



True friends are like diamonds, precious and rare ... and isn't that true of this group.

I have been meeting with members of The Foundation and Friends of the Sydney Botanic Gardens for many years around this beautiful Lion Gate Lodge and it is my great honour to be asked to open this Harvest exhibition.

Last weekend I came to take a peek as the work was being hung and I have to say it fills you with joy to see this fabulous group of Friends at work.

It is all enthusiasm and expectation and laughter and wonder as Charlotte and her students reveal another feast for the eyes.

A harvest indeed of the very best everyone has to offer.

Truly delightful and filled with life and love.

A gem in a world of uncertainty.

Congratulation to everyone.

Another year of work.

Another triumph to all.

But there is a particular friend I must dwell on.

I have known Charlotte since our twenties. We have been the best of friends for a very long time.

I am a great admirer.

Charlotte can do anything very well.

She is a brilliant cook, a great designer, a talented writer, a rapier wit.

But her heart is in her art... and you can see it.

Her painting reveals her soul. Her still life bubbles with life.

She makes radishes dance, cherries smile, persimmons glow with pleasure.

And the quinces - Robyn - the quinces. You could lick their fur !

Then there's the politics... raising the potato and cabbage from their lowly tasks providing peasant food, to new heights where their veins pump with experience and their eyes wink with understanding.

I have seen Charlotte produce work through thick and thin.

I have watched her develop as a painter with true grit and persistence in pursuit of beauty and strength. For being a painter is a tough roe to hoe.

There are no staff !!

The noble discipline of the still life has become her own.

With acknowledgement to its traditions of form, composition and light, in her hands it exhibits matters she holds dear. Simplicity, risk, beauty, adventure, humour, light and joy.

Charlotte's work this year looks strong and assured. It reveals a lifetimes study, a considerable talent and confidence to break some rules.

Teaching has become a pleasure for Charlotte and I understand this is true for her students who come back year after year.

I know Charlotte would be egging you on to take a leap, find your voice, to trust yourself while she leads you by her knowledgeable hands. She is a very generous person.

OPENING SPEECH 'HARVEST' EXHIBITION / JUDY RYMER / AUGUST 4TH 2018

But a final subject before you go.

Humour ! Look at you all .. I know she would have persuaded you all to dress up.

I had to stand firm!

For Charlotte fun is the thing!

Look at those big heavy radishes dancing on their roots, that little twist of orange peel, a bite here, a feather there.

And this years Tour de Force a vegetable orchestra.... a life long dream come true !

So to the diamond Friends, jewels in the crown of The Botanic Gardens and the talented students here's to another terrific exhibition.

And to my dear friend who I once said was the only painter I knew who painted, slept with, and ate her subject.... here's to another marvellous body of work.

Off you go to a house full of treasures.

But I would be failing Robyn if I didn't say "may you all put up red stickers ".

Judy Rymer