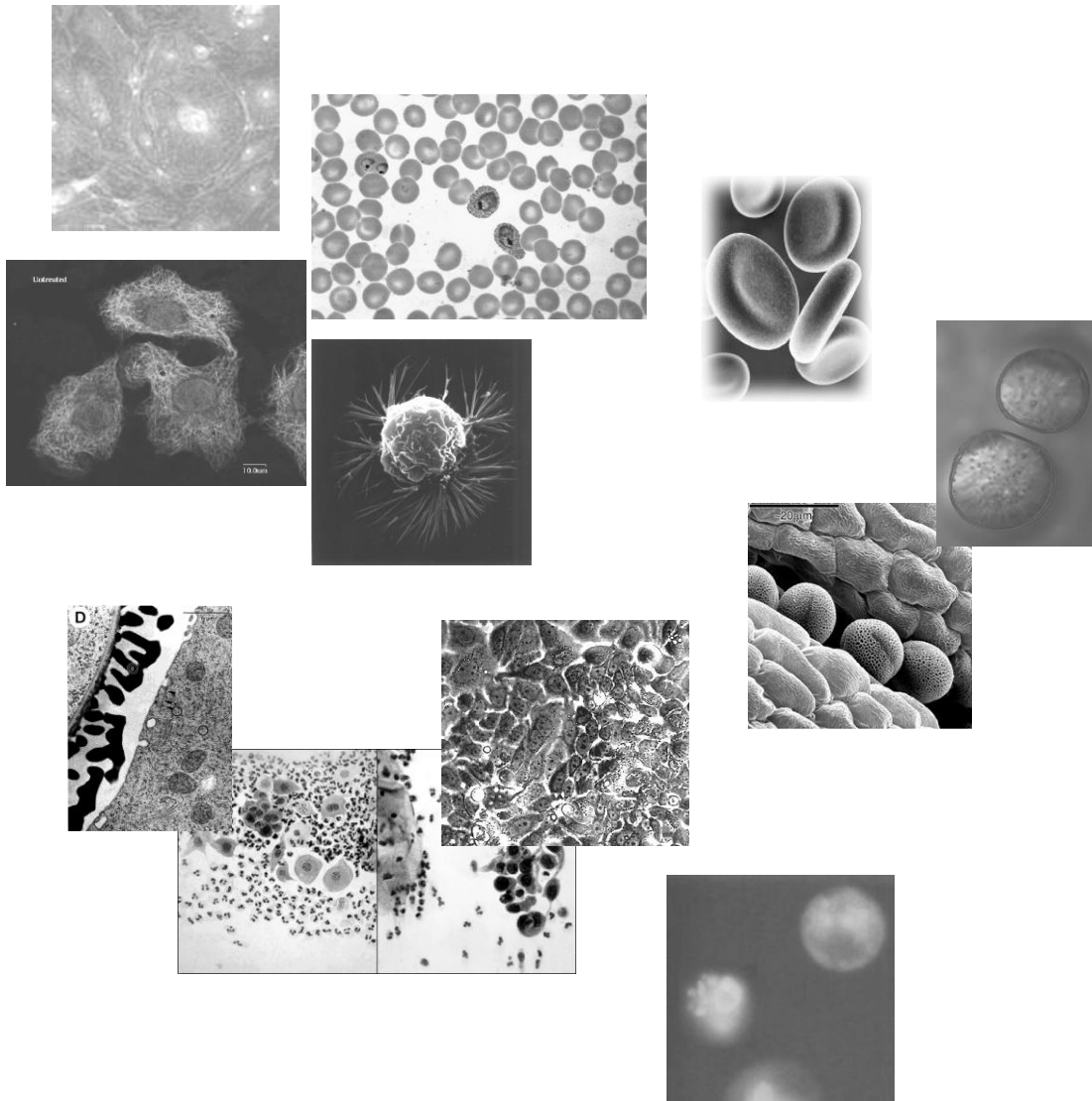




From a cog to a cell to a blot

My exploratory journey with
Inner Beauty –
an exhibition of paintings
inspired by
images from
within the human body

Cindy Tonkin 2006

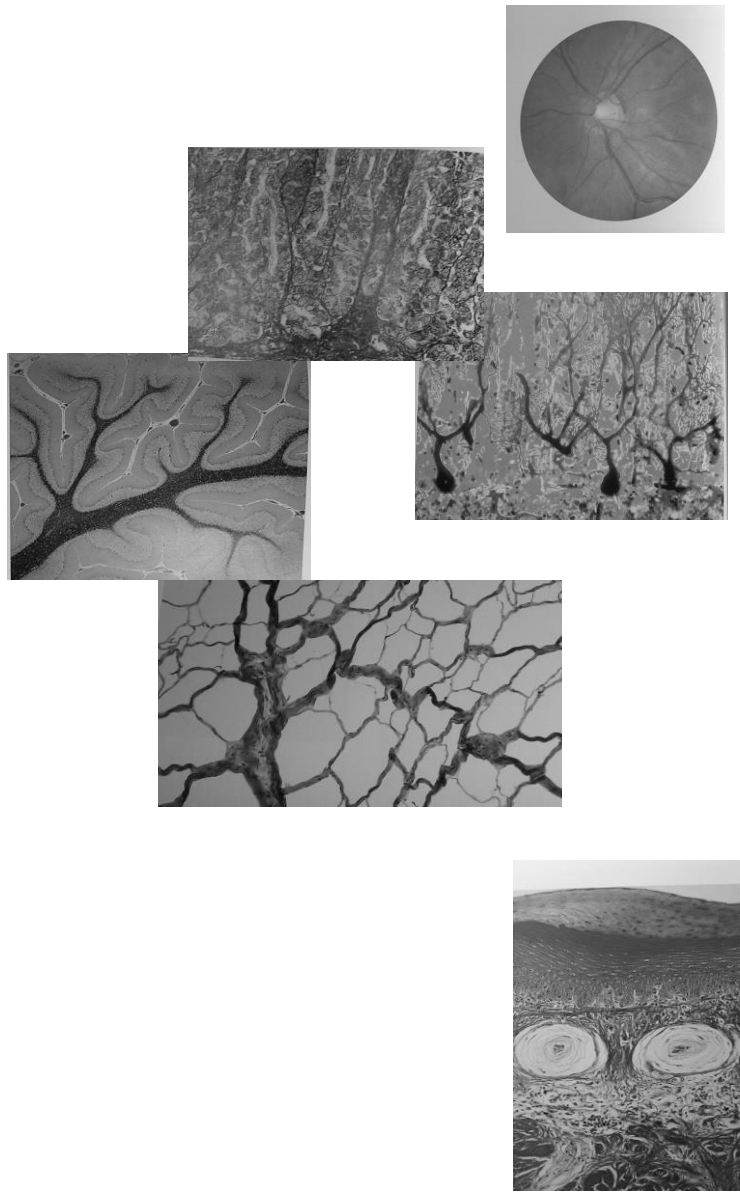


Inner Beauty began when Anna painted something which I thought looked like an internal organ. It's the first painting in the exhibition (no 1).

We thought it would make an interesting theme for a series. Within days we had pulled images from the web as source material, and chose a few of them as our starting points.

We printed them in gray scale, because the colours weren't "real", and because we wanted to add our own interpretation.

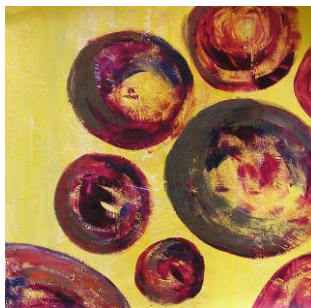




Later, as we explored the theme, we discovered other interesting photos like these.

These ones are of blood and nerves and skin and eyes.





We began with quite literal interpretations of the original images. Here are some of mine in acrylic.





And some more with collage and acrylic.





Klimt – the Kiss and Galerija

Then I went to Vienna and saw a lot of Klimt, and thought the way he'd worked on some of the fabrics in his paintings would work well for cells.

I noticed some part of his paintings a "stamp" like motif. I explored using wooden blocks and pieces of plastic to "stamp" the cells.

My work is on the right hand side of the page. The two on the left hand side of the page are Klimt's.





While I was enjoying playing with colours and layering, and stamping was a lovely child-like state to be in, the images still felt too controlled.

One day on the way to art class it rained. I momentarily worried about the wet paint coming off the paintings I'd just finished. It occurred to me that it would in fact add an element of "no control" which may be what I wanted.

Before I put all my work out in the rain, I remembered a technique Adrienne Crouch taught me. It involved throwing ink onto paper, letting it partially dry and then washing it off, leaving behind interesting random stains and shadows.

For a little while I ventured off into the world of just playing with ink, eventually abandoning the washing off, in favour of sometimes diluting the ink, sometimes just leaving it to dry thick and tasty!

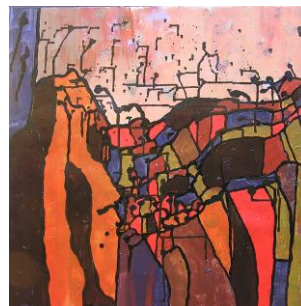
I mostly concentrated on turning the ink “into” something representational.

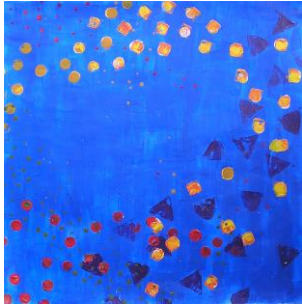




Then I saw a Fred Williams exhibition in Melbourne.

I loved the ochres, and something in my head suggested I could switch to more of a “stained glass” look, which led to works like these, where I used the ink to define the black part of the stained glass, and then made patterns within the patterns.





I returned to the original cell paintings, and added ink to them.

Here are some of the original cell paintings, and the paintings they have evolved to in this exhibition.





Which lead me more or less to today, and these types of images that you're seeing here at the exhibition. Who knows what the next stage is?

I came to art in my 40th year, having never painted before, and had my first exhibition a year after I began painting.

I'm still learning, and am very grateful to my first art teacher, Adrienne Crouch, and to the three women with whom I paint every Wednesday. They constantly help me surprise myself – Anna Warren, Margaret Westcott and Pip Carroll. Their works open my eyes to options and possibilities.



And of course the Workshop Arts Centre, who have supported my art through providing studios to work in for a very modest fee, and the gallery in which we're exhibiting!