



Oceanic Art Society 25th Annual General Meeting.

**Held at the Middle Harbour 16ft Skiff Club, 237 Spit Road, Mosman,
NSW, Australia.**

November 28th 2020 at 10:00am.

- **Apologies** were received from: Tom Arthur, Helen and Paul Dennett, Jim Elmslie, Crispin Howarth, Warwick Majcher, Michael Martin, Michael Mel, Suzanne Pilj, Gabriella Roy, Sam Singer, David Said and Krisztina Turza. Thirty-one members of the Society were present.
- **Confirmation of Minutes of the Previous AGM.** Acceptance was proposed by Rita Uechtritz, seconded by David Welch.
- **President's Report (Including Treasurer's Report).** A summary of the president's report is given below.
 - Of course, 2020 has been highly challenging, with only two live events able to be held, due to the Covid pandemic, but thanks to outstanding teamwork by the main Committee, the OAS's future looks secure and we have ambitious plans.
 - The OAS quarterly Journal has gone from strength to strength during the year under our new editor, Margaret Cassidy. The winter edition highlighted our only lecture during the year, by Jeffrey Mellefont of the National Maritime Museum, given at the National Art School in March – "Noah's Art: Floating Art Galleries of Indonesia". It was a fascinating talk - and a well-attended one, considering the Covid scare was just beginning – covering, as it did, a novel area of "contemporary" yet traditional Oceanic art. Another edition of the Journal featured an interview with the Director of the National Gallery of Art, Nick Mitzevich.
 - The bumper 25th Anniversary edition of the Journal, recently distributed, is a particular triumph, as it contains a long history of the OAS by Crispin Howarth, "Creating Change for a Quarter of a Century: The Oceanic Art Society".
 - Under the coordination of the expanded website sub-committee, the OAS website has also developed strongly, both for its presentation of the Society's activities, but also as a secure system for membership records and renewals. Suzanne Pilj has joined the Committee to run an Instagram site, and Alyson Joyce is about to do the same for Facebook, so it is now a "digital media" sub-committee. We have also established a YouTube account, and posted a lecture by Barry Craig from some years ago on it.
 - Of course, we couldn't repeat the stunning success of the Tribal Art Fair in 2019, but it will be returning to NAS as Sydney Oceanic Art Fair on 21st August 2021. The National Art

School relationship is actually set to resume from March, with the first lecture, most likely on the 17th, being given by Crispin Howarth.

- Last year's Forum was also always going to be a tough act to follow, but Krisztina Turza and Michael Martin are determined to succeed in late 2021 or early 2022 in Brisbane (10th Forum) and in November 2022 in Melbourne (11th Forum) respectively. Work on these will begin in 2021
- There have been some successes recorded due to the OAS's lobbying over the last few years. The society is not without influence and "soft" diplomacy – "furthering the appreciation and understanding of Oceanic art" - has been effective in several places.
- We have also maintained membership levels and our accounts show only a small loss on the 2019-2020 financial year of \$1,414.70, due to the fact that we were unable to stage any fund-raising activities between March and the end of June. Our cash on hand has actually improved since the end of the financial year by nearly \$3,000 due to the increased efficiency of the membership renewals system. We have had further generous, and anonymous, donations of valuable items to raffle or auction, so for the time being the OAS finances are sustainable.
- All of these successes are the result of incredibly impressive team work by the main Committee and a few others. After the first Committee meeting of 2020 (which was held in the company of Evarne and Eric Cootes' wonderful collection in Mittagong), the others have all been held on Zoom. This has actually increased the team's enthusiasm and energy: the last two meetings have had an almost full turnout.
- I've only specifically mentioned the names of newcomers and returnees to the Committee, but everyone has done tremendous amount of work. All the current Committee and the newcomers are standing for re-election today.
- Jim Elmslie is stepping down from the Vice President role but will remain on the Committee as South Australia rep. Happily, Crispin Howarth has nominated to be his replacement. Sincere thanks to both of them.
- Valete: sadly, in the last twelve months we have published obituaries of two long-term

members:

Barbara Perry, Dealer and Collector, 13 August 1938 – 10 November 2019

Jutta Malnic, Photographer and Author, 1924 – 20 October 2020.

Geoff Carey commented that the year had also seen the passing away on 7 February of another long-term member, Antonia Williams, former Vogue editor and writer, at the age of 79.

There was a brief discussion about rumours concerning the staffing at the NGA.

There were no other comments or questions.

- **Election of Office Bearers and Committee members.** The following nominations have been duly received and accepted:

- William (Bill) Rathmell, President (nominated by Rita Uechtritz, seconded by Irene Ashburn)
- Crispin Howarth, Vice-President (Bill Rathmell, Geoff Carey)
- Rita Uechtritz, Treasurer (Noëlle Rathmell-Stiels, Pierre Laffont)
- (No nominations have been received for the office of Secretary).

- Irene Ashburn (p. Warwick Majcher, s. Jim Elmslie)
- Geoff Carey (p. David Welch, s. Noëlle Rathmell-Stiels)
- Margaret Cassidy (p. Noëlle Rathmell-Stiels, s. Jim Elmslie)
- Jim Elmslie (p. Bill Rathmell, s. Noëlle Rathmell-Stiels)
- Alyson Joyce (p. Krisztina Turza, s. Noëlle Rathmell-Stiels)
- Pierre Laffont (p. Noëlle Rathmell-Stiels, s. Bill Rathmell)
- Jerry Liew (p. Rita Uechtritz, s. David Welch)
- Warwick Majcher (p. David Welch, s. Jim Elmslie)
- Suzanne Pilj (p. Bill Rathmell, s. Jerry Liew)
- Noëlle Rathmell-Stiels (p. Warwick Majcher, s. Pierre Laffont)
- Krisztina Turza (p. Warwick Majcher, s. Noëlle Rathmell-Stiels)
- David Welch (p. Pierre Laffont, s. Warwick Majcher)

The above nominees and were declared duly elected, unopposed.

- **Any additional questions/comments from the floor:** None.
- **Close of meeting:** The meeting closed at 10:23 am.

Following the Annual General Meeting there was an excellent presentation:

Objects as Ambassadors, by Matt Poll, Assistant Curator of Indigenous Heritage Collections, University of Sydney, Repatriation Project Officer. Matt explored the rewards and challenges of first nations community engagement in relation to the new exhibitions – *“Gululu dhuwala djalkiri: welcome to the Yolŋu foundations”* and *“Ambassadors”*, both of which had just opened at the new Chau Chak Wing Museum at the University.

This was followed by an **OAS Founding Committee Members' Panel Discussion** led by Geoff Carey and comprising Chris Boylan, Robin Hodgson, Peter McCabe, Beth Pryce, Noëlle Rathmell-Stiels and Jim Specht: OAS' 25th birthday - reminiscences, anecdotes, messages and a song from (or about): Harry Beran, Paul Dennett, Christine Koziel and other absent friends...

OAS members and their guests then raffled an (anonymously donated) valuable and truly magnificent giant clamshell Yua, from Yangoru in the East Sepik, PNG, as well as some smaller prizes. This was followed by an end of year lunch.

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