

**THE ART SOCIETY OF TASMANIA INC**  
**OPENING OF THE 139<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL EXHIBITION**  
**SPEECH BY**  
**HER EXCELLENCY THE HONOURABLE BARBARA BAKER AC**  
**GOVERNOR OF TASMANIA**  
**LONG GALLERY, HOBART, FRIDAY 8 SEPTEMBER 2023**

Thank you, Nikki [Munro, AST President introduced HE].

I begin by paying my respects to the traditional and original owners of this land: the palawa people. I acknowledge the contemporary Tasmanian Aboriginal community and recognise their enduring culture and continued connection to land, sea and waters.

As the Patron of the Art Society of Tasmania, I am delighted to again be opening your Annual Exhibition. May I warmly acknowledge your Vice-Patrons Lord Mayor Anna Reynolds and Rob Valentine MLC.

I enjoyed attending here at this Long Gallery in August 2021 when for the first time your exhibition location was moved from your home base, the Lady Franklin Gallery at Ancanthe. Your move was to accommodate your growing membership and exhibitors.

This evening's exhibition is an impressive testimony to the diversity and talent of your artists, working across many media. There are 146 entries on display, selected as the best works created during the last year.<sup>1</sup>

The move away physically from Ancanthe has been a means of bringing that unique place here spiritually. You attend workshops at the Gallery, refining your skills. You share your experiences with one another as colleague artists at work.

The Ancanthe story and spirit is well known and was creatively expressed at the Lady Franklin Gallery's June exhibition, *Figment*, by artists Jo Chew and Amber Stephenson.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Nikki Munro 5 September 2023 email to David Owen.

<sup>2</sup> *Gallery News* (Journal of the Art Society of Tasmania), No. 94 April-May-June 2023, pages 8-11.

The Vice-Regal connection with Ancanthe extends back to 1843. Lady Franklin commissioned the building to display local products and plants and encourage educational and cultural pursuits in Van Diemen's Land.

One hundred and eighty years on, and next month, we are look forwarding to hosting a reception at Government House for members of this Society to celebrate this 180<sup>th</sup> milestone.

Renowned Tasmanian landscape heritage planner, Gwenda Sheridan, in describing artist William Piquenit's 1879 painting, *Mount Wellington from New Town Bay*, wrote and I quote:

This is a painting where the viewer is intended not to look outwards, but to look inwards and upwards ... There almost hidden, and yet mysteriously present, strategically positioned right at the cusp between the settled, and the dramatic mountain, sits Ancanthe ... it could appear that Piquenit wished his viewers to take away with them some meaning of mystery and enclosure to this small, refined piece of Greek architecture, hidden amongst its trees at the foot of the mighty mountain.<sup>3</sup>

This is an elegant and evocative view of the inherent and enduring artistic grandeur of Ancanthe, as your creative home.

Here in the Long Gallery, may I thank exhibition curator, Carol Sheppard, on our behalf. May I also thank this year's judges, Katherine Cooper, Hannah Blackmore and Jock Young.

Thanks also to the generosity and support of all of the sponsors.

Finally, may I thank and commend all exhibitors. Your works individually and collectively are of an exceptionally high standard.

And now, I believe we have some announcements to make!

Thank you. [Awards announced]

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<sup>3</sup> *Tasmanian News*, Monday 16 November 1891 page 3, accessed 6 September 2023.