

CHANGE CAN BE GOOD !

It's the Year of the Rabbit, the Chinese zodiac animal said to bring calm, prosperity and hope. Sounds like a good reason to celebrate. The art world around and about Cape Town adopted the slogan 'Creativity & Hope' which they wish to project into their artistic endeavours. This will be their mantra for the 2023 year of art. We, on the Garden Route had planned to incorporate this into our projected thoughts to help us explore 'Creativity' in all its . We all need a little inspiration from time to time to assist the creative juices flow from brow to brush.

Walking into Creativity

The following is a quote from writer Julie Cameron, from her article 'Unlocking your Creativity'

"One of the techniques for sparking one's creativity is the process of simply walking. Walking is a vastly overlooked creative tool of our time. Experts found that if people will walk 20 minutes a day anywhere, what begins to happens is that walking moves us into our body, and when we are in our body, we are in our breath. The word is inspired. Inspiration.



Walking is an enormously potent tool. People really need to just try it for a couple of weeks. That's usually sufficient for them to notice.

Ancient man has always walked into the desert going on retreat. We have always walked as a people; we have simply forgotten it in our culture. There's also something about walking on the earth that connects you to the earth's energies that you don't otherwise experience. When you walk, you are able to hear more cleanly and more keenly. Life is about listening. It is about listening to ourselves. It is about listening to our greater selves. It's about listening to the things that we hear with what you might call our 'inner ear.

The word 'heart' has the word ear in the centre of it. Also it has the word art in it. When we walk, we begin to be able to hear with the ears in our heart. We begin to learn from our landscape. Sometimes we learn simply what we don't want, if we're in a cacophonous environment.

When you're in a very busy environment, if you listen to certain pieces of music when you walk, they will take you across the bridge to knowing yourself in a larger and deeper way. Walking tends to give us self-respect. Part of this is work ethic. Walking give us self respect. We walk on the ground, and we become grounded. We contact our souls quite literally through the soles of our feet. One of the things that we find when we walk is that we are able to hear the wisdom of people who have gone before us. We are connected in a much broader sense to the earth and also to ourselves.

If we move, if we will walk, we will be able to walk ourselves into our souls and literally walk ourselves into our art".

Editorial comment:

On the physical level, walking makes the blood course through our bodies, it clears the mind, opens the lungs, improves the breathing. And then there is the visible aspect. Our bodies walk themselves back into the shape they should have been in the beginning. We slim our torsos, taper our limbs and if you look down—you will see ankles again where once you saw tree trunks. Yes, walking is the answer for 2023

Steve Jobs, the late co-founder of Apple, was known for his walking meetings. Also Facebook's Mark Zuckerberg has also been seen holding his meetings on foot. And perhaps you've paced back and forth on occasion to drum up ideas..

A study was done by Stanford University on the effects walking has on our creativity. Follow that story on the internet.

DATE FOR YOUR DIARY

WORLD ART DAY

15th April.

Dr Brendan Cole has agreed to give SCAVA a lecture on Renaissance/Leonardo da Vinci in the Museum Art Gallery on 15th April. The timing of the event was not discussed but once everyone agrees on the time you will be advised.

There was an open invitation issued to all artists for the 26th January to a lecture on post Renaissance into 16th Century art. The chosen focal subject of the lecture was the large painting titled 'The Ambassadors' painted by Hans Holbein whilst he was the Court painter to King Henry VIII of England.

Please take the opportunity to look up this painting and peruse every small portion of it. You will find the date it was painted, the ranks and ages of the subjects, their nationality, where they were born, their interests and hobbies. What is not said is why foreign Ambassadors spent a full year in London..... but if you look up your own history books circa 1533 you can work that out for yourself.

WALL PAINTING PROJECT

The artists of George have a big ambition. They want visitors to George to see that they have entered a highly cultural city. So the artists would like to see art on the walls on every entrance road into the City. But Rome was never built in one day so we will begin with Wall No. 1.

We identified the wall, then identified the owner, and wrote letters, sent e-mails—held positive meetings and Voila! we can move to Stage 2, the request for SCAVA to submit a proposed first layout.

Next your members must get down to the nitty gritty, design of the wall, allocation of space, get experts to check the wall, the exact condition, water run off, any cracks, state of the surface, the shrubs before and around. Did I say Rome was not built in a day? Then they should deal with advertising hoardings over the wall and possibly get them re-sited. If you paint a wall you don't want your efforts to be diluted with unsightly signage everywhere. Then the wall might have to be prepared, maybe skimmed and pre-painted before the start.

Once all the creases are ironed out it is suggested that an Action Committee be set up to get an overall design in place, a theme, the ideas linked to the theme. They would then hold a meeting and ask for your input. Spaces on the wall will be allocated to artists. Then you should tell them what you want to paint. Make it to reflect our city and surroundings. What does George offer? Mountains, Outeniqua Pass, Montagu Pass, golf courses, rugby, sport in general, horse riding, different churches, some nice public buildings like the Post Office and Arts Theatre, Old Town Hall, some equally lovely private buildings, our logo, our disa emblem, our children, animals, friendly cats and dogs, and other animals. Then there are always people, all sorts of people. And the sea, seascapes galore. Did I forget to mention the train or the rail van up the Mountain. If you are 'in' on this activity please let it be known.

Once more concrete (ha-ha) info is to hand you will be advised.

CREATIVITY

WHERE DO YOUR IDEAS COME FROM? *Writer Andie Patrick was asked this question. Her response, as a writer, could equally well apply to visual artists. Here are some of her thoughts.*

Where do you find all your ideas for your stories or paintings? This is always question that all authors/artists are asked. We find it difficult to answer – not every creative brain works identically. But one commonality is that anything–

a word, a picture, a person, a smell;
a blade of grass, the sound of a bell;
a tiny mouse..... prompts a story to tell.

The key is to keep your mind open for that prompt to come to you. That flash of inspiration is ignited by sometimes unexpected sources, and can strike at any time.

It does not call for divine inspiration (although that does sometimes come into play). You can go deliberately looking for a prompt. How many of us belong to a writing circle or a group of artists, where we write or paint in response to a given prompt?

This is the way your mind works in response to a prompt. You worry away at the basic thought like a dog with a bone: see what you can tease out of it. **If your prompt is "Wine" look beyond the cliched still life of a bottle and glass of red.**

Set your imagination free. Ride your train of thought on the line to creativity.

- * Wine starts with grapes on the vine.
- * Workers in a sunlit vineyard
- * The magic of the cellar turns grapes into a fine Cabernet.
- * Huge vats in a cellar with moody lighting.
- * The patterns made by barrels in a cellar:
– by rows of bottle on a shelf.
- * Lovers gazing at one another, glasses in hand.
- * A drunk on a city street at night, empty bottle in hand.
- * A candle in a wine bottle.

Before you can say, "Sauvignon Blanc" you have a basketful of different ideas. Pick the one that you like best, and go with it.

That's what a prompt will do for you. Take a ticket to ride along on that train of thought, keep an open mind, and stick with that train down every branch line. Relax and go with the flow. Be firm with your inner critic. The time to sort out the good ideas from the dross is when you get to the end of the line, and the train stops.

Andie Patrick



Note on Selling by Pauline

"On a happy note, yes, it is very encouraging to sell, it is after all the ultimate endorsement when somebody likes your work enough to buy it.



There are two other hard working artists who have been quietly excelling and are tops at everything they do – Lynda Murison, sold all her many artworks up to and since Christmas. Tersia Hoffman sells so well she does not even need an art gallery. On top of it all she tackles very difficult commissions – a leopard against a pitch black starry sky!

Your kind words of encouragement to get cracking and produce an unusual painting for the forthcoming Regional Art Exhibition to be held to celebrate the re-opening of **the George Museum has me all fired up."**

That's all from me, warmest regards, *Pauline Lourens*

Strange !! But True !!!

Maura has been told by a Chairman of one of our sister Art Societies that special privileges are given to artists with credentials.

Should an artist wish to emigrate to a popular country preferential treatment will be given by some to him/her if the Embassy is presented with a good art c.v. Embassy staff particularly look for a history of known exhibition venues at which the artist regularly exhibits. And back up documents are sought.

These same countries are looking for individuals who have art teaching experience. They look for workshops, **art retreats, leadership and interaction with children's art.**

Should any reader be interested please contact Maura who will put you in touch with the individual who has some experience in this direction.

It's a Strange world we live in !!

This could be your last newsletter !!

If you wish the newsletter to continue, please ask one of the members of your SCAVA Committee. Sadly Maura has to announce that she will no longer be involved with SCAVA. She is celebrating her 80th birthday and wishes to paint full time.

This comes at a time when SCAVA is on **the cusp of changing from being a 'local' art society to one which is becoming truly 'regional'.**

Can you fill the vacancy of Chairman ?

Can you accept this challenge?

CAN YOU TAKE SCAVA FORWARD?

REINFORCING A POINT CONTACT DETAILS

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HAPPY SATURDAY MORNING SPENT PAINTING WITH RENE SCRIBANTE

We discussed Roman art of the Republican period and promised you a lot more about the period after Rome transitioned from a Republic to an Empire. We have to face the fact that imperial Rome was never a creative artistic centre like Athens was in the 5th century B.C.

IMPERIAL ART

Rome was an administrative, legal and military capital which generated stupendous works of engineering but which produced few native artists. After the absorption of Greece into the Empire, there was a migration of Greek artists and craftsmen to Rome where they could make a far better livelihood. They were responsible for most of the vast trade in copies and casts of Greek statuary. But Rome was not without artists of its own. Roman patrons, once they had the money and opportunity always preferred Greek work to Roman. Whatever the native origin of the artists, the output was prodigious, as we know from the number and size of the studios, supplying statuary and artistic works to the entire civilized world. Some was of exceptional quality. Less than 1% of the total survived. And we have often questioned the origin and found most to be Greek and not Roman.

Roman artists tended to work more in precious metals such as gold and silver, Imperial bronzes were usually gilded, and with their enormous output of bronze castings they did not improve on Greek techniques. With few exceptions Rome was a muscle-bound, low technology society which always had a huge surplus of manpower. Romans, unlike the Greeks, always operated in terms of quantity rather than quality. Labour was strictly controlled, especially wages, rather than educate and promote initiative and novelty. The arts were well rewarded. A decorative craftsman got 50% more than an ordinary skilled workman, and those in the category described as 'artists' got 100% on top of that. There was a category of artists above this rank, but they were paid by individual negotiation and there was no attempt to regulate their rewards. But the fact is that the practitioners of the visual arts, did not have high profiles in Roman society, even in its glory days. Great men did not defer to them, as the Greeks did. Few artist were known by name, not a single painting bears a signature. In most cases the large and elaborate programmes of Roman art seem to have been accomplished by groups of artists working together, probably in well organised workshops. Rome never developed a first-class school of painters. There were never any state sponsored academies, art societies, guilds or unions.



In Rome the artist achieved an effect by piling on the bling...by doubling the size, by raising the gold and silver content, by gilding and embedding jewels, all for the ostentatious palaces of the elite who ordered the best, then doubled it. There was an ineffable whiff of the *nouveaux riches* about Roman society which time's patina could never quite cover.

Of course we are arguing here from largely non-existent objects. The amount of Greek painting which survived is small and of pitiful quality. The Roman survival rate is no higher and the quality is worse. The wall paintings uncovered at Herculaneum and Pompeii are dull and commonplace. Those in surviving Emperors' villas are no better. Rooms were decorated with richly patterned ceilings and wall paintings. The subjects include realistic views of architecture, landscapes, still lifes, portraits and themes from Greek and Roman mythology and theatre. Some to-day could be described as full blown pornography. The Roman interest in landscape is likely to be Greek in origin. They continued a Greek tradition when they embellished the interior walls of houses with illusions of expensive decorative facings and slabs of coloured marble. They were specially interested in space. Artists knew how to open up space on a wall by means of mock images of porticoes, architraves, and parapets, which framed illusions of landscapes and figures. They liked the illusion of a garden. Painted in the durable fresco secco technique, their gardens scenes show birds, fruit trees low trellises, walls and grass. Still life was also popular—game, fruit, eggs. All combined to express grandiose aspirations, size, power and authority. We hear of movable paintings designed to be hung on walls, few are available for us to see.

The mosaic was just the sort of art form the rich Romans liked. It was labour intensive. It used rare and costly materials. It was durable and it could be washed and made to sparkle and astonish visitors. It was suitable for every venue, domestic, recreational, institutional, religious. It lent itself to subject matter such as marine life: stunning realistically detailed sea horses and mermaids, animals, birds, portraits, still life. A few mosaics have survived in excellent condition. The best are in the Vatican Museum. These compare well with the few wall paintings which have survived in reasonable condition, but none of them is great art.

Had the Romans not invented concrete and plaster, how would any interior embellishment be possible? What they did leave behind was of a more durable nature, buildings, temples, fountains, arches, theatres, roads, bridges, ports, laws, peace, trade, transport etc.,

