



# *Radlett Art Society*

Dear Member,

During the summer we had every hope that a return to something approaching normal was imminent. A date for reopening the Workshop at the Village Institute was agreed and your Committee were considering a return to live lectures before Christmas.

Sadly, we are once more at the mercy of this wretched virus, our Christmas lunch will not take place and it now appears likely that our activities will not return to normal until at least next spring.

However, on a brighter note, we have been able to enjoy a number of excellent online lectures and a demonstration, all of which have been very well attended.

Some of us have already taken up the Society's Monthly Challenge arranged by Anna Cross. The results can be seen on our Website which also has examples of members' works, including what we have done during "lockdown" !.

During the next few months your Committee will be optimistically planning a return to a full program of lectures, workshops, visits and social occasions including our exhibition. This will probably be a gradual process with at least some lectures and demonstrations remaining on-line, though probably, there will be more of them.

We are all grateful to the Committee for their efforts in these difficult times and I am delighted to report that our Treasurer has agreed that subscriptions for next year will remain unchanged!

I wish you all a very happy Christmas and New Year.

**Adam Lewis**  
**Chairman**



## Past and Future Lectures

### Frances Ross Organiser of the RAS lecture program

Despite still not being able to have our lectures live in Radlett the RAS art lecture program has continued and even increased in topics, diversity and frequency as we have all become more proficient in presentation and interactive participation in Zoom sessions.

The last of this year's art history lectures was Thursday November the 12th. **Barry Venning** presented on the subject of **American Realism**. His experience of presenting includes BBC television documentaries and radio as well as DVD recordings on Turner for the Tate.

We have had Peter **Keegan** do a fabulous talk on **The History of Colour** and how to mix paints based on the colour wheel, appealing to both painters and the special interest viewers of the society. More are planned for next year's 2021 program.

The art lectures that have been confirmed on Zoom for early next year include **Claire Ford-Willie** giving a private insight to the returning **V&A Exhibition of Renaissance water colours**, which have never been on display before. This exhibition was postponed in the first lockdown but will open later in the year and run till the end of January, or longer (to be confirmed on the V&A website), so you can have an insight into these rare and delicate artworks on **January 14<sup>th</sup> 2021**, even if you are unable to attend the exhibition. This is a real exclusive preview opportunity for RAS members as the images are not yet available to the general public.

Claire came back to present her first Zoom session on **Artemisa Gentileschi's** major retrospective at the **National Gallery** which was also postponed in the first lock down. This was again an amazing insight to a lesser known female Baroque artist who is often compared with Caravaggio. The current **National Gallery** exhibition is on temporary lockdown but you will be able to catch the exhibition from the **3<sup>rd</sup> December** onwards. **Ian Swankie** is back by popular demand after his very entertaining virtual walk through London to explore Bronzes to Banksy which covered everything from classical statues and sculpture to street art. This was delivered on July 9<sup>th</sup>. Ian will be presenting another fascinating session on **London Underground**

entitled **Underground Cathedrals** exploring art, architecture and design. The date for this is **February 11th 2021 on Zoom** (make a note in your diary).

This will be followed by a special request from Muriel Beaver (our lecture reporter) and long-term member of the RAS. Muriel's choice was **Mexican art**. I have managed to arrange an expert on this subject who has delivered many study days around the world, been on television and written books.

Her name is **Chloe Sayer** and her talk will be on **March 4<sup>th</sup> 2021** with the title **Frida Kahlo and Diego Rivera – the Golden Age of Mexican Painting**.

So, another first and a special treat for the RAS members. The remainder of the program will be announced in the next newsletter as we may be live in Radlett or still on Zoom or blending the two options if possible.

Thank you for your continuing support for our society and carry on enjoying the art and culture that technology now makes available.

### Future Lecture

**Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> January 2021 – 7.45pm for 8pm – via Zoom Meeting**

***RENAISSANCE WATERCOLOURS from DURER to VAN DYCK***

**Lecturer: CLAIRE-FORD WILLIE BA** Independent lecturer and scholar,

The lecture will present and discuss this exquisite medium as a unified art in the exciting summer exhibition at the **Victoria and Albert Museum**. It will bring together for the first time, over two hundred rarely seen watercolours exploring its pivotal role in understanding, interpreting and documenting portraits, landscapes and delicate visions of nature.



***Jacob Savery*** **A Village Fair 1598**  
pen and grey ink with watercolour  
Victoria and Albert Museum

## Future Lecture

**Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> February 2021 – 7.45pm for 8pm – via Zoom Meeting**

### ***UNDERGROUND CATHEDRALS –THE WORLD-CLASS ART, ARCHITECTURE and DESIGN of LONDON UNDERGROUND***

**Lecturer: IAN SWANKIE, Accredited Lecturer for the Arts Society**

The world's first underground railway has a wonderful heritage of architecture, ingenious design, powerful advertising posters and unique calligraphy. In this talk we

plot the early development of the Underground, examine the legacy of Frank Pick and Charles Holden, look at some of the iconic posters and

celebrate the award winning architecture of the modern Tube in the Jubilee Line Extension. We'll also take a peek at some of the forthcoming Crossrail stations, designed by some of the world's top architects.



## **ARTISTS CHALLENGE**

We suggest a title and a submission date, you submit your interpretation to us and we shall upload a selection onto the website each month.

This initiative has proved popular with members, while others have 'not quite got round to it yet'. Please, don't be shy.

Submit by 5.00pm November 16th - **Alive and Kicking (Now on website)**

Submit by 5.00pm December 14th - **Surprise!**

Submit by 5.00pm January 11th - **Just a Moment.**

Submit by 5.00pm February 15th - **Over the Rainbow.**

Submit by 5.00pm March 15th - **A Piece of Cake?**

As a committee, we had an interesting discussion at the last meeting about what forms of art would be suitable for our challenge. Painting and drawing definitely, but what about iPad art - yes we decided. (After all David Hockney exhibits it.) And have You Tried it - it's not easy. And what about artistic photographs? We think yes - if they are artistically manipulated to be truly artistic - either in real life, or in Photoshop etc.

I dare say you can think of other artistic media too, such as (photographs of your own) sculpture. So I do hope that you will join in the fun and the challenge and very much look forward to seeing your work.

1 entry per person per month please. With a title if possible.

**Anna Cross** (on behalf of RAS Committee)

Please send your submission to [anna.cross@me.com](mailto:anna.cross@me.com)

## Past Lectures

**Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> August Zoom Lecture**

**Clare Ford-Willey lectured on “*Artemisia Gentileschi Rediscovered*”**

Clare gave us a comprehensive and well researched lecture to accompany the now delayed

**National Gallery exhibition on Artemisia Gentileschi (1593 – c1656).**

She was the daughter of the well-known artist, Orazio Gentileschi. They lived in Rome and when Artemisia was about 12, her mother died and she had to take charge of the household.

She learned to paint, presumably in her father’s studio, and her talent was prodigious. We saw many examples of her realistic and emotional baroque works. Clare explained that, although many great works of art existed in Rome, those in private collections would not have been accessible to a young girl.

When Artemisia was about 18, she was raped by an associate of her father, who was eventually brought to trial and found guilty. She was married off and travelled to Florence with her husband, the brother of the notary who acted for her at the trial.

Feminists see this as having affected her work, as she depicted biblical and classical characters, many self portraits and other females, dealing violently with miscreant men. She forged a very successful career in Florence, working in the Medici court and moved back to Rome, then Venice, Naples and Greenwich (to help her father produce a ceiling for the Queen’s House.)

Let’s hope we are able to see the exhibition, due to be at the **National Gallery from 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2020 until 24<sup>th</sup> January 2021.**

**Muriel Beaver**

**Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> September Zoom Lecture**

**Frances Ross lectured on *ART and FASHION***

***Collaborations from Elsa Schiaparelli and Salvador Dali to today***

Frances’s lecture was based on a subject which, in years gone by, would probably have been frowned on as unsuitable by the hierarchy of our illustrious society. The objection would have been that fashion cannot be categorised as “fine art.” However, she illustrated that much high fashion has been designed collaboratively between some of our greatest artists and top couturiers.

Her first examples were designs by Dali and Schiaparelli. The lobster dress (1937) - an evening dress with a lobster painted by him on the front - was worn by Wallis Simpson and then she was photographed in it by Cecil Beaton, thus combining design, fine art and photography.

Cecil Beaton's collaboration with Christian Dior for American Vogue, used backdrops of monumental abstract expressionist paintings by Jackson Pollock, to publicise New Look designs in 1951. Yves Saint Laurent designed and made some Mondrian inspired shift dresses – ingeniously made to look simple, while being of very complicated construction. These were photographed by David Bailey for Vogue Paris. Andy Warhol was originally a graphic artist and illustrated Dior designs. He created silkscreen pop-art works, so using fabric for pure art.

More recently, Vivian Westwood worked with Keith Haring; Damian Hirst created scarves using Alexander McQueen designs and Zandra Rhodes makes textiles and other items which are often pieces of art. In 2014, she created the Textile and Fashion Museum and curated an exhibition with fabric designs by Duncan Grant, Eduardo Paolozzi, John Rombola, Dali, Picasso and Damian Hirst.

Frances proved, with all this name-dropping from the worlds of high fashion and high and low art, that the two are often inextricably linked and she has opened up a whole new area for us to discover.

**Muriel Beaver**

**Thursday 1st October Zoom Lecture**

**Val Woodgate lectured on *ART DOWN UNDER:***

***Australian art from the convict years to the modern era***

Val transmitted her deep interest in the history and art of Australia.

She explained that it took a long time before contemporary art appeared in Australia. After Cook's discovery in 1770, the later attitude of the British to the indigenous inhabitants and then the cruelty associated with convict transportation, all meant that life was a struggle.

Aboriginal art was integral to religious belief and related to sacred places, often indicating where water and other natural aids to sustenance might be found. The British had no understanding of these ancient sites and would destroy them with impunity. The establishment of a new, settled population of immigrants was more conducive to creative activity. Even then, early depictions of Australia were painted in England and did not evoke the light and atmosphere of Australia.

It was not until around 1850 that John Skinner Prout and others began to produce authentic looking landscapes. In the 1880s, art schools were founded and students produced works in the style of Japanese art, Degas and others. Gradually, Australian art developed a style of its own and some memorable works were produced depicting the First World War.

Sydney Nolan gained an international reputation in the 1940s and 50s, with his hard, dry, desert landscapes. Modern Aboriginal art was derived from their ancient culture, as storytellers, who would draw in the sand. In 1971, some of them were encouraged to transfer to drawing and painting on board and canvas. They produce amazing work, both landscapes and abstracts, based on traditional patterns. Once again, a fascinating Zoom lecture – but it would be lovely to see you all in person!

**Muriel Beaver**

### **Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> October Zoom Lecture**

#### **Peter Keegan lectured on *THE HISTORY of COLOUR***

This lecture was fascinating and instructive. Peter is a professional artist. His perceptions and analyses of paintings come from the point of view of someone who knows how colour is formed and how our minds perceive it. He has a deep understanding of the history of art as it changed according to the availability of materials and new technology.

Originally, artists would grind stones and produce earth colours. Certain colours, like lapis lazuli blue were from imported rare minerals and very expensive. With the introduction of ready-made paint in metal tubes and flat brushes, art could change dramatically. Peter stressed the importance of tone, which contributes to mood. Caravaggio's chiaroscuro brings drama and mystery; Sorolla used dark shadows to emphasise very bright sunshine and Constable's earthy tones are the basis for his naturalistic landscapes.

The lecture began with an explanation of the colour wheel and its importance in training artists in the mixing of primary colours and formation of tone. There was a discussion on how individuals perceive colour differently and also how surrounding colours can completely alter our perception of the colours we are seeing. After a short break, while Peter set up his computer by his easel, we had a demonstration of how to achieve the perfect combination of primary colours and black and white to reach an exact match with a colour card.

I was riveted, even though exhausted by the end of two hours. Peter had put a new perspective on what I thought I knew.

**Muriel Beaver**

**Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> November Zoom Lecture**

**Barry Venning lectured on *AMERICAN REALISM***

This lecture comprehensively covered a movement many of us, according to comments at the end, previously knew almost nothing about. It began towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and was driven by a socialist concept of showing “real lives.”

Barry showed works by a large number of artists, including Thomas Eakins (1844-1916), known as the father of Realism. His mantra was that art should portray life and feeling. We were shown his painting, *The Gross Clinic* (1875), which portrayed modern surgery.

The Ashcan School, were a group of artists who wished to depict an authentic view of New York. George Bellows (1882-1925) was an important member of this group and, among many of his works, we saw *Cliff Dwellers* 1915, an ironic title for a chaotic depiction of tenement living and *Dempsey and Firpo* (1923) an expressionist portrayal of a famous boxing match.

There were some more familiar names among the Regionalists – Grant Woods’ (1891-1941) *American Gothic* 1931 and Edward Hopper’s (1882-1967) *Chop Suey* 1929 and *Nighthawks* 1942. Another leader of this group, was Thomas Hart Benton (1891-1941). He painted a large mural, *America Today, Instruments of Power*, on three panels entitled, *City Activity with Subway, Steel and The South* 1930-31. So many artists were mentioned, with a variety of interesting works, it might be an idea to have another lecture, concentrating on some of them in more detail.

**Muriel Beaver**

### **VISITS**

Until we know what the Covid and lockdown situation is next Spring, we can’t currently plan any day trips.

I hope that we will be able to start some trips May/June, so please look out for announcements in the next newsletter and from Myrna next year.

We are still planning to have our postponed trip to Shropshire from the 19<sup>th</sup> to 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2021.

Details will be available on our website and circulated next Spring.

**Gary Harding**