

Antiques & Art in Victoria

July to November 1995



Valerie Lynch "Waiting In The Wings", oil.

The Sherbrooke Art Society's unique and historic gallery, the Sherbrooke Art Gallery, displaying over 200 works of traditional art and Australian paintings, nestles on the edge of Sherbrooke Forest, an area known for attracting artists to its outstanding native beauty.

The Society conducts annually its prestigious 'Streeton Roberts McCubbin Art Awards' to commemorate the work of Sir Arthur Streeton, and Tom Roberts, fellow artists who lived and worked in the area at the turn of the century and Frederick McCubbin, another famous member of the Heidelberg School of Artists.



Valerie Lynch "Country Life Castlemaine", oil.

The first award to be introduced was the Sir Arthur Streeton Award in 1967 to celebrate the centenary of the birth of Sir Arthur Streeton. 1971 saw the introduction of the Tom Roberts Award, and in 1990 the Frederick McCubbin Award.

These art awards for 1995, judged by well-known artist John Balmain, attracted a full to capacity number of entries from all over Australia.

The winners:

Sir Arthur Streeton Award – Ron Russell Fletcher – previously profiled by the Society in the preceding issue of *Antiques & Art*. Tom Roberts Award – Valerie Lynch; Frederick McCubbin Award – Dorothy Bartrop. The latter two artists appearing in profile with artist Konstanty Kuczewicz.

Valerie Lynch

Brought up by a family not her own, Valerie, at a very young age felt a special bond with an orphaned baby cockatoo. The close detailed study of her pet produced the many drawings that were the first impressions of the keenly searching artists' eye, that was to develop bringing her the success and recognition she enjoys amongst her artist peers.

In 1992 Valerie was awarded the prestigious Alice Bale Award for Oils, an Australia-wide competition judged by the 'Twenty Melbourne Painters'. This year she won the sought after Tom Roberts Award, conducted by the Sherbrooke Art Society.

Valerie, a Tonal / Impressionist painter is especially known for landscapes and marine studies. She has the openness of spirit to see new subjects abounding and an enquiring mind, essential to shift her approach to the challenge at hand.

Looking back over her 20 year art career, Valerie well recalls the words of a former tutor – "many thousands of miles of painting are required to make an artist!" Then, with a laugh she said, "it certainly feels as if I must be well on the road". For Valerie, it would seem, the dotted white line in the middle of her artistic 'road' has been the strictly taught lesson to work from life. To do whatever is there, and not just from pictures. A belief in the importance of having the never-ending desire to learn and see.

Laughing, husband Neil joins in, "middle of the road is right, that's where she drives when she is looking at scenery!" To which he adds hastily, "Val really is a good driver, but to give her artist's seeing full freedom, I actually drive on painting excursions."

In learning to 'see' Valerie well remembers her first tutor the renowned artist Max Casey; a former student of Max Meldrum, the acknowledged protagonist of Tonalism. Valerie recollects the still-life arrangements the resourceful Max Casey set for her. The objects placed on shiny benches so that the subject was reflected in the bench, eliminating the chance of looking past and not actually seeing. Still life is perhaps the ideal way to learn colour, tone and shape,

Valerie suggested, because the subject does not move. She adds with a wry smile, "flowers do though, they can surely twist depending on whether they are thriving or wilting. With still-life the light does not change affecting the way tones relate one to another, due to a well placed lamp being in control, giving steady illuminated highlights and settled shadows, rather than fickle sunlight with walkabout shadows."

Valerie's brushed and drawn pilgrimage to paint was further stimulated by seeking to become the student of many well recognised artists, including Alan Martin, David Taylor, Shirley Bourne and Maxwell Wilks.

Valerie acknowledges that skilled tuition enables an artist to travel far. However, Valerie believes the forks in the 'road' and the inviting 'tracks', are all branches of complexity. Only de-

isions of discovery from experiment by an artist themselves, can finally allow the individual, to arrive at what they want to express.

Valerie knows this has happened for her due to the many wonderful years of painting in oil, watercolour, pastel and drawing. She has enjoyed working in studios and on landscape painting trips travelling extensively throughout Australia and overseas, painting and collecting material.

To be able to see the true clarity of tone and brush stroke of the world's most admired paintings has made a great difference to her work. Valerie has viewed and studied in the major art galleries of England, Scotland, Wales, Ireland, France, Italy, Spain and China. Before this inestimably beneficial experience, Valerie had previously sought to learn from only seeing the great masters in books.

Valerie said, "the great thing about art is there is always more to be revealed. It opens your eyes to the world around you and you learn to appreciate the beautiful things many people miss in their busy lives." It could be said that perhaps it is up to the artists of this world, who by painting their impressions, enables others to then see through the painting to the true reality. Or perhaps artists would say, the true reality is the painting – a conundrum of seeing?

An art teacher for many years in watercolour and oil, it is with oil at the present time that Valerie is expressing her painterly observations, either subtly or with strong dynamics (light and dark contrasting next to each other).

Valerie imparted that she is very interested in the effects of light, perhaps the extreme light on something, or a very subtle distant view with an interesting light, or rays of beamy brightness emitting to the cool colours of the early morning or warm colours of late afternoon, especially when the sun is going down.

Seeing nature very much as God arranged it, Valerie is of the opinion that perhaps landscape is easier to paint when it is all there to see in front of you. To 'move' trees only creates more problems, because then you are making things up and making changes. Valerie would rather move herself around instead painting and following the 'what is there' rule. Although, Valerie said with a chuckle, "I have been known to tie a sapling back, or dare I say, break the odd small branch!"

Working with a limited palette, Valerie said that nature decides the colours she uses. It is nature she loves, telling us that sometimes something of apparent insignificance will catch her eye, fallen logs or the holes in trunks where birds live.

Valerie's much admired paintings is testament to her talent and her hard work, always striving to capture the 'seeing and believing' beauty that surrounds her.

Valerie has held solo and group exhibitions and won over 70 art awards and commendations. Also, Valerie has entered in the Sherbrooke Art Society's competitions for its large number of members, successfully winning the Jack Montgomery Award twice and the Hans Heysen Award.

Valerie's paintings have been selected for display at

the Hamilton Regional Gallery, Sale Regional Gallery, Mildura National Gallery. The Nunawading Council have acquired her works to hang in their Chambers.

Two exhibitions of paintings by Valerie Lynch are imminent, one in Sydney at the Durning-Lawrence Gallery, Crows Nest, from 12 August, and the other in Melbourne at the Victorian Artists' Society's Cato Gallery from 9 November to 15 November, 1995.

The Sherbrooke Art Society congratulates Valerie Lynch on her success in winning the 1995 Tom Roberts Award. The Society proudly exhibits her work in the Sherbrooke Art Gallery.

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