



SRGC

Bulb Log Diary

ISSN 2514-6114

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BULB LOG 29.....15th July 2020





Expressions of a garden

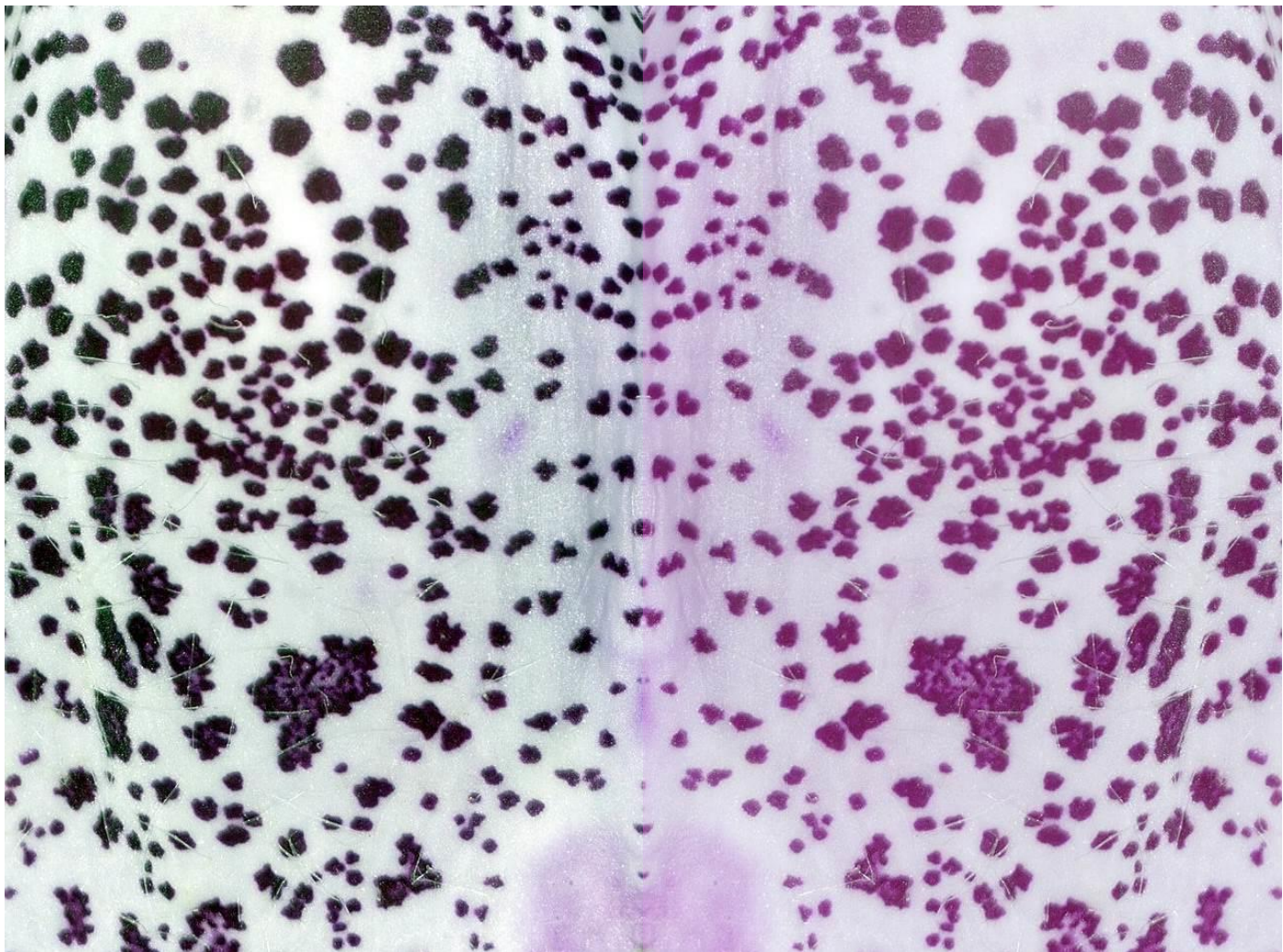


The date of the oldest known art keeps getting pushed back as new discoveries keep coming to light but we do know that humans have felt the urge to make art for over 40,000 years. Art has always been important to me especially the process of making art where I can experiment (play) with media of all kinds, including growing plants and our garden which is a continually changing work of art.

The inspiration for my art comes from things around me and for many years it was based on the sea, ships and fishing communities that surrounded me in Aberdeen. The overall garden is a complex work of art made up of many smaller works such as beds, troughs, etc. but in recent years I have turned to the challenge of representing the garden and flowers as the subject for my paintings as well as my photographs.

The camera does the best job of capturing a moment and the detail while I aim to capture an impression or expression of what I see and how it makes me feel in the paintings. Since lockdown and increasingly in the last month I have been producing a series of colourful images that express the summer garden. As well as acrylic, and spray paints I use powder pigments and sand mixed with PVA. The works are on paper and are built up of

many layers of colour, form and texture reflecting the many layers we observe in the plants and garden. The images are abstract and as Picasso alluded to they are only complete when they are being viewed.



Abstraction was not invented by artists if we look it is present everywhere: nature is the true master.



As with many others the markings on **Digitalis purpurea** flowers are variable.



Lilium martagon



Papaver somniferum in all its colour forms is a wonderful source of inspiration in the summer garden; here it seeds around at the edge of the paths.



Papaver somniferum





Art in the garden and the garden as art has inspired artists from Albrecht Durer to Claude Monet – this photo includes one of my sculptures from the early 1980s, a permanent part of the garden, plus a staged recent work on paper, and the garden itself is the best art.



The hot coloured flowers born on many plants from South America such as **Tropaeolum speciosum** is surely not a coincidence. All four that I am showing here are native to Argentina and Chile. The evolution process ensures that the most successful plants are those that have an advantage; here the bright colours must be more efficient at attracting the pollinators.



Embothrium coccineum



Named after Ferdinand Magellan, an early 16 century explorer, **Philesia magellanica** spreads underground by sending up runners, this one has chosen to scramble through a *Rhododendron dendrocharis*.



Crinodendron hookerianum

This plant is named after Joseph Dalton Hooker a 19th century explorer and friend of Darwin.



The predominance of reds in the South American flowers I showed is not shared across the Southern hemisphere in New Zealand., where there is a predominance of white flowers, such as **Celmisia semicordata**.



The camera captures the simple beauty of **Allium** and **Linaria purpurea**.



Paeonia rockii seedling.



Paeonia ostii seedling



Aconitum napellus



The first of the **Roscoea alpina** are now in flower – like the Meconopsis they are seeding around the rock garden.



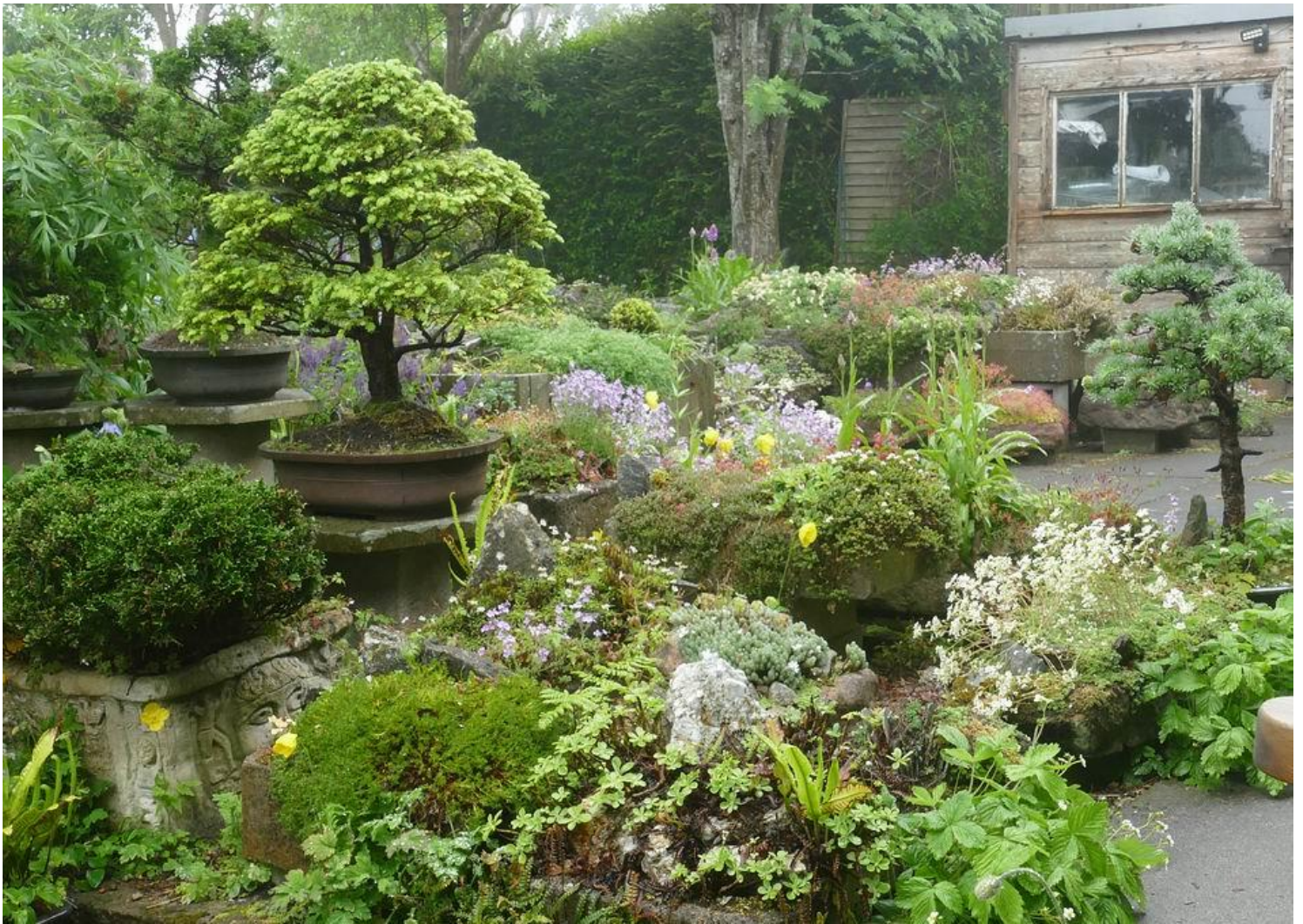
This is a critical period of growth to ensure that *Meconopsis baileyi* flowers again next year.

Flowering is now over with plump seed pods on the stems but it is the new leaf growth rising from around the base of the stem that will lead to the plant surviving and flowering again next year.

That new growth needs cool moist growing conditions, which our summer weather is delivering and, in addition, a few weeks ago I gave a light application of a general purpose plant food.



I am not claiming that my Bonsai are great examples of the art but I enjoy having them. You may remember that this is one of the two that I root-pruned in 2019 so it did not have much new growth last year however the mass of new foliage indicates that the roots have regrown and now it needs a good trim.



The bonsai are in scale with and work well with the troughs – on the right is a larch which always has cones: below you will see some of last year's cones along with the new ones.





Bonsai



Bonsai Yew.



Because of its geography Aberdeen is known for having a wide range of cloud formations - these ripple effect clouds appeared briefly when the wind was coming off the sea as each formation broke down it was replaced just as quickly by another .





This proof of an etching I made in the latter part of the 1970's reminds me that plants have appeared in my art before.



From an earlier period in the 1970's I did a series of small watercolour drawings of clifftop fishing villages, the best of which all sold at exhibitions but I found a few lurking in a plan chest.



In 2014 I started on the **leafing marks series** of mixed media works which have evolved into impressions of a garden suite which I am still working on.



Impressions of a garden

In this series there is a large graphic element to the drawing with colour added to bring atmosphere.



The recent expressions of a garden series combine the colours, shapes, forms and textures that we see in gardens from the small scale details of flowers through to colourful summer borders in full growth.



Expressions of a garden

I encourage everyone to explore your full creativity and where better to start in lockdown than in your gardens....