



## *Radlett Art Society*

Dear All,

This month the Newsletter comes to you in a different format. Unfortunately, Margaret Follett, who always compiles our newsletter, has had a fall and broken a bone in her knee.

She is therefore unable to do her wonderful work of creating the Newsletter.

So I am sending you all the items that were due to be included but in the form of a very long News Sheet. Many apologies for this but I do not have the technical ability to make them into a magazine. Also, I am not able to send all the picture illustrations in this email.

So here it is:-

### **Chairman's Report August 2023**

It is four months since my last newsletter and your committee have been very busy organising planned events and planning future events

We extend a warm welcome to several new members and hope that you enjoy the lecture programme for this year and take part in other activities offered by our society .

Our main event has been " The Summer Art Exhibition ", held this year in the Village Institute in June - it was a VERY hot weekend!!! ( you have probably forgotten) . Most of our visitors came in the cooler morning -there was not a soul on the High Street in the afternoon -the weather was very hot

Despite this we felt our return to the Institute was well received and hopefully we will be returning there next year

Karen Warner, a local art teacher, judged the art display and declared Vicky Valins a worthy winner.

Her prize was £100 and her winning picture will be on our 2024 calendar.

Anna Cross and Shirley Conn were “ highly commended “ for their work.

Well done all of you and thank you to all the talented artists among our membership who showed their work

Our outgoings for this event far exceed our income-transportation and setting up of the display boards and advertising being the highest - the committee wonder whether sponsorship for this highlight in our calendar might be available from any of our members or their acquaintances. We would welcome some feedback.

The Thursday workshop for our painting, multi media and “ would like to be “ artists reopens on September 7th , 1.30 to 3.30 in the Institute . Everyone is welcome to come along-it costs only £5 for each session.

We have had 10 weeks painting in locations around Radlett during the summer months and we have booked a landscape/seascape artist, Mark Warner for a whole day’s workshop on Sunday November 19th -10.00 till 4.00

Probably by the time you receive this newsletter, we will have been to Dulwich Art Gallery for the Berthe Morisot exhibition and looking forward to a 4 day trip to Cardiff.

We will run a 4/5 day trip next year but don’t know where at the moment.

During the winter months our monthly lectures starting in October will be on zoom only

Finally a date for your diary.:-

**Wednesday December 6th is booked at Porters Park Golf Club for our annual Christmas Lunch , 12.30 for 1.00**

Further details will follow shortly I.e. meal cost, menu choice etc

This can be the kickstart for your Christmas festivities-it would be lovely to welcome lots of you to the beautiful surroundings of the Golf Club.

My best wishes to you all

Gill Cooper

Chairman

## **Forthcoming events**

### **Day Trip to the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford - 8th October**

Featuring the major exhibition COLOUR REVOLUTION - VICTORIAN ART, FASHION AND DESIGN.

The exhibition hopes to dispel the notion that Victorian art is sober and lacks colour.

**Date Sunday 8 October 2023.** Final price has yet to be fixed but should be around £38 for members and £45 for nonmembers.

Further information will be available shortly, but in the meantime please make a note in your diary. As this trip is only 6 weeks away please let Angela Sobell know if you would like to come.

The Museum are holding tickets for us and will be allocated on a first come first served basis. Tel number [07768040970](tel:07768040970) email [angela@thesobells.com](mailto:angela@thesobells.com).

### **October Exhibition at The Radlett Centre**

We are now looking forward to our October Exhibition in the Foyer at the Radlett Centre.

I shall be sending an invitation to all members asking for submissions in the near future.

Historically, this exhibition was for members of the workshop but your committee has decided to open it to the whole membership this year. Space is limited so we shall ask for no more than 2 pieces of relatively recent art work in the first place. If we think we can manage to find space for more, I shall let you know. This exhibition is for hung work only. There is nowhere to display 3D work as you will know if you visit the Radlett Centre.

We shall also have a display in the window of The Harpenden Building Society in mid October and I shall need some pictures for that too. (There is only space for 7 or 8 pictures in that space).

Anna Cross

### **WORKSHOP WITH ARTIST MARK WARNER**

Radlett Village Institute, Watling Street, Radlett WD7 7JG

**Sunday November 19th 10.00 till 4.00**

Cost £45

I have taken the opportunity to engage Mark Warner for a whole day's workshop on Sunday November 19th

Mark is a talented artist and worked as an art teacher before deciding to paint professionally . He lives on the Shropshire/Welsh border

He was raised in Aberystwyth which is where his love and inspiration to sketch and paint landscapes and seascapes comes from.

He paints in acrylics, oils and charcoal

He is very friendly ,chatty and has lots of tips and painting advice even if you paint in a different media. If you would like to see/read more about him, have a look at his website [www.brushmark.co.uk](http://www.brushmark.co.uk)

He will sending details, of all you will need to bring along for the day nearer the time

The day will be split into two sessions, come early to set your table/easel up so that we can have a prompt start at 10.00.

We will have an appraisal of our work with Mark at the end of the day

He will be sending details of what we will need to bring along for the day nearer the time and I will be in touch with you

Tea /coffee making facilities and biscuits will be available all day on a self service basis

There will be a break for lunch- Please bring your own .

There are 12 places available and will be allocated on a first booked basis

Please email or ring me to book a place

You can pay either by cheque:- made payable to "Radlett Art Society " and sent to me at the address below , please enclose an S.a.e. If you require a written confirmation

Or, by bank transfer :-

Sort code :- 60-17-14

Account :- 50902571

Reference - your name + Warner

4,Ridge Lane

Watford

WD17 4TD

Tel. 01923 226745

I look forward to hearing from you for what I know will be a wonderful day of painting with a professional artist

Regards

Gill Cooper

### **September-November Lectures 2023**

Frances Ross (Beasant) lecture September 7<sup>th</sup> 'Op Art' Definitions, theories and practices' in Radlett Reform Synagogue, 118 Watling Street, WD7 7AA 7.30 for 8.0 pm

The characteristics and style of Op Art includes, distorting the viewer's perception of motion, depth, and form by emphasising moving forms, lines and colour that are not always present. All of which can cause Vertigo, dizziness and disorientation of the body and mind through the eyes. Op Art is best known in the 1960s as a modern art movement, with Britain's famous award-winning Bridget Riley leading the way. However, many other artists have successfully used deception, perception, and conceptual happenings in their art practices. For example, Victor Vasarely (considered the father of Op Art) and MC Escher both utilised geometric and mathematical optical illusion in their painting.

This lecture will look at 20<sup>th</sup>-21<sup>st</sup> century Op Art examples in painting, sculpture, kinetic art and applied arts and how other influential art movements are inter-connected. Concluding with present day digital optical artists.



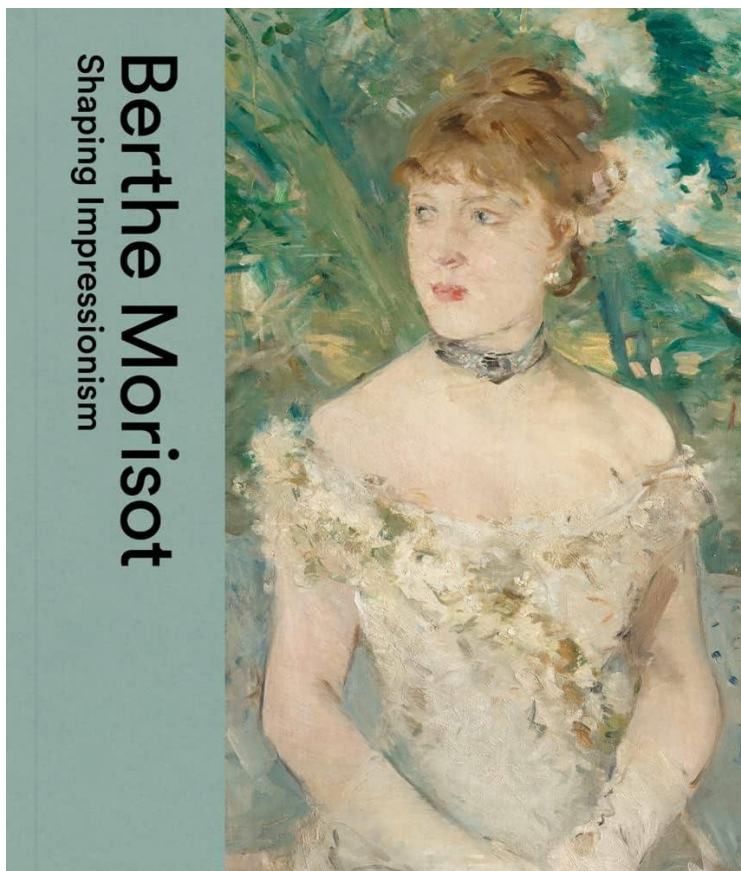
Bridget Riley; Rajasthan 2012 (Graphite and Acrylic on plaster wall 90 x 168")

Known as the Curve Paintings

Clare Ford Wille October 19<sup>th</sup> Zoom 7.45 for 8.0 pm Berthe Morisot at Dulwich Gallery

## **BERTHE MORISOT IN CONTEXT**

The work of Berthe Morisot (1841-95) is the subject this summer of an exhibition at the Dulwich Gallery, the first in London for over seventy years. Forty of Morisot's work will be brought together and will be shown alongside the 18th century artists who inspired her. The lecture will be an opportunity to explore in depth the work of this leading Impressionist in depth and place her in the context of other leading women artists.



Ian Swankie lecture November 16<sup>th</sup> 7.45 for 8.0 pm on Zoom

## **Pots and Frocks – the world of Grayson Perry From Essex Punk Potter to Superstar National Treasure**

Best known for his outlandish appearances dressed as his feminine alter ego, Claire, Grayson Perry is now a core part of the art establishment, a Turner Prize winner, Royal Academician, popular broadcaster and colourful character. He's possibly one of the world's best-known contemporary artists. His works of ceramics, textiles, tapestries and prints are highly sought after. Often

controversial, he tackles difficult subjects in a poignant yet witty way and holds a mirror up to modern society. This talk will examine Grayson Perry's work, his exciting and thought-provoking exhibitions, and the unique character inside the flamboyant frocks.



**Pots and Frocks the world of Sir Grayson Perry from Essex Punk Potter to Knight of the Realm**

**Past Lecture Reports**

**Wham! Here comes Pop Art**

**Lecture by Simone Bloom on 11 May 2023**

Our member Simone Bloom commenced her interesting talk with what is for me the paradigm of Pop Art, Roy Lichtenstein's famous 'Whaam!' showing a fighter pilot destroying an enemy plane in a style strongly derived from US, and in particular DC, Comics. The complexity of Whaam!, she said, lies in its contrasts and dualities – an emotionally-charged subject presented in a detached style, a commercial image placed in a fine art context. Lichtenstein said "The purpose of my war paintings, is to put military aggression into an absurd light".

Simone saw Pop art as the subversive grandchild of Surrealism, elevating the ephemera of popular culture and the artefacts of daily life, into the context of fine art. This flew in the face of what most people think of as "proper" art. But as long ago as 1917 Marcel Duchamp put a urinal on a plinth in a gallery and called it "Fountain" Simone traced the origins of Pop Art from surrealism and the sculpture of Picasso to the Anarchic Dada Movement and then the Constructivists.

Pop Art as we know it emerged in the 1950s in Britain and flourished both here and in America in the 1960s in a climate of re-birth and experimentation, having begun as a revolt. Young artists felt that what they learnt at art school and saw in museums had nothing to do with the realities of the post-war world. Instead they looked at their immediate environment, turning to comics, films, product packaging and pop music for inspiration, and re-purposed this material with irony and wit. Subjects in Pop Art were derived from the modern everyday environment, in particular that of the US which in the post-war period was glamorous, strongly influential in design. Household objects were presented ironically, distorted or decontextualised sometimes to the point of parody in order to mount social/political criticisms of the society that produced and valued them. While art critics questioned this seemingly uncritical use of such cheap, mass-produced ephemera, Pop Art was taking modernism into a new direction: rather than critically appraising the subject matter, they used the subject matter to critically appraise society. In this way, Pop Art can be seen as one of the first manifestations of [postmodernism](#).

The techniques and approaches adopted varied widely, but commonly included a combination of art and industrial science, futuristic images, comic-book styles, and mass-produced consumer goods.

As exemplar practitioners, Simone cited Richard Hamilton as well as Eduardo Paolozzi for many well-known works, including his mosaics at Tottenham Court Road Station. Also Robert Rauschenberg who after conventional training and academic work pursued exclusively Pop Art comic-strip imagery, objectifying women and adopting images of weapons and violent warfare.

Simone also drew parallels with developments in music, fashion, film and not least architecture through the Archigram movement. The work of Jeff Koons and the medium of Graffiti has led to the position where Pop art is now mainstream.

Simone fully illustrated her talk with well-matched groups of images, highlighting examples, similarities and contrasts.

Edward Cross

## **The Life and Times of John Craxton**

### **Jo Walton**

John Craxton 1922-2009

Not many of us had heard of John Craxton and Jo began by giving us a short biography. He was born in London in 1922 into a very musical, Bohemian family. They moved in influential



circles and understood the value of networking. He was educated in a variety of private schools giving him the opportunity to make many contacts.

As a teenager he travelled widely having access to the art of Europe. He was particularly impressed by Picasso's Guernica in the Louvre. He grew up to be well liked, enjoying travel and the pleasures of good company, music, food and wine.

In 1941 he met Peter Watson who became his Patron and Lucian Freud who became his friend. Watson funded adjoining studios for Freud and Craxton and the three frequently travelled through Europe together often with other well known artists such as Graham Sutherland. Eventually, by hitching a lift with Lady Norton, Craxton arrived in Greece.

He loved Greece and unsurprisingly spent much of his adult life there, it suited his lifestyle. He returned to England when exiled by "The Colonels" in 1967 but Greece called him back as soon as the political situation improved. He was a talented artist with wide ranging interests including dancing, sculpture, photography and architecture. He illustrated books, designed a tapestry and also designed sets and costumes for ballet, and he drew and painted pictures too.

He was very much affected by his environment. His choice of subjects and materials reflected his surrounding physical world, the influence of his friends and fellow artists and the effect of major events in his life, such as World War II and the bleakness resulting.

During the war Craxton drew and painted mainly landscapes with poets and shepherds, both lone figures. He worked to escape and to protect himself "Landscape with Poet and Birdwatcher" 1941 is an example. Here he was influenced mainly by Samuel Palmer and William Blake. In his "Split Yew" 1942 the influence of Paul Nash, a surrealist painter and a war artist is apparent. Paul Nash painted trees as if they were human beings, and his trees in "Monster Fields" would have been familiar to Craxton.

He first visited Greece in 1947. The sunshine, the landscapes, the people, the mythology, and even the cats, inspired his work. He continued to be influenced by other artists, the cubism of Picasso and the pointillism of Seurat. He was happy in Greece, perhaps this allowed him to be relaxed about spending 15 years working on "Two figures and a Setting Sun" 1952-1967 using the Pointillism technique

He developed his own skills such as creating an almost three dimensional image by outlining in white as shown in "Two Greek Dancers" 1951 and "Cats and Chair" 1997.

He was not interested in self promotion, he did not write an autobiography, but Jo gave us insight into John Craxton's many works and in so doing brought both the person and the artist to life.

Maureen Grossman

With apologies to Maureen and to you, I can't attach the lovely photographs Maureen included with her report.

## **'A global lens; people and places in recent photography'. Lecture on 20 July 2023 by Barry Venning.**

Barry Venning, a speaker familiar to RAS audiences, commenced his talk by posing the question "Is photography Art?" The question surprised me, as it had never occurred to me that photography could not be regarded as Art, along with sculpture, poetry and violin-making, etc.

The main theme common to most of the work he presented, all by 20th- and 21st.-century photographers, appeared to be un-posed depictions of 'ordinary working people' and their environments. Some widely-differing areas were discussed.

**James Barnor**, an Accra-born Ghanaian, created pictures for the magazine *Drum*, a sort of *Picture Post* with a largely black circulation in the 1960s. He depicted the UK's black population as modern and fully integrated into 'Swinging London' and was known for his ability to make his subjects relax. His subjects were not all everyday people; he also depicted Ghanaian PM Nkrumah, Mohammed Ali, and a variety of striking black models.

**Martin Parr** (born 1952) in contrast avoided the attention of his subjects and depicted an entirely Anglo-Saxon population in working-class holiday locations such as Butlins at Filey, Margate and New Brighton, described as 'the Last Resort'. He moved into colour in the early 1980s when only black-and-white photography was considered a suitable artistic medium, colour being identified with commerce and advertising. He achieved exaggerated effects by using flash in already well-lit outdoor locations, often beaches and lidos. The liberal press accused him of mocking the working class in its enjoyment of unsophisticated and overcrowded holiday spots. To my eyes there was indeed more than a hint of Thomas McGill in this work.

Not so with **Ragubir Singh** (Jaipur, 1942-99) whose work used the vibrant and gaudy colours of his native India to produce 'a River of Colour' again depicting scenes of everyday life. His much more subdued 'Monsoon Rains' was, to me, the beautiful and artistic highlight of the entire talk.

Depictions of working people in their lived environment continued with **Elena Chernysova** (born 1981) who endured seven months in her subject of Norilsk, an isolated Stalin-era mining town 400 miles into the Arctic Circle. The quality of life in this below-freezing urban and industrial wasteland, where average life-expectancy is 50, was vividly portrayed, often with effective use of a single

colour, e.g. a fleet of bright yellow buses crossing a largely grey desolate landscape under a grey sky.

Degrading and unsafe working conditions were strikingly portrayed in pictures of the vast expanse of Serra Pelada Gold Mine, Brazil, by **Sebastiao Selgado**, where workers resemble struggling ants as they climb rickety ladders out of the enormous open-pit mine, carrying over-heavy sacks of spoil. Barely less demeaning was the depiction of row upon row of pink-uniformed workers in a Chinese chicken processing plant. The workers were allowed as much individuality as the chickens.

A huge contrast came in the work of **Fatima Shbair**, born in Ghaza in 1997. She showed people surrounded by conflict and continuing everyday and creative life amid the devastation.

The Canadian **Edward Bertynsky** similarly depicted ordinary people struggling to survive in a difficult environment; amid lithium mining in Chile or carrying dangerous loads of oil in multiple jerrycans by boat or by moped in impoverished Benin.

Did any of it represent Art? Some of the photographers disclaimed any role as Artist, preferring their work to be regarded as Reportage. I was sorry that our speaker did not attempt an answer to his own question. Most of what we saw was highly creative, often informative, and imaginative. Whether it qualifies as art must perhaps be left to the individual viewer.

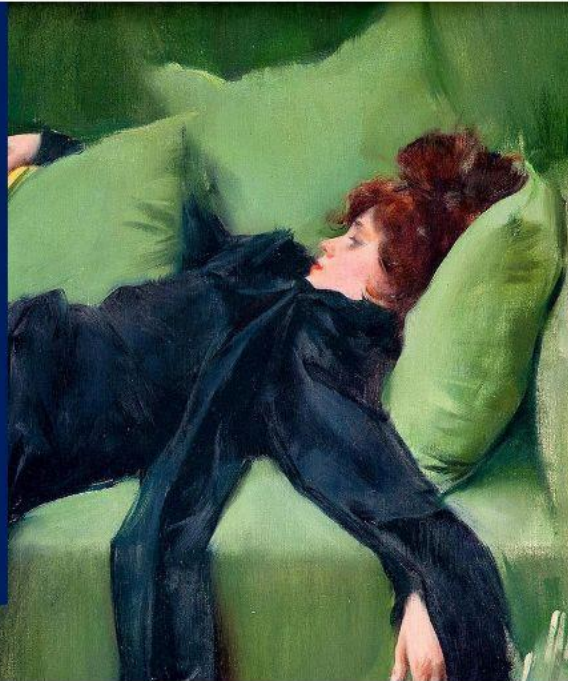
Edward Cross

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RADLETT ART SOCIETY

**COLOUR  
REVOLUTION  
EXHIBITION  
DAY TRIP**

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SUNDAY 8<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2023



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**Radlett Art Society** is arranging a day trip to view the Colour Revolution exhibition at the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford.

Dispelling our monochrome idea of Victorian Britain, discover a revolution of colour. Rediscover Victorian society as a vibrant colour-filled era – from dazzling dyes used in chic corsets, bold experiments by avant-garde painters, and the flamboyant use of nature's beauty in jewellery.

The exhibition will include fashion pieces – from Queen Victoria's monotone mourning dress to the most daringly vivid clothing and accessories – and works by artists including Ruskin, Rossetti and Whistler, as well as objects from around the world. This major exhibition explores the vital role that colour has played in shaping our art and culture.

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The total cost for the day is **£35** for members and **£42** for non-members, travelling by coach leaving from outside the Radlett sorting office at **9.30 am** promptly to return at approximately **5pm**.

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To reserve your place, email Angela with the number of member/non-member places required and the name of the member who is making the booking at: [angela@thesobells.com](mailto:angela@thesobells.com)

The closing date for bookings and payment is **17<sup>th</sup> September 2023**.