



Artist's camp 1880

Julian Rossi Ashton arrived in Australia in 1878. Initially settling in Melbourne he came to Sydney and put down permanent roots at Bondi. As a trustee of the Art Gallery of New South Wales he was responsible for acquiring "Still glides the stream" by Arthur Streeton. The first Australian Impressionist to be acquired by any Australian Gallery

Streeton and Roberts imagined the streets were made of gold, and joined Julian in Sydney.

With artist Livingstone Hopkins he established an artists' camp at Balmoral Beach in the 1880's, a model for the camp later joined by Streeton and Roberts at Curlw Camp at Sirius Cove. The oil study on the left was painted at Balmoral by Julian of his wife Eliza, a pioneer woman journalist.



Eliza Ashton by Julian Ashton

Robert Louis Stevenson, whom Julian visited at the Union Club in Bent St Sydney and Premier Sir Henry Parkes who wryly tolerated camp discomfort, were guests of Julian at Balmoral over the years. Ada Cambridge writes of travelling through the bush and lunching with the artists at the camp



Sir Henry Parkes by J.R. Ashton 1887

Robert Louis Stevenson

In 1890 Julian had opened The Sydney Art School in King St Sydney. In 1989 the school's antique casts, easels and paintings were classified by The National Trust. The school keeps a fine cast collection at Georges Heights.



Julian Ashton with students at Georges Heights 1880

Many students, including Sydney Long, George Lambert and Charles Conder joined the master painting "en plein air" by Balmoral Beach. A J Daplyn and Henry Fullwood also painted at the camp



Students at Georges Heights 1880



Wyargine Point from the camp

Julian Ashton

He disapproved of the custom of creating the major work of art in the studio and himself habitually painted large and small works in the open air. Julian's paint box, which he used in Europe and on his travels all over Australia, is an exhibit in the Georges Heights Gallery. His son Howard continued this practice. Paul Delprat remembers as a boy going on painting trips with him and holding the stake to which any large canvas would be clamped as Howard hammered it into the ground. J Richard Ashton continued the tradition of painting out of doors with his students.

Julian embraced the ground breaking but unwelcomed Van Gogh, Dali and Cezanne exhibition in Sydney in 1942. He was excited by adventurous work as long as "it was well drawn." The ex students of the school who have over the years been attracted by the natural beauty of Balmoral include Lloyd Rees, Howard Ashton, Brett Whiteley, Brian Gaston and many others.

In 1988 as a Bi Centenary event Mosman Municipal Council initiated a re-enactment of Julian Ashton's artist's camp. Richard Ashton's painting (right) records the event. Shelley Rose diligently researched records, tents were erected and concerts and lectures were held. A photographic exhibition was mounted survived a storm in a marquee by the beach.

Ethel Stephens (Julian's first Student) Elioth Gruner, Howard Ashton, (Julian's son) and J.J.Hilder were visitors Throughout his life Julian was a champion of the impressionist painters in Australia.



From the camp Sydney Long 1890



Julian Ashton at Bradleys Head



Artist camp reenactment

J Richard Ashton 1988



Howard Ashton at work

A flagpole and bronze plate marks the site next to the Balmoral Beach Club. Our campus since 2004 at Georges Heights, Mosman is a corrugated iron ex army building restored faithfully by The Sydney Harbour Federation Trust. At Headland Park natural vistas have been permanently secured by the enlightened Trust for future generations.

The school, which is part of the living history of our harbour conducts classes in this spectacular location – an inspiration to artists and students, young and old who seek to capture the moods of land sky and sea.. Whereas our first students found refuge from the elements under canvas latterday aspiring artists at school are to be found happily at work under the iron roofs of army huts.



Towards North Head Howard Ashton

Groups of painters venture forth in most weathers to find vantage points to capture the prevailing sky and sea. Their canvas is as wide as the vista.



Morning, noon and night

Brian Gaston

To the North here is Balmoral bay and to the north east the harbour entrance. The main harbour draws our eyes to the South and to the city via all the many lobed inlets and waterways flowing eastward to the sea.

It has been a dream of many that one day there may be a fine art gallery dedicated to the work of the artists who have painted the harbour whereby the viewer may walk from courts of master paintings – from Conrad Martens to the present day– and then go forth to enjoy aspects of the living harbour itself .

*The School is delighted to provide this gallery to remind visitors of the artistic legacy of our Harbour*



Lunar Eclipse at Georges Heights Paul Delprat

## The art school for all seasons

There are very few aspects of the history of Australian Art that have not been enriched by this School. Students have flocked to its door attracted by its reputation which is unaffected by fashion.

When other art schools took up the iconoclastic baton and in frenzy destroyed their plaster casts and discounted the importance of fine drawing, the Julian Ashton Art school carried on regardless, quietly continuing the invaluable function of providing sound basic training to generations of students.

Many of Australia's most famous modern contemporary artists built on their sound Ashton's training. The consistency of teaching standards is the result of the unique continuum of student becoming teacher in the school. A visitor to the school at any time in its long history would notice no change in our basic practice. The search for excellence takes time and at Ashtons a student may spend years on one painting in pursuit of perfection. It has been my privilege for twenty years to share my days with the most deserving and inspired members of our community, art students.

It is recognised that a nation's commercial success does not fulfill the deeper needs of a society unless it provides a framework for the arts.

This young country is not more than but two centuries old, and has an enviable reputation as a home of opera, music, theatre, the novel, poetry, architecture and art. The Art School, half the age of Australia, is unique among institutions that have survived to this day in that its sole focus from the beginning was excellence in fine art. The most ancient of the arts are drawing and painting and it is the continuing mission of this School, by its teaching, to nurture the artistic talent of the future.



Paul Delprat



Towards Bradleys Head from the south

Howard Ashton 1910

## Heritage on the harbour

Through the vision of the Sydney Harbour Federation Trust army lands on Sydney Harbour have been returned to the people. The Julian Ashton Art School is proud to be part of the living heritage of this grand enterprise. The school is the cultural link, via the artist camps and the work of its many ex students who have painted the Harbour with the new Headland Park Artists Colony at Georges Heights.



### Spirit of The Beatles

Only since the Renaissance has the emphasis has been on individuality in the creating of works of art. *Why so?*

Could the challenge of a subject like our grand Harbour be brought to life by the submerging of artist's ego's? Paul Delprat collaborated with Robert Dujin over a large canvas with members of the School family, young and old. Masters; Sam Wade, Guy Troughton, Nafisa Naomi, and others lent their skilled brushwork to create this panorama of the Harbour, seen here on Headland Park Open Day 2007. The work is painted from an imaginary viewpoint looking towards the Georges Heights Studio from Balmoral Beach, the site of the Artist's Camp, to embrace history and a magical floating world from Manly to The Rocks.



**Mon to Fri 244 BUS to / from city to Georges Heights** departs Wynyard (on Carrington St) Tel for timetable - 131500. See [www.131500.com.au](http://www.131500.com.au)  
**Sat 238 BUS** meets Taronga Zoo ferry from Circular Quay. Alight Beaconsfield Road. **CAR PARKING**



Visit our **Georges Heights Gallery**  
**Hours:**  
**See School Prospectus and by appointment**  
**Tel 02 92411641**  
*Also on*  
**Sydney Harbour Federation Trust**  
**Headland Park Open Days**

## FROM THE ARTIST CAMP A HISTORY

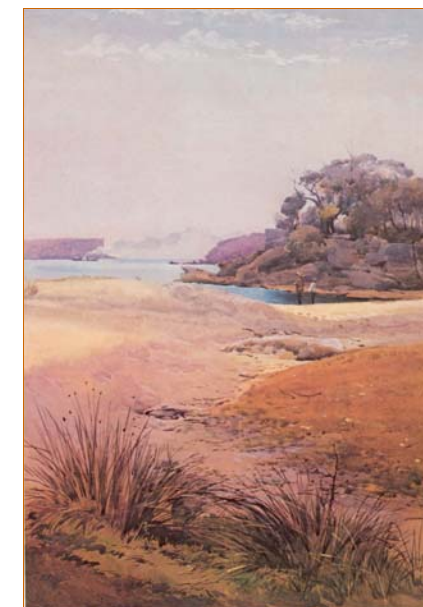


# JULIAN ASHTON ART SCHOOL

FOUNDED 1890

PAUL ASHTON DELPRAT  
 PRINCIPAL

AUSTRALIA'S OLDEST CONTINUOUS  
 FINE ART SCHOOL



To North Head Sydney Harbour Julian Rossi Ashton 1888

**A journey from the Balmoral artists camp to Headland Park at Georges Heights 1880 to the present day**

**Building 17 Headland Park 1100A Middle Head Rd  
 Corner of Cobbittee St Mosman.**

Rocks Campus Level 2 117 George Street The Rocks