

SOPHIE STEFANONI AT DAPTO

If you haven't been to the Wollongong City Gallery recently then you've been missing two very strong exhibitions - Otto Dix and Sophie Stefanoni.

Stefanoni is the great Australian artistic find of the 1980s - a cache of fine art (paintings, embroidery and ephemera) all hidden within the wall of a house. Moreover, Stefanoni turns out to be probably the most prolific and skilled female plein air practitioner of the Heidleburg School era. She was

accepted as a student of W. Lister Lister (who did some impressive South Coast seascapes) in 1893 and went on to exhibit with the likes of McCubbin and Walter Withers. But before her career could really take off she died of tuberculosis in 1906.

The exhibition contains one oil entitled "Blackheath Springtime, 1903" which looks to me very much like an image of a farm beneath Mt Keira. More surely, however, the show contains two photographs entitled "Afternoon Tea at Dapto, 1898". An accompanying note states that "These photographs were taken at "Warooka" homestead in Dapto. "Warooka" was the home of Regina Jones, the mother of Ethyl May Jones who married Lewis Steffanoni, Sophie's brother."

Does any reader no more of "Warooka" and its inhabitants?