



ARTISTS CONNECT INC.

THE BLANK CANVAS

WELCOME TO OUR CREATIVE COMMUNITY NEWS

Welcome to the first edition of the Artists Connect Inc. digital newsletter!

We're delighted to share this new space with our artists, creatives and supporters across the Mackay, Isaac and Whitsunday regions. Artists Connect Inc. exists to celebrate, support and connect our vibrant creative community, and this newsletter is one more way we can share opportunities, stories, events and ideas. We hope it becomes a place to stay informed, feel inspired, and strengthen the connections that make our regions' arts scene thrive. Thank you for being part of the journey—it's been an amazing year so far and we are so glad you're here.



"EVERY ARTIST WAS FIRST AN AMATEUR. THE CANVAS IS WAITING—WHAT STORY WILL YOU TELL?"



Marg Burgess, Brizi Zimmermann, and guests at the Chamber of Commerce B2B Brews event featuring Artists Connect Inc. auction of displayed artworks at Gallery•31, CQU. See full story on page 3.

Getting creative with the ourSCAPE Art Challenge!

Artists of all backgrounds were invited to explore, respond and share their creative voice by creating artworks in just four hours. Members and wildcards gathered in three inspiring locations across our regions as participants in engaging on plain air experiences.

BRISK BAY, BOWEN | SUNDAY 19 APRIL
WINTERMOON FESTIVAL | SUNDAY 3 May
ST LAWRENCE ARTIST RETREAT | SUNDAY 26 July

EXHIBITION 26 Oct– 1 Nov | LIVE AUCTION 30 Oct

See page 4 for the photo gallery and details!

Editorial Comment

GROWING TOGETHER IN 2026

Artists Connect Inc. has much to celebrate in 2026. Thanks to the dedication of our executive, committee members, volunteers and supporters, we have continued to strengthen connections, deliver creative opportunities, grow partnerships and advocate for a more visible and valued arts sector across our three regions. We extend our sincere thanks to all who have contributed their time, skills and passion. As we approach our AGM, we encourage members to consider taking on leadership, committee and subcommittee roles. Sharing knowledge, building skills and sharing the load are essential to ensuring a sustainable and vibrant future for our organisation.

Many hands, shared knowledge, stronger outcomes. Please join us at the AGM on October 14 and help shape the next chapter of Artists Connect Inc.

Glenda Hobdell
Editor



BUILDING A VISIBLE AND VIBRANT CREATIVE COMMUNITY

2026 ACHIEVEMENTS TO DATE

- ✓ Strengthened artist connections across Mackay, Isaac and Whitsunday
- ✓ Delivered art trails, tours, workshops, retreats and creative events
- ✓ Expanded partnerships with councils, businesses, tourism and community organisations
- ✓ Increased visibility for regional artists and creative practitioners
- ✓ Continued advocacy for a stronger, more recognised arts sector
- ✓ Maintained a thriving volunteer-led organisation supporting artists across three regions

COMMUNITY EVENT: BUSINESS COMMUNITY RALLIES BEHIND ACI'S INTERNATIONAL DREAM

DBCT AND MACKAY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE SUPPORT FUNDRAISING AUCTION



Marg Burgess welcomes B2B participants to the exhibition of members works donated to raise funds for the exhibition in France 'From the Coral to the Coal' (see pages 9-10 for the full story)

Artists Connect Inc. members joined forces with Dalrymple Bay Coal Terminal (DBCT) and the Mackay Chamber of Commerce on 14 April 2026 for a fundraising event at Gallery•31, CQU, Mackay, demonstrating the power of community partnerships in supporting regional artists.

The one-day event featured an exhibition of member's works and a silent auction, bringing together artists, supporters, business representatives, and community members with a shared goal: raising funds to help send local artworks to France and create opportunities for artists to showcase their work on an international stage.

Throughout the morning, attendees had the opportunity to bid on a range of artworks kindly donated by Artists Connect Inc. members. The silent auction format encouraged participation while fostering a spirit of generosity and support for the region's creative community.

The fundraiser highlighted the valuable role that business organisations play in nurturing the arts. Support from DBCT and the Mackay Chamber of Commerce helped strengthen connections between the cultural and business sectors, potentially creating future pathways for local artists to extend their reach beyond regional Queensland.

For Artists Connect Inc., the event was a reminder that achieving international opportunities often begins with strong local support. By investing in the creative sector, the community helps ensure that Mackay artists can share their talents with audiences far beyond our shores.

Artists Connect Inc. extends its sincere thanks to DBCT, the Mackay Chamber of Commerce, participating artists, bidders, and everyone who contributed to the success of the fundraiser.

Editor's Note

Partnerships matter. When business, industry and community work together, the arts flourish. We acknowledge the support of DBCT and the Mackay Region Chamber of Commerce for helping create opportunities that contribute to a stronger, more connected and creative region.

COMMUNITY EVENT: OURSCAPE – THREE LANDSCAPES... ONE CREATIVE JOURNEY

This year's ourSCAPE *en plein air* Challenge took artists across three distinctly different Central Queensland landscapes: Brisk Bay, Wintermoon, and the St. Lawrence Wetlands. Each location presented unique colours, textures, and challenges, inviting participants to capture the spirit of the landscape while working outdoors. Painting in public and responding to changing weather, light, and conditions encourages artists and the public to work with greater freedom and spontaneity. Our supportive mentor and Mackay artist-educator, Glenda Hobdell, commented that for many artists, including those visiting these regional locations and participating for the first time, the challenge offered an opportunity to step beyond familiar surroundings, embrace potentially new environments, and challenge themselves to step out of their comfort zones and develop greater confidence in their evolving practice.



ourSCAPE 1 – Wintermoon



ourSCAPE 1 – Brisk Bay



ourSCAPE 1 – St. Lawrence

The challenge celebrated the strong sense of community that exists among *en plein air* artists. Sharing four hours in the elements, observing, creating, and connecting with fellow creatives made the experience as rewarding as the finished artworks themselves. See the next page for a personal reflection contributed by our Whitsunday member, Leigh Skead.

The artworks created during the challenge will be showcased in the ourSCAPE Exhibition from 26 October to 1 November 2026, with the Auction available online from 26 October and culminating in a dynamic Live Auction on opening night – 30 October at Gallery•31. The challenge, exhibition and auction, now in its third year, offers the community a unique opportunity to experience and support this unique artistic journey organised for ACI members and public wildcards. All are invited to participate in this growing and ongoing challenge in 2027!

THE ourSCAPE CHALLENGE: A PERSONAL REFLECTION ON PARTICIPATING AS AN EMERGING ARTIST

BY WHITSUNDAY ARTIST, LEIGH SKEAD

“LOOKING BACK, THE CHALLENGE WAS FAR MORE THAN A SERIES OF PAINTINGS. IT WAS AN OPPORTUNITY TO PUSH PERSONAL BOUNDARIES, CONNECT WITH NEW COMMUNITIES, AND CELEBRATE THE SHARED PASSION THAT BRINGS ARTISTS OUTDOORS TO CREATE.”



Whitsunday artist, Leigh Skead at the St. Lawrence Artist Retreat

This year's ourSCAPE Challenge took me on a creative journey through three very different Queensland landscapes: Brisk Bay, Winter Moon, and the St. Lawrence Wetlands. While each location offered its own unique beauty, the experience became about much more than painting a scene. It became a journey of artistic growth, discovery, and connection.

Winter Moon and St. Lawrence were entirely new places for me, challenging me to step beyond familiar surroundings and respond to landscapes, light, and atmosphere in fresh ways. One of my personal goals was to overcome the self-consciousness that can come with painting in front of an audience and to develop a freer, more intuitive approach to my work. Each location encouraged me to trust the process, embrace the unexpected, and simply enjoy being present in the landscape.

Just as memorable as the places themselves was the community spirit of the plein air Challenge. Artists, festivalgoers, spectators, and local residents all became part of the experience. I was inspired by the dedication of fellow artists willing to spend four hours in the elements, capturing a fleeting moment on canvas while sharing encouragement, stories, and laughter along the way.



A glimpse into the diverse locations experienced through ourSCAPE 2026

Editor's Note

Whitsunday artist, Leigh Skead, completed all three components of the 2026 ourSCAPE Plein Air Challenge, painting across coastal, inland, and wetland environments while embracing new locations and creative challenges along the way.

COMMUNITY EVENT: EXPANDING REGIONAL ART EXPERIENCES AT THE ST. LAWRENCE RETREAT

A PERSONAL REFLECTION BY SARINA ARTIST, JANE GUNN



THE ST LAWRENCE WETLANDS ARTIST RETREAT WAS MUCH MORE THAN A WEEKEND OF CREATIVE ACTIVITIES. SET AGAINST THE TRANQUIL BACKDROP OF THE ST LAWRENCE WETLANDS, IT BROUGHT TOGETHER ARTISTS, LEARNERS, AND MENTORS TO SHARE SKILLS, INSPIRATION, AND A PASSION FOR CREATIVITY.

One of the retreat's greatest strengths was its ability to provide access to a wide variety of artistic experiences in a single location, particularly for people from rural and remote communities who may not otherwise have opportunities to participate in workshops and creative development. The knowledge and skills gained can then be taken back to local communities, creating a growing "chain" of art experiences that continues long after the retreat has ended.

For me, the retreat offered a unique opportunity to step into a mentoring role. I was fortunate to be selected to facilitate a mixed media workshop for ten participants, an experience that proved both rewarding and transformative. Not only did it strengthen my confidence as an artist and workshop facilitator, but it was also incredibly satisfying to see the creativity, enthusiasm, and completed artworks produced by such talented participants.

An equally valuable part of the experience was the encouragement and guidance provided by more experienced artists and mentors. Their support helped create a welcoming environment where learning, experimentation, and creative growth could flourish. Events such as the St Lawrence Wetlands Artist Retreat do not happen by chance. They are made possible through the vision, dedication, and volunteer efforts of organisers, workshop presenters, and community arts organisations, including Artists Connect Inc.. Their commitment continues to create opportunities for artists across the Mackay and Whitsunday region to develop their skills, build connections, and enrich their creative practice.

As artists, we often speak about the importance of sharing knowledge. This retreat demonstrated how powerful that sharing can be, creating not only new artworks but new opportunities, new friendships, and new pathways for artistic growth.

"The St Lawrence Wetlands Artist Retreat offered participants a diverse range of artistic experiences in a unique wetlands setting. Developed and hosted by Artists Connect Inc., the retreat brought together artists, facilitators, and community members to learn, create, and connect."

COMMUNITY EVENT: ST LAWRENCE CREATIVES MAKE A SPLASH AT THE WETLANDS FESTIVAL

A PERSONAL REFLECTION BY ST. LAWRENCE ARTIST, ANN MISON



The St Lawrence Wetlands Festival was transformed into a vibrant celebration of creativity, community and nature this year, thanks to the efforts of the St Lawrence Creatives. What began as an ambitious idea grew into a remarkable installation featuring 176 land and sea sculptures, created by members of the creative group and the wider community. The installation became a standout attraction, delighting festival visitors with a colourful menagerie ranging from lifelike creatures to imaginative underwater-inspired forms. The display was illuminated at night, creating a magical spectacle that brought the wetlands landscape to life.

The project was made possible through the dedication of the St Lawrence Creatives, with support from the Isaac Regional Council and the St Lawrence Wetlands Festival Working Group. Special recognition was given to Anne-Marie Loeskow for ongoing encouragement and support throughout the project. Visitors responded enthusiastically to the installation, including well-known gardening and sustainability advocate Costa Georgiadis, whose interest highlighted the broad appeal of the community's creative achievement.



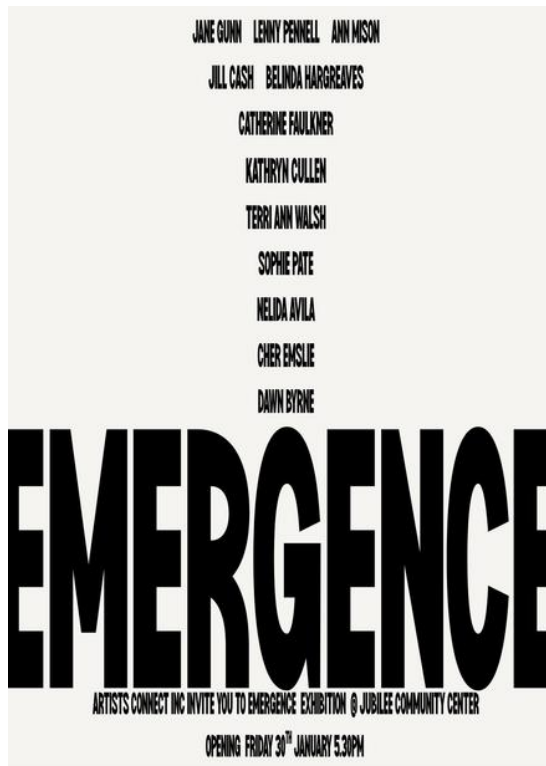
Alongside the installation, the group delivered its first independently run creative workshops and market activities. Festival-goers of all ages embraced the opportunity to participate in hands-on experiences, including tie-dye workshops facilitated by Jill Cash, suncatcher-making sessions led by Catherine Faulkner, and botanical gelli printing workshops presented by Ann Mison. The workshops were characterised by creativity, curiosity and plenty of laughter as participants explored new techniques and shared artistic experiences.

The group's market stall, coordinated by Belinda Hargreaves, showcased a diverse range of locally made arts and crafts, providing an opportunity for visitors to engage directly with makers and support regional creativity. Creating the installation required three days of intensive work and countless volunteer hours. Beyond the impressive visual outcome, the project demonstrated the power of collaboration, community participation and creative leadership in a small regional town. The success of the workshops and installation represents an exciting milestone for the St Lawrence Creatives and highlights the important role that grassroots arts groups play in enriching community life across the Isaac region.



Congratulations to the St Lawrence Creatives on an inspiring contribution to the 2026 St Lawrence Wetlands Festival and for showcasing the creativity, generosity and community spirit that continues to thrive in regional Queensland.

COMMUNITY EVENT: NEW VOICES IN ART CELEBRATED THROUGH 'EMERGENCE' EXHIBITION



Emerging artists and mentor, Tracey Robb at the 'Emergence' exhibition at the Jubilee Centre in February

Emerging artists from across Mackay, Isaac and the Whitsundays stepped into the spotlight through *Emergence*, an exhibition presented by Artists Connect Inc. (ACI) at the Jubilee Community Centre in February.

The exhibition showcased the work of artists exhibiting publicly for the first time, providing an important platform for creative growth and community engagement across the region.

A key feature of the project was the mentorship provided by local artist Tracey Robb, who guided participants as they prepared for their first exhibition experience. "What a pleasure to be given this opportunity to mentor such an enthusiastic group of budding artists," Robb said. "I'm looking forward to seeing their progress after such a great start."

Tracey also congratulated the artists for taking the leap into public exhibition, describing it as an important milestone in their creative journeys.

Artists Connect Inc. thanked Tracey for sharing her expertise and supporting the artists throughout the process.

"We love to see the growth in cultural capacity across our footprint of Mackay, Isaac and Whitsundays," the organisation said.

The exhibition reflected ACI's commitment to supporting artists at every stage of their careers, from emerging to established practitioners. The organisation continued that commitment with its following exhibition, showcasing mid-career artists in March.

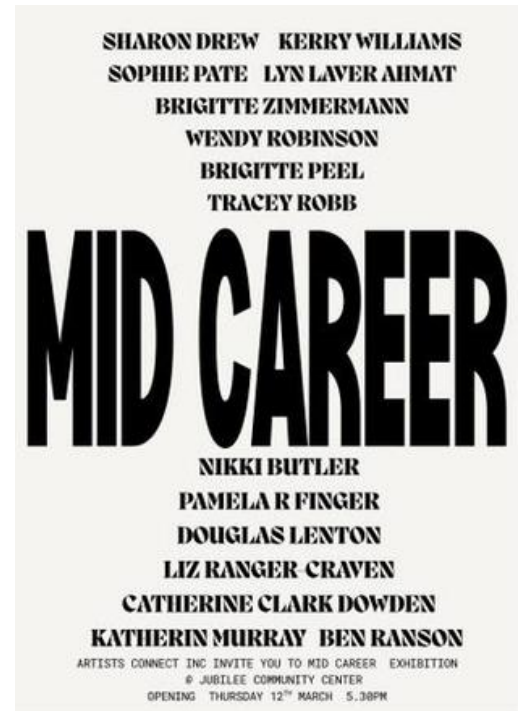
The *Emergence* exhibition offered the community an opportunity to discover and support the region's newest artistic voices., supporting the artists throughout the installation and curation process.

"Emergence reflects the growing strength of the creative sector across Mackay, Isaac and the Whitsundays, where artists at all stages of their careers are being encouraged to develop their practice and connect with audiences. By investing in emerging talent today, we help build a vibrant and sustainable cultural future for our region, reminding us that artistic growth flourishes when creativity is nurtured, mentorship is valued, and communities come together as one."

COMMUNITY EVENT: MID CAREER EXHIBITION AT THE JUBILEE CENTRE IN MACKAY



Brizi, Nikki and Katherin hanging the artworks entered in the Mid Career exhibition at the Jubilee Centre in March



The Mid Career Exhibition, presented by Artists Connect Inc., showcased the work of talented mid-career artists from across the three regions at the Jubilee Centre Mackay during March 2026. The exhibition provided a platform for ACI artists who have developed established regional creative practices and continue to make significant contributions to the local arts community.

Featuring works by our members, the exhibition celebrated the depth of experience, artistic growth, and professional development that characterise the mid-career stage of an artist's journey. It also provided audiences with the opportunity to engage with a diverse range of artistic styles, perspectives, and creative approaches.

While emerging artists are often discovering their creative voice and established artists may be recognised for a lifetime of achievement, mid-career artists occupy an important space within the arts sector. They continue to refine their practice, expand their skills, and contribute to the cultural landscape through ongoing creative exploration.

The exhibition highlighted the strength and diversity of the Artists Connect Inc. membership and reinforced the organisation's commitment to supporting artists at every stage of their creative journey. Visitors were able to experience firsthand the passion, dedication, and artistic excellence that continue to thrive within the region's creative community.

"The Mid Career Exhibition celebrated artists who continue to evolve, experiment, and contribute to the vibrant creative culture of our region. Their dedication to artistic practice enriches both the local arts community and the audiences who engage with their work."

EXHIBITION: CREATIVITY MOVING FORWARD... THREE REGIONS TOGETHER AT THE COALFACE GALLERY, MORANBAH



Katherin, Rochelle Barber (Moranbah Council) and Brizi hanging the artworks from Isaac, Mackay and Whitsunday regions at the Coalface Gallery, Moranbah

Artists and audiences in Moranbah were invited to experience the strength of regional creativity through an exhibition at the Moranbah Coal Face Gallery, featuring works by members of Artists Connect Inc. (ACI). Curated by Katherine Murray and Brigitte Zimmermann, the exhibition celebrated artistic connections across the Isaac, Mackay, and Whitsunday regions.

More than an exhibition, the project represented an important step forward in bringing artists from three neighbouring shires together through a shared creative platform. By showcasing work from across the region, the exhibition highlighted the diversity of artistic practice while strengthening relationships between communities connected by geography, culture, and creativity.

Exhibitions such as this play an important role in extending opportunities for artists beyond their local area. They encourage new audiences to engage with regional art and demonstrate the value of collaboration in building a vibrant and connected creative sector.

The exhibition also reflected Artists Connect Inc.'s ongoing commitment to creating opportunities for artists to exhibit, connect, and share their work across the wider Central Queensland region. Through partnerships and collaborative projects, artists can reach new audiences while contributing to a stronger and more visible arts community.

Running from 5 August to 5 October 2026, the exhibition celebrated not only the artworks on display but also the growing creative relationships between the Isaac, Mackay, and Whitsunday regions.

"Bringing together artists from the Isaac, Mackay, and Whitsunday regions, this exhibition celebrates the power of creativity to connect communities."

INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITION: ACROSS OCEANS... ACI ARTISTS CONNECT WITH FRANCE



FROM THE CORAL TO THE COAL

EXPOSITION D'ARTISTES AUSTRALIENS REGIONAUX
DU QUEENSLAND

VERNISSAGE
A 19:00H LE 18
AOÛT

DU 18 AOÛT AU 1ER SEPTEMBRE

OFFICE DU TOURISME DE
FORCALQUIER

ENTRÉE LIBRE

August 2026 marked a significant milestone for Artists Connect Inc. as artworks were carefully packed and shipped to Forcalquier, France for the organisation's first international exhibition. What began as the practical task of preparing artworks for transport became the culmination of a much larger vision: creating connections between artists, communities, and cultures across the globe. Coordinated by Margaret Burgess and Brigitte Zimmermann, the exhibition brought the creative voices of regional Queensland to a new international audience.

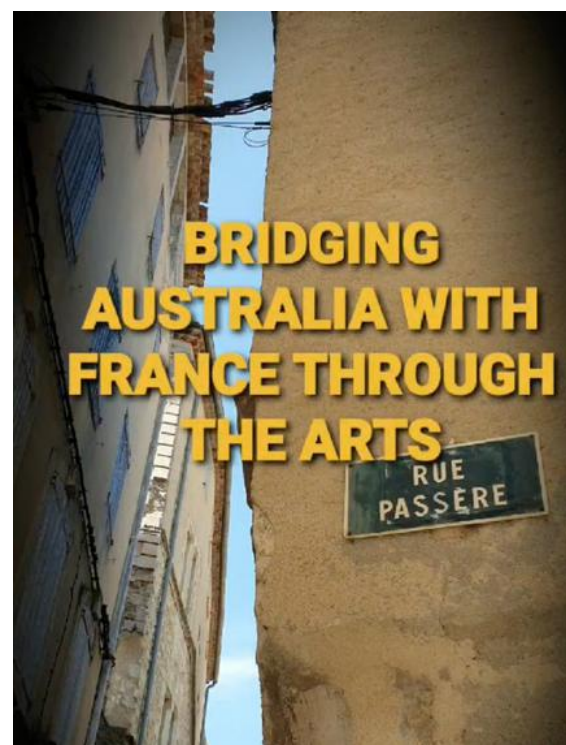
Opening the exhibition in France, curator and former ACI member Agnes Durbet reflected on her years living in the Whitsundays and the enduring connection she maintains with the region. Now based in Provence, Agnes described the exhibition as a bridge between two hemispheres, creating opportunities for Queensland artists to share their stories, perspectives, and creative responses to the landscapes they call home.

This important exhibition highlights the unique realities of life in Queensland, where natural wonders, tourism, industry, and community intersect. Through painting, sculpture, and other creative forms, participating artists explore themes of place, environment, resilience, and connection, offering international audiences a glimpse into the diverse experiences that shape regional Australia.

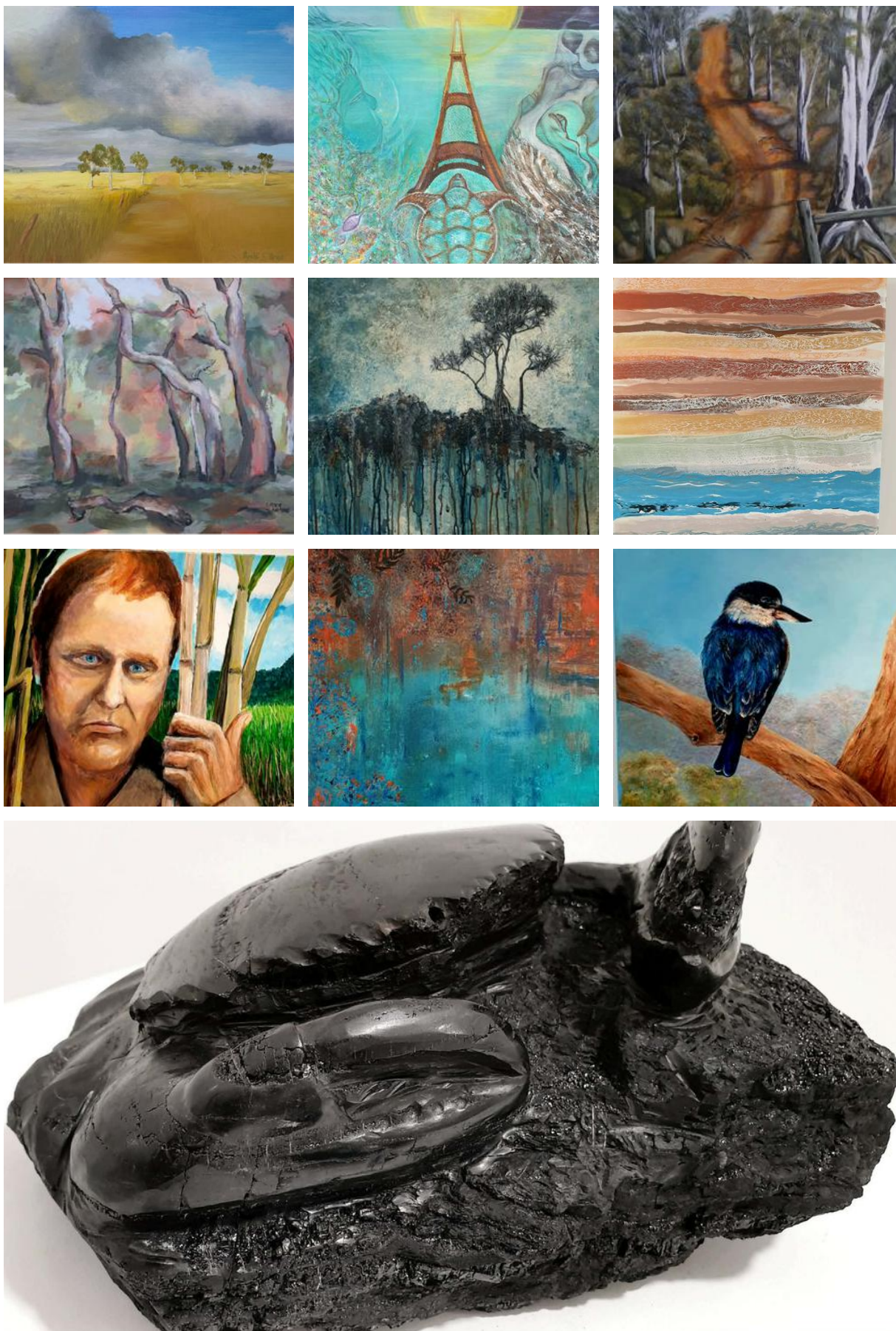
More than an exhibition, the project represents a cultural exchange. By taking the work of local artists beyond Australian shores, Artists Connect Inc. continues to expand opportunities for regional creatives while fostering meaningful dialogue between communities separated by thousands of kilometres but united through the universal language of art.

Running from 5 August to 5 October 2026, the exhibition celebrated not only the artworks on display but also the growing creative relationships between the Isaac, Mackay, and Whitsunday regions.

*"We are creating a passage between two hemispheres."
Agnes Durbet, Curator*



"ACI's first exhibition in France marks a major milestone for the organisation, creating a cultural bridge between Queensland and Provence, showcasing the talent, stories, and perspectives of regional artists on the international stage."



A selection of members' artworks that travelled to France for the 'From the Coral to the Coal' exhibition in August, 2026. Congratulations to all whose work was showcased at this successful international event!

2026 HIGHLIGHTS: A SELECTION



THANK YOU TO OUR FUNDING BODIES, REGIONAL ARTS AUSTRALIA AND @SQUADRON, FOR SUPPORTING THE ST LAWRENCE ARTISTS RETREAT 2026.



ACI ARTIST DIRECTORY PUBLICATION – THANK YOU TO MAJOR SPONSORS #DBCT; BB PRINT PTY LTD; MACKAY REGIONAL COUNCIL; ISAAC REGIONAL COUNCIL; WHITSUNDAY REGIONAL COUNCIL



CONGRATULATIONS TO ARTISTS CONNECT INC MEMBERS, CATHERINE CLARK DOWDEN, STACEY NICHOLAS, BEN RANSON AND BRIGITTE ZIMMERMANN – ART SOCIETY EXHIBITION WINNERS 2026

OPEN STUDIOS | ART IN THE PARK | EXHIBITIONS | B2B EVENTS | WORKSHOPS | COMPETITIONS | RETREATS | MENTORING | PUBLICATIONS | ART CHALLENGES... !!!

OPEN STUDIOS: OPENING DOORS TO CREATIVE CONNECTIONS ACROSS REGIONS

ACI ARTISTS HOST OPEN STUDIO EVENTS FROM MAY TO AUGUST

Open Studios continue to create valuable opportunities for artists and visitors to connect through authentic creative experiences. Recent studio visits in both the Whitsundays and Mackay regions have demonstrated how a simple invitation into a working studio can spark meaningful conversations, inspire visitors, and strengthen connections within the arts community.

In August, Victorian artist Margaret explored several Whitsunday studios using the *Artists Connect Inc. Whitsundays Studio Passport*, collecting stamps while meeting local artists and experiencing the rich diversity of creative practice across the region. One stop included a visit to the Cannonvale studio of Carolyn Shannon, where discussions about art, galleries and creative opportunities highlighted the value of artist-to-artist exchange and cultural tourism.

At the same time, many artists across the Mackay and Whitsunday regions have continued to welcome visitors into their creative spaces. Lyn Laver-Ahmat recently hosted her final Open Studio event for the year at Slade Point, offering visitors the opportunity to view artworks, explore a working studio and engage directly with the creative process.

Open Studios have also been thriving in Slade Point at *Retreat on Janz Art Studios*, where visitors have been welcomed throughout the year to experience working studios, view exhibitions and engage with artists in a relaxed and inspiring environment. Together, these experiences showcase the strength of Open Studios as a platform for artist visibility, creative exchange and regional cultural tourism.



Top: Lyn-Laver-Ahmat in her Slade Point studio gallery
Bottom: An engaging work displayed by Carolyn Shannon's Cannonvale studio

“Open Studios offer something increasingly rare in today's world: genuine connection. By opening their doors, artists invite visitors into the heart of their creative practice, transforming studios into places of conversation, learning and inspiration. Whether through the Studio Passport initiative, independent Open Studio events, or ongoing programs, these experiences strengthen our creative communities while celebrating the unique cultural identity of our regions.”

ARTIST SPOTLIGHT: BOTANICAL BEAUTY BLOOMS AT CEDAR GALLERY

ACI ARTIST BARBARA LAWRENCE SHOWCASES A PASSION FOR BOTANICAL ART



From 15 April to 15 July 2026, visitors to the beautiful Cedar Gallery in Eungella were treated to a remarkable display of botanical art and illustration by local artist Barbara Lawrence. This exhibition showcased a collection of detailed botanical studies inspired by the rich plant life of the Whitsunday region.

Housed within the stunning purpose-built Cedar Gallery, the exhibition offered audiences a rare opportunity to engage with the specialised art forms of botanical illustration and botanical art. While these disciplines have a long and respected history, they are not always widely recognised by the general public. Barbara's exhibition sought to share her passion for this centuries-old practice and highlight the extraordinary beauty found in the plants of our local environment.

The works featured plants that can all be found within the Whitsunday region, with many growing in the Mackay Regional Botanic Gardens. Botanical art, while maintaining scientific and botanical accuracy, allows the artist greater creative interpretation, resulting in artworks that celebrate both knowledge and beauty.

Through careful observation and study, Barbara transformed familiar botanical specimens into artworks that invited viewers to look more closely and appreciate the intricate details often overlooked in nature.

The Cedar Gallery exhibition helped audiences understand the subtle distinctions between botanical illustration and botanical art, enriching the viewing experience and fostering greater appreciation for this specialised discipline.

Barbara expressed her gratitude for the opportunity to share her work in the beautiful Cedar Gallery space and acknowledged the exceptional support provided by Kerry and Owen, owners of Cedar Gallery, throughout the exhibition.

The exhibition stands as a testament to the power of art to deepen our connection with the natural world and celebrate the unique flora of our region. Artists Connect Inc. congratulates Barbara on this successful exhibition and looks forward to seeing her botanical journey continue to flourish.

"Barbara Lawrence's practice exemplifies the powerful intersection of art, science and environmental appreciation. Through her dedication to botanical art, she encourages deeper engagement with the natural world while preserving and celebrating the unique plant heritage of our region."

ARTIST SPOTLIGHT: NEW HORIZONS: INSPIRED BY THE KIMBERLEYS

ACI ARTIST PAM FINLAY'S ARTISTIC EVOLUTION



A recent journey to the breathtaking Kimberley region of Western Australia has become the catalyst for an exciting new direction in the artistic practice of Pam Finlay. Working from her home base in Bowen, Pam is developing a new body of work inspired by the landscapes, colours, textures, and atmosphere of one of Australia's most remarkable environments.

Through a combination of mixed media and textile techniques, Pam is exploring fresh creative possibilities while continuing to extend and challenge her artistic practice. The work reflects an ongoing commitment to experimentation and growth, demonstrating how travel and new experiences can inspire artists to see the world, and their work, through a different lens.

The Kimberley's dramatic escarpments, ancient landforms, and distinctive colour palette have sparked a series of works that move beyond representation to explore mood, memory, and personal response. Through layering, texture, and mark-making, Pam is translating her experiences into artworks that capture the essence rather than the literal details of place.

As this body of work continues to evolve, it represents a creative journey of discovery, experimentation, and artistic growth. Artists Connect Inc. looks forward to following Pam's exploration of new ideas and seeing where this Kimberley-inspired path leads next.

SOCIAL MEDIA LINKS

[HTTPS://CRYSTALCLEARCREATIONS.COM.AU](https://crystalclearcreations.com.au)

[HTTPS://INSTAGRAM.COM/CRYSTAL CLEAR CREATIONS](https://instagram.com/crystalclearcreations)

"Pam Finlay's evolving Kimberley-inspired body of work reflects the curiosity, courage and creative openness that underpin a lifelong artistic practice. By embracing new experiences, materials and techniques, she moves beyond simple representation to explore the emotional resonance of place, demonstrating how travel, observation and experimentation can become powerful catalysts for artistic growth and renewal. This ongoing exploration highlights Pam's willingness to challenge herself creatively while deepening her personal visual language, resulting in work that is both deeply reflective and richly connected to the Australian landscape."

WHAT'S ON NEXT FOR ARTISTS CONNECT INC.

HELP SHAPE THE NEXT CHAPTER

As we approach our AGM, we encourage members to consider becoming involved in:

- Executive positions
- Management Committee roles
- Project and regional subcommittees
- Events and volunteer support teams
- Advocacy, marketing and fundraising initiatives

Getting involved is a fantastic way to:

- Build new skills
- Share professional knowledge
- Expand networks
- Influence future directions
- Help share the workload across our growing organisation



Participants at our first AGM in 2023 at Gallery•31. Current and future members and communities across the regions, are welcome... Let's keep growing!

CONGRATULATIONS

Congratulations to our ACI members who exhibited at the 'Beyond Beautiful' Great Barrier Reef Festival exhibition, hosted by Creative Connections in the Whitsundays. A special mention to award winners – Lyn Laver-Ahmat (2D Award), Katherin Murray (Reef Theme Award), and Stacey Nicholas (3D Award). For the full list of award recipients, click the link below.



Winners Announced at 2026 Great Barrier Reef Festival Art Exhibition

The winners of the 2026 Great Barrier Reef Festival...

creativeconnectionswhitsunday.com

Click the image above to open... thank you Creative Connections!



CALL FOR MEMBERS 2027

Soon the callout for 2027 membership will be published. As we begin our 5th year, we would love you to join us as Artists Connect Inc. continues to grow and advance the opportunities and connections made for our regional artists. Watch this space!

OUR FUTURE DEPENDS ON ALL OF US

**Many hands • Shared
knowledge • Stronger
outcomes**

Together we can secure an Arts Hub, achieve paid administrative support, grow our membership, continue to increase visibility, and build a sustainable creative future for Mackay, Isaac and Whitsunday.

UPCOMING EVENTS

SEPTEMBER | OCTOBER 2026

DALRYMPLE BAY RUN SHIRT DESIGN COMPETITION 2027

Competition Theme: Nature

The Dalrymple Bay Run Shirt Design Competition celebrates creativity inspired by the beauty, diversity and spirit of nature. Entries close on Sunday 13 September. Selected artworks will be exhibited, with the winning artwork featured on the official 2027 Dalrymple Bay Run Shirt. [Link to enter.](#)

Shortlisted Artists Notified: Monday 14 September 2026 via email

Delivery of Shortlisted Artworks: Tuesday 22 September 2026

Gallery 31, CQUniversity | Sydney Street, Mackay QLD

Exhibition Opening & Winners Announcement: Thursday 24 September 2026

Art work to be collected: Tuesday 6 October



ourSCAPE ART CHALLENGE EXHIBITION AND AUCTION 2026

All works completed on site during any of the 2026 ourSCAPE ART CHALLENGES will be accepted into the annual exhibition and live auction of the en plein air artworks completed in or under 4 hours.

Artwork entries close: 30 September 2026 via email (link to enter: <https://form.jotform.com/262437593850869>)

Auction artworks online: 14 October 2026

Delivery of Artworks: 26 October 2026 to Gallery 31, CQUniversity

Exhibition at Gallery•31: 10 am - 4 pm: 28, 29, 30 October 2026

Exhibition Official Opening & Live Auction: Friday 30 October 2026

Artwork to be collected: Saturday 31 October 2026



ACI OPEN STUDIOS PASSPORT COMPETITION

\$500 Voucher to be used in a studio of the winner's choice

Open Studios have taken place from May to August in 2026. Participants were encouraged to gather an ACI stamp on the 2026 Passport from each studio or artist visited.

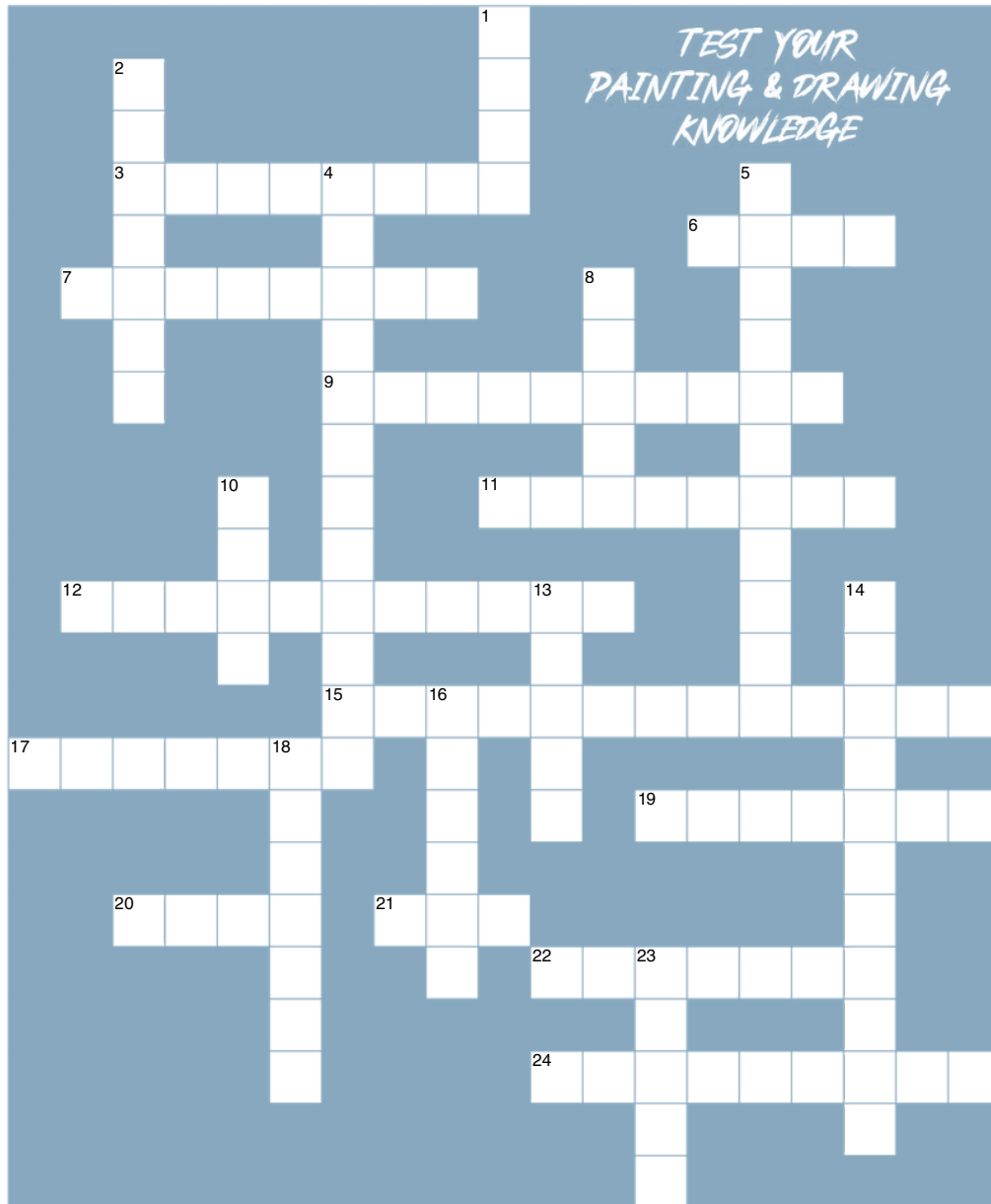
The winning entry is to be drawn and announced at the opening of the ourSCAPE exhibition: Friday 30 October 2026 | Gallery 31, CQUniversity | Sydney Street, Mackay QLD



EDITION 1 CROSSWORD

Answer the clues, and enter the terms into the crossword.

Think about what you have seen, felt and discovered while painting or drawing.



Clues

ACROSS

3. In drawing, the space around and between objects.
6. A colour altered by adding grey, or a subtle variation in lightness or darkness.
7. The difference between opposing elements, such as light and dark.
9. The intensity or purity of a colour.
11. The gradual joining of colours or values so that transitions are softened.
12. A system for creating the impression of depth and space on a flat surface.
15. Colours opposite each other on the colour wheel.
17. The degree to which a paint blocks what lies beneath it.
19. A quick drawing that captures movement, action or the essential pose.
20. A colour mixed with white, making it lighter.
21. The name given to a colour, such as red, blue or yellow.
22. The coloured substance that gives paint its colour.
24. Colours that sit next to one another on the colour wheel.

DOWN

1. A mark made by a moving point; it can vary in direction, weight and character.
2. A line that describes the outer edge or form of something.
4. The quality that allows underlying layers or paper to remain visible through paint.
5. The arrangement of visual elements within an artwork.
8. A colour mixed with black, making it darker.
10. A fluid, even or graduated layer of diluted watercolour.
13. How light or dark a colour or mark appears.
14. The speckled or textured effect created when pigment settles into the paper's texture.
16. A material or substance used to create an artwork, or added to paint to change its behaviour.
18. The actual or visual quality of a surface.
23. A thin transparent layer of paint applied over a dry layer.

Tip: Some answers may be familiar words used in a more specific art context.

ACI VALUES

Connection • Sustainability • Creativity, •
Respect • Community

“Every exhibition, workshop, trail, partnership and community project featured in this edition reminds us that creativity is not created in isolation. It grows through connection, generosity and a willingness to contribute. Thank you to all our members, volunteers, partners and supporters who continue to strengthen the creative communities of Mackay, Isaac and Whitsunday. Together, we are building a vibrant and sustainable future for the arts.

Thank you everyone who contributed to this first publication of the BLANK CANVAS.”

Glenda Hobdell

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