

BIRMINGHAM ART CIRCLE NEWSLETTER



From 12-24 May 2026 the Birmingham Arts Circle held an exhibition at the Wolverhampton Arts Centre. Below are some photos from the event.



WORD FROM OUR PRESIDENT

Hi all,

We are now over halfway through the year, and it seems to be going very fast.

We've tried some new things this year - some social meet ups, our urban sketching outing and this newsletter. The informal feedback to these new things has been positive but we will be sending out another survey later in the year to get proper feedback so that we can use this to develop the programme for next year.

We're also delighted to welcome two new members and hopefully we will be able to encourage more later in the year.

Hopefully you've all managed to get used to the new WhatsApp group - I think this will make it easier to continue to share news between members etc, but also for the Committee to highlight any official news more easily. Do let me know if you're not on it and I can add you.

I am looking forward to the upcoming meetings, including Linda Nevill's evening that we had to postpone in the Summer and the Waveney Frederick lecture. Also please remember to look out for the October meeting which will be on Sunday 25th - time tbc.

I hope you have a creative next few months, ready to show at our exhibition titled "Stories". Please see the poster in this newsletter!

Thanks
Kate

Circle in the



Square

Birmingham Art Circle

RESA Gallery
4 Brook Street
St Pauls Square
B3 1SA

Tuesday 3/11 - Saturday 14/11
Private View - 7/11 2pm - 4pm
Closed Sunday and Monday
10.30am - 5.00pm



NEW MEMBERS' ELECTION

New members' elections took place at our May 29th meeting and we welcomed two new members to our Circle: a sculptor Gwenda Jones and a painter Maya Davis- vStokes.



Gwenda's instagram:
@gwenda_jones_sculpture

Maya's instagram:
@mayadavisstokesartist



WAVENEY FREDERICK LECTURE

On Sunday 29 November 2026 we are going to have our annual Waveney Frederick lecture.

Historical highlight: Waveney Frederick (1911-1999) was a remarkable Birmingham painter, who contributed greatly to the artist community in Birmingham. She was a member of the Birmingham Society of Artists and of the Pastel Society, London. She also founded the Harborne Group and the Birmingham Pastel Society. In her will Ms. Frederick left funds for the Birmingham Art Circle to conduct an annual lecture with invited art educators and scholars, and though the money has been used long ago, we continue and appreciate this tradition.

This years the Waveney Frederick's lecturer is Stuart Jarvis. While the theme of the lecture is being discussed, we are sure that it will be a memorable and informative event recommended for all members to attend. Stuart is an experienced art educator who has taught at the UK's leading schools, as well as a successful practicing artist himself. Please read more about Stuart, his art and his credentials here: <https://www.stuartjarvis.co.uk>

MEMBERS' EXHIBITION HIGHLIGHT

This year our long-standing member Nadia Kisseleva (BAC member since 1999) was invited to participate in the prestigious Venice Biennale. We asked Nadia a few questions about how she got there and about her repeated experience with this international event.

Over the years, I visited the Venice Biennale to study other artists' work, their displays, and developments in contemporary art. Gradually, I felt that my own work was strong enough to appear alongside that of other Biennale participants. In 2019 I was invited to present my project *Stripped* to one of the curators, and it was accepted. The next step was finding sponsors—the hardest part. Fortunately, I received the support of BV Gallery in Austria, with which I had exhibited for many years.

My second attendance at the Venice Biennale this year with the project *Rare Metals* was an exciting and astonishing experience. My project explores the global struggle for the Earth's mineral wealth. The visual and aesthetic form of *Rare Metals* was shaped by its concept and my extended research into global geopolitics, triggered by the violent conflicts and events of recent years. The final key to the project came after several experiments, almost by chance. Each painting bears the name of a rare metal or rare earth element, revealing the entanglement of geology, power and value. The paintings' surfaces are embedded with soil and sand, physically tethering the artwork to the earth they invoke. The works are small-scale, reflecting the fragile and precious nature we associate with rarity. The earth is not depicted; it is present. What appears as a radiant landscape also carries a warning: violence is embedded in the ground itself.

This time, the organisation of the legal work, display, support and communication of the European Cultural Centre with artists surpassed previous years, bringing together a comprehensive selection of artworks and creating an impressive international community of artists and their followers.

Nadia's Instagram to get further acquainted with her work: @kisselevanadia



URBAN SKETCHING MEETING

In July our meeting was an urban sketching event led by Tim Griffiths, a Birmingham artist. The event received positive reviews from the attendees. Here is a report on the event from our member Susan McClure.

The announcement of an Urban Sketching walk as one of our BAC meetings got my creative imagination flowing, and I turned up at the RBSA Gallery for the initial mini-talk by Tim Griffiths armed with an A4 sketchbook and a few Posca acrylic pens (for loose colourful sketching) contained in my trusty striped shopping trolley with fold-down seat. (Small folding stools were available when we arrived). Tim explained that "Urban Sketching" had become a Thing, a worldwide movement, recording small scenes that people don't usually look at, and becoming a useful historic tool for the future. You can carry the tiniest sketchbook in a pocket or handbag and just scribble a little bit as you go around in life.

We then walked in beautiful summer evening light through the Jewellery Quarter, stopping twice to sketch at spots which had visual interest of the scruffy sort. When we got to the very pleasant pub, The Bull in the Gun Quarter, we all had a drink and looked at each others' sketches. They varied greatly in size and detail, and we all agreed it was a lovely alternative to the usual indoor meeting!



MEMBERS' EXHIBITION HIGHLIGHT

One of our newly elected members, sculptor Gwenda Jones, has been recently acknowledged for her artwork by two leading UK exhibitions. We asked Gwenda about her winning art and process.

What are these two projects that you have been acknowledged for?

Piece of Us received the GreatArt Award at the New Emergence Art Prize 2026. It forms part of a new body of work reflecting on our changing bodies, what we really see when we look in the mirror, and what is revealed when the body is stripped back and viewed beyond idealised societal expectations. Becoming Whole has just been selected as a finalist in the Sculpture Category of the Women in Art Prize 2026. It reflects on fragmentation, vulnerability and resilience, and the ongoing process of bringing together the different parts of ourselves.

How do you pick where to submit?

First, I look at the level and reputation of the open exhibition or competition. I also ask whether it will push me artistically. It's also an opportunity to put my work in front of industry professionals, curators, and push myself out of my comfort level and grow. Then there are the practical considerations: can I make the work in time, deliver it and collect it afterwards? Ultimately, I'm looking for opportunities that offer a combination of artistic challenge, meaningful exposure, professional recognition and the potential to move my practice forward.

What is your advice for anybody who wants to take part in opens and competitions?

Do your research and choose opportunities that align with your goals. Be selective. Most importantly, be prepared to put yourself into the work you are genuinely passionate about, rather than making what you think the selectors want to see. Enjoy the process. Some of the most rewarding work can come from pushing yourself outside your comfort zone, allowing yourself to grow as an artist.

Gwenda Jones Instagram to see her winning artworks: @gwenda_jones_sculpture

THREE QUESTIONS TO ONE OF OUR MEMBERS

We asked three questions about art to our long standing member and textile artist Rachel David. Rachel has participated in numerous exhibitions by the BAC and Sutton Coldfield Art Society, of which she is a member as well. Among others, her work was highly commended at the last BAC exhibition at the RBSA in 2025.

What is art for you and what is your art about?

Imagination, creativity, experimentation, communication, excitement.

My art is about multitude of different things – sometimes the state of the world, sometimes my delight in nature, sometimes my delight in the media I'm using, but almost always colourful and with clear lines.

How long have you been doing art and how has it developed over time?

As a child, I was always drawing and painting, as well as learning various crafts with the great encouragement of my mother and other relatives who drew and painted. It was mainly a hobby taking the form of sketching on holidays, although in my work as a speech and language therapist, it was very useful to be able to draw. When I became disabled in my late 40's and had to take early retirement, it took up a much more important place, as I needed something to provide a structure to my life. I took the Open College of the Arts 4-year painting course and attended many workshops at the RBSA and elsewhere. I have a condition called essential tremor, which has got worse with time and has led me to do much more textile and mixed media work over the last few years as control of a paintbrush has become more difficult.

Which artists inspire you?

They change over time and are too many to list. Recently, I have enjoyed the later work of Huguette Caland, Richard Diebenkorn, Elizabeth Blackadder and Barbara Rae, but the inspiration to keep going was initially provided by several cousins of my father's who encouraged me to draw and paint. I am from Guernsey and when I was a child, there were no art exhibitions and very poor art teaching at my school, so I didn't start going to art exhibitions until I was well into my 20s and was very uneducated in art history. The OCA course was very helpful at filling in the gaps.



Left photo: Rachel's highly commended art work «A Bird Fanciers Delight». Textile and found objects. The nest has ten little textile eggs inside. The book is A Bird Fancier's Delight, which was used to teach songbirds new tunes in the 17th century.



This summer has been and continues to be quite eventful in terms of our members' news, please look for the list of the events that our members are participating in, in our follow up email.

Finally, let us know if you have any ideas or submissions for future newsletters. We would love to hear from you at kathryn.e.sawbridge@hotmail.com or anbt2009@gmail.com