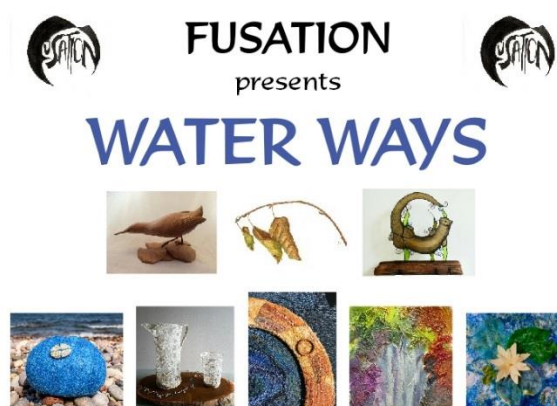
Branklyn Garden

If any of you are thinking of visiting Perth from Spring to Autumn next year, it is well worth putting Branklyn Garden on your itinerary. Unfortunately, by the time this newsletter comes out it will be closed for the season. This magnificent 2-acre hillside National Trust Garden was established in the 1920s by John and Dorothy Renton after they had built their beautiful Arts and Crafts house. They used seeds collected by many of Scotland's renowned plant hunters. There's a lovely tearoom and the garden hosts the national collection of Meconopsis among many other things. The 100th anniversary of the garden is next year 2022.

<https://www.nts.org.uk/visit/places/branklyn-garden>

**Fusation 4th Exhibition
The Barn Gallery
at
The Bield, Blackruthven near Perth
Saturday 13th to Sunday 28th November,
open daily 10am to 4pm.**

**All ESBA members invited to
the Opening
10.00 - noon on 13th November**



A new exhibition of
contemporary arts and crafts

at
The Barn Gallery

The Bield at Blackruthven
Tibbermore, Perth, PH1 1PY tel: 01738 582238

13th to 28th November 2021

Open daily 10am to 4pm

Admission free

Botanical illustration, ceramics, mixed media, paintings, photography,
textiles, stained glass, wood carvings



© Jan Miller