

Monthly presentations up to 2020 (covid lockdown) See recent presentations for 2022 - to date

February 2020

Not many artists could draw with a steady hand whilst shut into a small cage with a predatory bird of six foot wingspan and talons like billhooks. Alastair Sibbald explained that, when he began his birds of prey project, he had imagined being on the outside of the cage. The owner of his local Birds of Prey Centre had different ideas.

Alastair's talk, to a crowded club room, struck a nice balance between the personal anecdotes of getting to know these beautiful birds and the technical challenges of creating their portraits. Most of his early work used carbon pencils and Conte crayons. The pencils caught the form of the bird and the subtle differences of types of feathers, while the crayons highlighted the form and began to indicate the bird's colouring. Later works moved towards colour portraits, although Alastair noted the difficulty of matching the subtlety of natural colours with the crayons and his latest move is into large watercolours.

The next club competition is a bird painting and Alastair offered much helpful advice to his fellow artists. Alastair tries to capture the character of the bird in a position where the bird is poised to do something, rather than merely sitting on a perch, although most of us would regard that as challenge enough.



Watercolour of Ural Owl by Alastair

November 19

Sandra Haney generated a lot of enthusiasm in a crowded club room when she talked about "Drawing with my iPad". Sandra began by showing several examples of her iPad work. This revealed that she spends a lot of time in cafes and restaurants while sketching staff and customers. Drawing only with her finger tip directly on to the iPad screen, Sandra caught the attitudes and posture of people in bright colourful images that are full of atmosphere and character. Her landscape examples were equally enthusing, with a vitality that would be hard to capture in conventional paints. Sandra brought printed examples of her work to show how the intensity of colour on the screen transfers well to the print.

Sandra explained that she uses a simple free app called Drawcast, and then demonstrated how the app works by making, altering and editing marks on her iPad, that were then projected onto the screen. Several members wanted to ask technical questions about using the app and Sandra explained these clearly and succinctly. Her advice to us was simply to get the app and use it, discovering its potential by exploring this new medium.



October 19

For our October talk, guest speaker **Peter Farr** introduced members to painting with **egg tempera**. Peter has used the medium for forty years and his expertise shone in the examples of his work that he brought to the club. Beautifully detailed with subtle colours, his enigmatic studies of run down streets are peaceful and intriguing. Peter began with a brief history of egg tempera and then explained how he makes his colours, mixing egg yolk and water in equal proportions before working pigment into the mixture. He explained that mixed paint will keep for three or four days in the fridge, an important consideration as the technique requires layer after layer of very thin paint to build up the image. Peter also discussed his approach to composition. He uses photographs of buildings and street furniture in his locations and then repositions them until he has a composition that reflects the feel of the place rather than painting what is actually there. From the lively discussion it seemed that some members were tempted to try out egg tempera.



Grimsby



Jaywick

September 19

Ian Hancock started our autumn series of monthly talks with an interesting presentation on **Modern Seascapes**. Ian chose to define 'modern' as twentieth and

twenty first centuries but opened with a work from 1880 by Russian artist Ivan Aivakovsky, a realistic storm scene which dramatically illustrated Ian's first point that it is the play of light on the sea that makes a great painting.

To make sense of a vast subject area, Ian grouped his analysis into six subject areas: the sea; waves; sea and light; sea and ships; sea and land, and, "we do like to be beside the seaside". The first group highlighted the interest in patterns on the surface of the sea and included a desolate seascape by L S Lowry, probably off the Sunderland coast. Ian contended that depictions of waves have been dominated by Hokusai and Hiroshige.

'Sea and ships' included examples of famous maritime artists, many of them with amazing accurate details, but Ian had also found some inspiring recent examples, such as a lively yachting scene off a breezy Scottish coast by Marion Douglas in 2001. Land is often included in seascapes to give scale to the scene, Ian suggested, and there was much interest in the dramatic Norwegian landscapes of Ornulf Opdahl. Nicolas de Stael's powerful blue and grey abstracted seascape from 1952 was also popular. 'We do like to be beside the seaside' opened with a railway poster for Whitley Bay, looking a lot more sunny and sophisticated than it does today, but a useful reminder of the artistic quality of railway poster art.



Marion Douglas (2001)



Peter Wileman (2011)

June19

On a cold and wet day, more like winter than the middle of June, **Lyn George** introduced our summer competition with a presentation on **Diverse Approaches to Flower Painting**. Lyn chose to show some of his favourite paintings as a way to make such a vast subject manageable, but he also covered a range from sixteenth century botanical paintings to Andy Warhol. Lyn's favourites chimed well with the audience and there was much light hearted participation. The Van Gogh irises and sunflowers were popular and everyone enjoyed Hokusai's Bullfinch with Cherry Blossom as Lyn rotated the image to show that it could be viewed either way up. Lyn finished his talk with some good examples of work by local artists, including one of his own watercolours, to inspire us all.



Warhol



Hokusai

May19

Roly Burn enthralled his audience with a charming talk about **painting in stations**. Roly revealed that his fascination with stations and locomotives stemmed from childhood trainspotting treats with his father. His enthusiasm shone through with a presentation that included works not only by famous artists such as Monet, Hopper and Lowry but also by several Club members. Some of the paintings selected celebrated the architecture and engineering of the stations themselves, the “cathedrals of the steam age”, and they also illustrated the challenge of getting correct perspective with receding curved arches! Other paintings celebrated human aspects of stations, the anticipation of adventures and going on holiday, the tension and sorrow of farewells, or the way in which one can be alone even in a crowd. A thoroughly enjoyable and inspiring presentation.



Newcastle Central Station by Roly Burn and Tom Lawson

April19:

The studio was full to capacity to hear **Alan Dordoy's talk on Hokusai and Traditional Japanese Art**. Alan gave us a broad outline of Japanese art before and after the Shogun period when Japan was isolated from the rest of the world for over 200 years, but he concentrated on the Shogunate and its most famous artist, Hokusai. It became clear that Hokusai had a prodigious artistic talent from an early age and that he gradually learned to combine this with an equally prodigious talent

for self-publicity. Yet it was not until the age of 71 that he “hit the big time with his 36 views of Mount Fuji”.

Alan might have inspired all of the older members of the Club with Hokusai’s own words: *From the age of six, I had a passion for copying the form of things and since the age of fifty I have published many drawings, yet of all, I drew by my seventieth year there is nothing worth taking into account. At seventy-three years I partly understood the structure of animals, birds, insects and fishes, and the life of grasses and plants. And so, at eighty-six I shall progress further; at ninety I shall even further penetrate their secret meaning, and by one hundred I shall perhaps truly have reached the level of the marvellous and divine. When I am one hundred and ten, each dot, each line will possess a life of its own.*



March 2019

Richard Howe – Expressionism , Episode 2. The Degenerates

Richard dealt with three artists who were prominent in the years of the Weimar Republic between the wars and were subsequently persecuted and branded “degenerate” by the Nazi regime. George Grosz, Otto Dix and Max Beckman were all mentally scarred by their experiences in WW1. They flirted with Dadaism and the post-expressionist “New Objectivity”, movements that wanted to use their art in a more forward, political manner than earlier expressionists. Their portrait work gave emphasis to particular features or objects that were seen as distinctive aspects of the person depicted. Satirical scenes often depicted a madness behind what was happening, with distorted or cartoon-like figures. Beckman (Richard’s main inspiration) in particular was noted for using symbols in his colourful allegorical paintings – acrobats and clowns, animals, musical instruments.

Illustrations are :

Otto Dix - Stormtroops

Max Beckman – The Acrobats



February 2019

Wendy Ranadé opened the 2019 programme of monthly talks with an interesting exploration of the diverse ways in which artists have interpreted **Snow Scenes**. The examples that Wendy chose covered almost five hundred years from the crowded, active landscapes of Pieter Bruegel the Elder to semi-abstracted modern generic scenes that “wouldn’t look out of place on the top floor of Fenwicks” (as one member observed). It was a lively session, with lots of audience participation and opinions that ranged from harsh criticism to stunned admiration, especially for examples of watercolours and pastels that showed very impressive techniques. Wendy also included examples by club members such as illustrated below “The Wynd” by Harry Bell. The wide range of work in Wendy’s talk should provide a wealth of ideas and challenges for the next Club competition: A Snow Scene.



Pieter Bruegel the elder "Hunters in the Snow" 1565



November 2018

Judy Appleby entertained a packed club room with a presentation on **animals in art**. She narrowed down a vast subject by concentrating on animals that had a special significance in her life: cats, chickens, goats, cattle and horses. Each animal was illustrated in several ways, showing historical examples, individual portraits, animals in typical settings, or with people. The examples ranged from early Egyptian pottery to contemporary abstraction. A few artists provided regular contributions, notably Leonardo, Stubbs, Landseer, Munnings and Picasso. Judy also used examples of her own work and animal paintings by other club members. A thoroughly enjoyable event, with lots of audience participation, was the trigger for our next club competition: an animal painting.

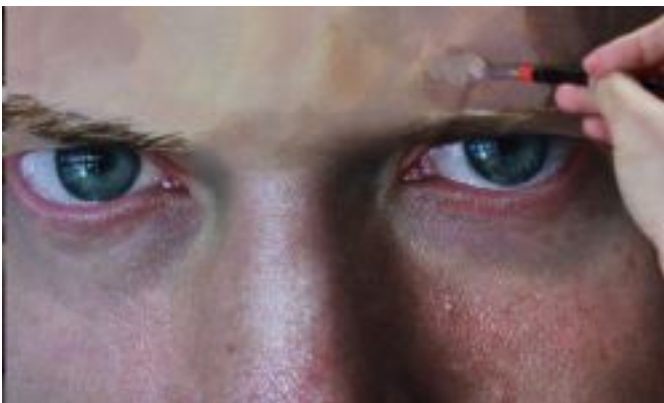


Red Cow by Simon McWilliam



October 2018

Stephen Elson held his audience in rapt attention with his talk on **Hyper-Realism**. Stephen quickly explained how realism had led to photo-realism and then to hyper-realism. It is a worldwide phenomenon as Stephen showed with his examples of many diverse artists who all create incredibly detailed and technically accomplished work from paintings of oversized portraits to giant burgers and disturbingly detailed sculptures. The majority of pieces were very large scale, five to thirty times real life size, but Australian Ron Muerk's sculptures (illustrated) ranged from the tiny to the huge. Korean artist Yong uses traditional layering techniques of classical oil painting to create portraits in which every pore and follicle is shown. The audience favourite was perhaps the five feet diameter fried egg!



September 2018

"Still Life" by Bruce McNiven

Bruce's presentation gave us a succinct introduction to the definitions and modern history of Still Life painting. Starting from an unusual (for the period) piece by Carravaggio (1571-1610) Bruce pointed out the hierarchy of subjects, which lasted through to the mid nineteenth century, placing Still Life as bottom of the list until Impressionism allowed technique and colour to triumph over subject. Bruce showed how Cezanne's still life paintings influenced Matisse, Picasso, and Peplow. With Still Life firmly established in the 20th century, more recent examples showed the painting of 'unremarkable everyday objects'. Picasso provided a well known example, but Mary Fedden's bold expressive paintings and Jurgen Gorg's monochromatic palette, introduced us to two lesser known artists. Finally the very familiar work of Tom Lawson showed us the importance of Cezanne's influence.



June 18

"The Garden in Art" by Monica Shaw

Pointing out that she was tackling a huge subject area, Monica began her talk with the Garden of Eden (which suggested that we might be in for a long historical perspective) but quickly moved to the eighteenth century, when garden paintings expressed the affluence and good taste of aristocratic landowners.

Monica's talk then concentrated on Post-Impressionist European work, in which artists portray 'ordinary' life in gardens of the modern era, from the perspective of the bourgeoisie and the working class, even 'gardens' such as vegetable patches and allotments. Gardens had become a subject in its own right – and the garden even became a studio for many artists.

The selected works showed a wide variety of garden scenes, with or without figures, and in styles from softly romantic realism to flamboyant abstraction. Can include back gardens, formal gardens, vegetable patches, allotments etc. Monica felt that the style of painting of the modern garden reflects the personality and politics of the artist.



Kandinsky



Caillebotte

April 18

Richard Howe gave an enthusiastic presentation on **German Expressionism**.

There were two main groups of German expressionist artists: [Die Brücke](#) (The Bridge), and [Der Blaue Reiter](#) (The Blue Rider).

Die Brücke was a group founded in Dresden in 1905. It developed a radical anti-traditional style characterised by vivid colour and emotional tension. The artists drew on African and South Pacific tribal art and [fauvism](#) to create a distinctive style. They sought a more direct relationship with nature. This is vividly expressed in their pictures of themselves bathing nude. As Richard said, "They were all young and liked taking their clothes off".

Der Blaue Reiter was an informal association rather than a coherent group, established in Munich in 1911 when Kandinsky and Marc held their first exhibition. Paul Klee and August Macke were also involved. In 1912 Marc and Kandinsky published a collection of essays on art, the *Almanach Der Blaue Reiter*. Franz Marc adored horses and produced many paintings of them and other animals. A Kandinsky painting of 1903 is called *The Blue Rider*. Both groups had complex theories about the significance and symbolism of colours. Both Macke and Marc were killed in the First World War, bringing an end to Der Blaue Reiter.

Richard ended his talk by inviting members to view several of his recent paintings in the Expressionist style.



You can have integrity without realistic proportions, or 'correct' colours.



March 18

For the March talk **Nick Broome** introduced "**What we can learn from The Fauves**"

Nick gave an interesting presentation on the Fauves or "Wild Beasts" as one critic called them because of their emphasis on their exuberant use of non-representational colour and loose painting style. Nick talked about their colour theories, illustrating from the work of Derain, Dufy and Albert Marquet. Although the movement itself was short lived the Fauves influence on other artists was considerable, notably Van Gogh and Gauguin. Several members vowed to be more experimental and bold in their use of colour after listening to Nick's talk.



February 18

The 2018 season of lunchtime talks began with an excellent presentation by **Tony Harrison**. Tony's subject was **the Wyeth dynasty and particularly the "Helga Paintings"**. Andrew Wyeth's father was a distinguished artist, best known for his book illustrations. Andrew's son is another distinguished artist and portrait painter. Andrew himself was probably best known for his evocative landscapes until the Helga paintings were discovered.

Successful and financially secure, Wyeth had three studios. Two were in the houses of friends and a third in a redundant mill that Wyeth had purchased. Perhaps these options gave him some opportunities to operate "under the radar", because it was discovered that he had a portfolio of 147 paintings of his neighbour Helga, mainly life studies. Neither Helga's husband nor Wyeth's wife knew that Helga had been posing as Wyeth's model. As Tony suggested, this must have led to some awkward explanations!



The works are either watercolour or tempera. Some are sketchy, but the main works are intricately detailed photo-realistic paintings, demonstrating astonishing skill and attention to details of light and textures. Wyeth's wife was also his business manager and she set aside any personal concerns about their creation to exploit the value of the suddenly discovered hoard. The works realised over a million dollars, a very considerable sum in the mid-1950s.

Tony went on to set the scene for the new Club competition: a life study that tells a story. He encouraged everyone to be ambitious in setting up poses and using props.

November17

On Thursday 9 November, the Club Room was packed to listen to **Ian Hancock's** presentation on **abstract art**. Ian showed a range of examples and discussed the significance of the titles chosen by the artists. He proposed that there are three types of abstract painting.

The first, an assembly of colours, shapes and marks that are intended to be pleasing without representing any physical object or setting, such as a work by Jackson Pollock.

At the other extreme are examples where a physical object or setting has been "abstracted" to such an extent that the subject disappears in shapes and colours that refer to the physical without representing it. Ian noted the Scottish landscape work of Barbara Rae and showed other examples.

Between these extremes are abstract works in which the physical is abstracted but still decipherable, such as Kandinsky's milkmaid and cow (below right), and Ian used other examples that were clearly landscapes but not in a representational manner. It was particularly noted that nearly all the illustrated examples were very large works except the Kandinsky. Particularly the huge abstracts of Helen Frankenthaler (below).



October17

Ian Davison presented the October lunchtime talk in a new format "**The Great British Landscape Paint off**"

Taking the (disliked) format of the familiar tv "eject one and move on a round" competitive shows, Ian put together a series of images of paintings by 6 'known' but not perhaps not that well-known British landscape artists. Each round of the competition had the audience vote to eject their least favoured contestant. Then the remaining artists added another work to their display and so on til only one artist remained. Only at the end were the artists identified. This show (expertly presented and chaired) caused lively, emotional discussions and argument! The audience was delighted to be introduced to new artists in this way. Such as the work of Philip Hughes illustrated below



September17

The lunchtime talk for September 2017 was **Daisy Haggerty on 'Self Portraits'**, introducing our next club competition. Daisy gave us an interesting historical perspective from Artemisia Gentileschi (1590-1662) as *The Allegory of Painting* in 1638 to Frank Auerbach's self portrait in squiggles drawn over seven years to 2001. There were several women painters, many of who had succeeded only after struggles against prejudice and social constraints. Daisy's examples showed how portraits can include elements to illustrate the sitter's interests or talents, such as a palette and brushes or references to family and relationships.



June17

Despite being in severe discomfort after a fall, **Wendy Ranadé** came to the Club on Thursday 8 June to give a lunchtime talk on “**Scenes of Rural Life**”. Wendy chose to concentrate on the evolution of rural painting in nineteenth century France, primarily through the work of three painters: Millais, Pissarro and Van Gogh. At the end of the eighteenth century typical rural scenes depicted a fantasy idyll for wealthy patrons who enjoyed dressing up as milkmaids and shepherds, oblivious to the poverty and hardship of many country folk. The talk showed how art began to reveal the realities of rural life, the hours of back breaking work and the struggle to survive. As the nineteenth century progressed, philosophers and enlightened politicians advanced arguments for a more equitable society and the artists, particularly the anarchist Pissarro, used their work to advance their political agenda. By the end of the century the pretty milkmaids had disappeared and the view from the fields included the smoke of industry from the nearby town. A very appropriate and interesting presentation for an election day!



May17

Carmen Gordon and **Judy Appleby** gave the May lunchtime talk. This was an account of their different experiences of "**Learning about Art**". Carmen described the learning process through formal courses, having just completed the Newcastle College 2year Foundation in Art course and before that an HND. Judy took us on her journey so far over 10years of self-teaching. There were interesting similarities in how they both came to significant changes in their work through new environments, new techniques, and research studies of artists. The contrasts were more evident in the programme constraints of a formal course, where projects are completed and new projects are introduced on a fixed timescale. Whereas the self-teaching model has a strong continuity, but selectively misses out elements of expression.

Carmen entered her course with the specific intention to learn how to have ideas. The outcome has taken her from painting into 3D and multi-media installation work.



Judy started from a background in teaching in a creative discipline (architectural design) with the intention to have a retirement hobby, this has turned into an almost full-time occupation and a 'new career' in painting.

April 17

Steve Telford gave the April presentation on the subject of **Lino Cuts**. Steve concentrated on the medium and how to work with it. He showed us examples of other artists' and his own work with lino cuts. He paid particular attention to choosing suitable subjects with the observation that animals seem to work extremely well. It was encouraging for the audience to see how Steve has quickly developed his technique with the medium through his own interest and experimentation.



Minoan Dancers Lino cut by Steve Telford

March 17

The March talk was given by **Alan Dordoy on the life and work of Paul Nash**. Drawing on his recent visit to the Nash exhibition at Tate Modern [Alan explained that Nash](#) (1889 - 1946) spent much time in southern England exploring the Downs and coastal areas. His work was often quite surreal as he interpreted his environment according to a unique, personal mythology. There are many striking examples perhaps best epitomized by his studies of Wittenham Clumps.

Nash's life covered two World Wars and he was an official artist in both, producing some of his most powerful and disturbing work. In 1918 he was commissioned by the British War Memorials Committee and produced a huge canvas of the Battle of Ypres known as 'The Menin Road'. Nash was at Ypres and became disillusioned with the pointlessness of war. His health suffered badly, he had severe asthma and he had bouts of depression.

In World War II Nash was an official artist for the RAF. He finished the imaginative representation of the Battle of Britain in 1941 but then his health deteriorated and he was unable to paint. During periods of recuperation he painted some of his best landscape work, including studies of Wittenham Clumps, but his strength was failing and he finally died of heart failure caused by his asthma.

February 17

2017 lunchtime presentations started in February with **Ian Davison on "Forgers"** Ian concentrated on ten artists who created work that was then passed off as a valuable original by a famous artist. In most cases, these forgers were very talented artists who found that the art market and gallery owners did not value their own original work. For some the act of forgery was an act of revenge on the art establishment that ignored them.

Others were definitely motivated by money. Of these there were examples of forgers who had been unmasked, served time in prison (commonly about four years), and come back into society with a reputation and able to command high prices for bespoke "forgeries" signed in their own name!

The strangest forger in this talk was Mark Landiss, a not very talented American artist, who disguises himself as a Jesuit priest and tries to donate his work to small

museums and public galleries. He was eventually caught out but could not be prosecuted because he had never sold any of his work.



November16

Elizabeth Wilkinson gave the final lunchtime presentation of 2016 with “**Tangible Examples of Global Art**”, and it really was hands on. Elizabeth brought an extensive collection of folk and tribal art from around the world and encouraged her audience to handle, examine and compare the pieces. In her “travelling museum” Elizabeth had attached descriptive and explanatory texts to the works but she was happy to answer questions and point out curiosities such as the similarity of bushmen figures on African pottery and Aboriginal cave paintings. This was an interesting and thought provoking event.



October16

Thursday 10 October. **Nick Broome** entertained a packed studio with his account of **modelling the human head**, in this case Guy Fawkes. Nick was accompanied by his 2016 guy. The process was made to seem easy but Nick's examples showed that he has developed a particular expertise in this field. He showed how he begins by building a timber armature that sets the key dimensions, and demonstrated how he measures these key dimensions from his own head using a scaled up DIY micrometer. This appeared to be a risky operation. Nick then rolls pages of broadsheet newspaper and winds these around the armature, poking holes and bulking out to achieve the form of the head. Once the mass is about right, it is plastered using household filler that clings well to the paper and can be sanded and scratched when it is set.

Nick finished his talk with examples of ancient human sculpture that we are used to seeing as bare stone or metal. He suggested that these would have been fully coloured in their original state. Members did not rise to the suggestion that we might offer to colour some of the statues around the city.



September16

The autumn season of lunchtime talks began on 8 September with a presentation by **Adrian Swales** on "**Renaissance Portraits**". Eighteen members attended as Adrian took us on a journey from 1400 to 1530, concentrating on the evolution of portraiture in Italy and the Low Countries.

Early works were in egg tempera on rigid grounds. The quick drying nature of the medium limited the artists' ability to achieve realism. Portraits were usually in profile, and somewhat stylised. Adrian contrasted examples by Pisanello and Fra Filippo Lippi with Van Eyck's "Man with a Turban" to show how the use of oil paints in the Low Countries enabled greater realism.

At the beginning of the period, portraits were most frequently related to religious subjects, representing biblical scenes that were given to churches or used in family chapels to confirm the devoutness of the donors. Gradually the works became more realistic, representing wealthy sitters who were portrayed with many symbolic elements that confirmed their piety and reinforced the concept that the soul continued after death. Towards the end of the period portraits had become affordable by successful merchants as well as aristocrats, and would be commissioned to remind families to pray for them long after their death to reduce their soul's time in Purgatory.



These examples are an unknown lady by Rogier van der Weyden in 1460 (with a remarkably modern style) and “Baldassare Castiglione” by Raphael painted in 1515.

June 16

There was sunshine outside the studio and on the screen when **Tony Harrison** introduced the club to **Joaquin Sorolla**, the forgotten Spanish Impressionist. Sorolla's first big success was in 1900, when he was in his mid-thirties, with “The Sad Inheritance” which won the Gold Medal in Paris. Success followed success. His work was very popular and his show of 500 paintings in Paris in 1906 was a financial triumph. By 1909, he showed 356 paintings in America and sold 195 of them. It may have been this commercial success that caused art critics to undervalue his talent.

Although he made much money painting portraits of wealthy families, his real interest lay in painting outdoors in the sun. Tony showed many lively beach scenes and dramatic compositions of fishing boats and fishermen. Sorolla painted many large works en plein air, with vigorous brush strokes that (combined with his prodigious output) suggest that he painted very quickly.

Sorolla's second visit to America in 1911, where again he sold most of his work, led to a commission to paint fourteen very large canvases for the Hispanic Society of America. The works were 12 to 14 feet high and 227 feet long! This exhausting project occupied the rest of his life until his death in 1923



May16

On 12 May **Ken Ayre** entertained members with a presentation on the Mexican painter **Diego Rivera** and reminiscences of his own life in commercial art. Ken had moved from Army sign writing during his national service, through producing huge posters, to executing complex mural designs for Formica.

Ken's interest in Rivera was triggered by an extended visit to Mexico. Rivera came from a privileged background, his family owned silver mines, and he had an abundance of self-confidence. Sure of his own artistic ability, he went to Europe and mixed with the likes of Picasso. He returned to Mexico suddenly after several years, leaving behind a wife and a string of mistresses.

He was commissioned, at a fixed rate of \$2 a day, to produce vast murals illustrating the history of Mexico. He became an active member of the Communist party (they later threw him out) and met, and eventually married, Frida Kahlo (neglecting to divorce his European wife). He was incredibly productive, working with a team of assistants, and was also commissioned to work in the USA (although some work was destroyed because of his Communist affiliation).

The murals are powerful bold compositions, often allegorical, incorporating accurate portraits of influential people, dramatic perspectives and unrestrained use of strong colour.

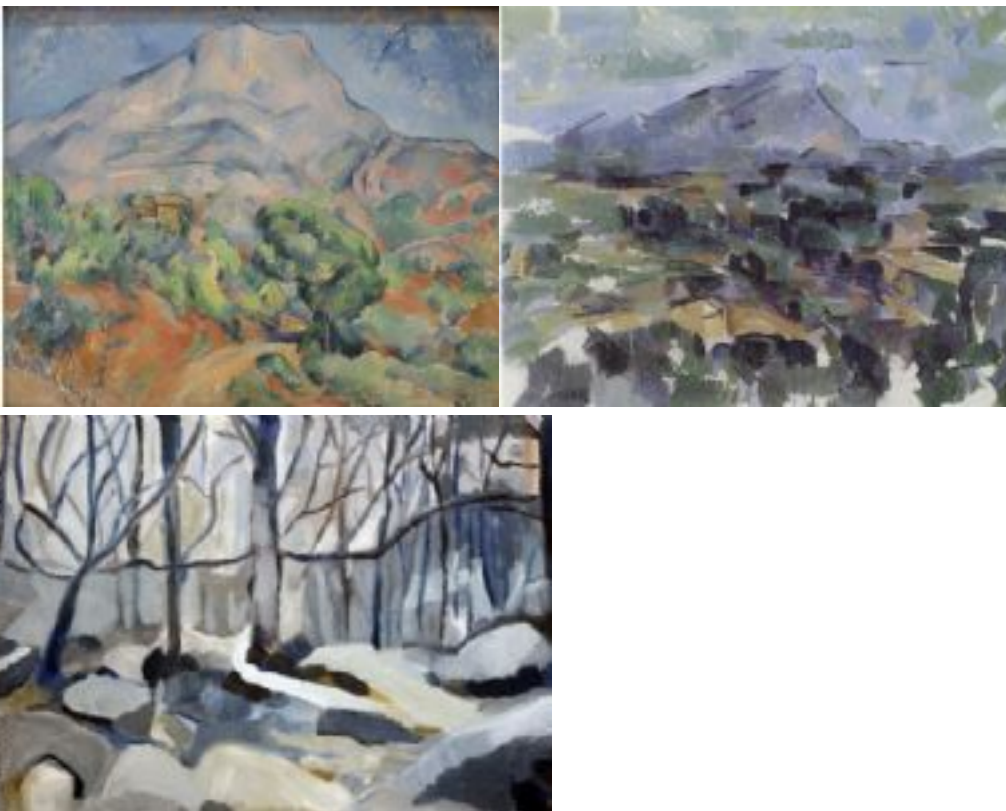


April 16

For our April lunchtime talk, **Monica Shaw** treated us to a discussion of the works of **Cézanne**, and particularly the significance of his **Mont St Victoire** paintings. Monica's interest was stimulated by a visit to Cézanne's studio in Aix en Provence. Cézanne was a self-taught artist and not constrained by classical training. Whilst he learned much from his friend Pissarro and from the impressionists, he developed his own style and led the way into cubism and other abstract experiments.

Cézanne's significance was emphasised by Monica's quotations. Picasso, "my one and only master ... the father of us all". Matisse, "a sort of god of painting". Bonnard, "a painter who was powerfully armed in front of nature, the strongest, the most sincere.

Monica divided Cézanne's Mont St Victoire paintings into three periods: "conventional" from around 1885, "increased faceting" from 1890, and "greater abstraction" from 1900 until his death in 1906. The illustrations show an early conventional view of the mountain and a late example from 1904-6. The third example is Monica's own painting "in the style of Cézanne".



March 16

The March 2016 lunchtime presentation was by **Tony Marron**, entitled "**Why Do We Paint**".

Tony illustrated his talk by a well chosen and inspiring selection of paintings, starting with those created 35,000 years ago on the surfaces of the Lascaux caves.

He then developed his main themes of; Enjoyment, Being Driven, Sharing the Beauty of Place, and The Painters of Light.

Amongst his selection were works by Van Gogh, Joan Eardley, Turner, Monet and others, including IRIS, aged 5 and 7, which were much admired by everyone.



February 16

The 2016 programme of lunchtime talks began with **John Proud** entertaining a packed studio on the topic of “**finding a subject**”. The standing room only audience waited in excited anticipation as John tuned his banjolele (a cross between a banjo and ukelele) but were disappointed to discover that an injured thumb would prevent him from giving us his rendition of “Lorena”. We had instead a You Tube version of the top hit banjo ballad from the 1860s.

“What has this to do with art?” you may be asking.



John explained how the song was popular with Confederacy troops and he had become fascinated by the photographs of the period, and the history of the people involved with the creation of “Lorena”. One photograph in particular had caught his imagination and he converted the black and white image into a colour portrait of a young lady who would have been born around 1850. It was John’s interest in historical research that led him to find a subject. We all have interests outside our art, and John showed how those interests might be integrated to lead us to new subjects and deeper meaning in our paintings.

The Christmas Party 2015



Club members were entertained by "Christmas Crackers" in which four members each gave a short presentation of "The best painting I've ever done"



Ted Byerley showed us a stunning icy-cold snow scene 'From Barend to Dalbeattie' and a second choice of 'a quiet corner behind the Cathedral' in Carlisle. **Tony Harrison** brought along his beautiful framed painting of a dancer resting. **Wendy Ranadé** showed us her favourite portraits of her mother and grandson. Each quite different with the boy being a diagonal composition with high contrasts, and her mother a serene image in soft pastels. **Ken Ayre** shared his Christmas card, then showed us his striking wintery northern village, and one of his favourite subjects the North Shields Fish Quay.



Members then enjoyed home-made snacks and a variety of sweet and savoury party food, a glass of wine and some further chat about those much appreciated Christmas Crackers. More to come next year!

November 2015

Judy Appleby gave her illustrated talk on "**Architectural Drawings as Art**". Judy identified the different purposes of architectural drawing from design concepts to presentation drawings through a gallery of architects' work from late c18th to fresh off the 'drawing board' (iMac). The gallery started with Sir John Soane, and Joseph Gandy's renderings of Soane's Bank of England in the late c18th, then introduced Frank Lloyd Wright's delicate watercolours, Charles Rennie Mackintosh's characterful renderings of his architecture and on into today's architects with Will Alsop's intriguing design development paintings and Zaha Hadid's extraordinary theoretical paintings and computer graphics.



October 2015

Carmen Gordon gave us a fascinating insight into her chosen subject: "**Psychoanalysis and Art, Help or Hinderance**". Carmen introduced us to the idea of the conscious and sub-conscious mind and which area we are more likely to use when creating art work. Her example artists of **Leanora Carrington** and **Grayson Perry** showed, in the former, a painting laden with symbolism (see below) by an artist who refused to consider the subconscious meaning, and in the latter, an artist who thrives on making his psychoanalysis public through his image and works.

Carmen's presentation was extended by details of her personal experience and approach. This was illustrated through her current course work (see below) at Newcastle College.



Following Carmen's presentation there was a steady flow of questions and further thoughts from the audience. There was clearly an interested in discussing these more abstract concepts in next season's lunchtime workshops.

September 2015

The series of lunchtime talks resumed after the summer break with a presentation by **Ian Hancock** on the **The American Ashcan Painters**, who were active in Philadelphia and New York between 1905 and 1935. The five painters who exhibited together as coherent group were **George Bellows**, **William Glackens**, **George Luks**, **Everett Shinn** and **John Sloan**. Most earned a living as illustrators but in their painting they set out to "to tell certain truths about city and modern life ... poverty and the gritty realities of urban life" (Wikipedia).



George Luks "Bread Line"

Ian had gathered a comprehensive range of examples, but overall he questioned if they achieved their aim. He suggested that the work might have seemed tough and realistic at the time, in contrast to other conventional work of the early 20th century, but today they seem romantic rather than socially critical. Nevertheless, there were many interested observations on the strong composition their works and the use of powerful contrasts especially in the many contre-jour paintings. There was a lively discussion that suggests we may look forward to some inspiring work in our next Club competition: Newcastle Ashcan.

May 2015

David Roberts "Three Illustrators"



A smaller than usual group attended David Roberts' talk on the work of three illustrators. The absentees missed a treat. David chose three contrasting artists, one from the early twentieth century, one from mid-century and the third still working. Discussion and comment was interwoven with David's presentation.

Phil May was the seventh of eight children in a wealthy Yorkshire family that fell on hard times. He went to London to try to earn a living with his self taught artistic abilities. After years of failure and living rough, he was eventually accepted as a regular Punch cartoonist. His elegantly hatched line drawings show careful social observation and an ability to capture facial expressions with very few pen strokes.

Eric Fraser produced his illustrations from the 1930s onwards and most of David's examples concentrated on Fraser's work for the Radio Times, especially his black and white cover illustrations. These drew nostalgic murmurings from some of the audience. Many of the freehand drawings have the quality of woodcuts or engravings, with crisp high contrast images giving powerful direct messages. David explained that Fraser would receive his instructions on a Friday afternoon and the finished artwork had to be delivered on the following Monday. Quite a challenge for such ambitious drawings.

Nicola Jennings' perceptive and sometimes harsh caricatures appear in many magazines and frequently in The Guardian. David entertained his audience with a "quiz" in which we identified many familiar faces. There was some discussion of the process of creating caricatures and how far one can push facial characteristics without losing identity and personality. Some members felt that it might make a good subject for one of next year's competitions.

April 15

Alan Dordoy on "Being parents of an artist"



Alan Dordoy introduced the club to the work of his son, Alex, a professional painter and sculptor.

Alex studied at the Glasgow School of Art and his lucky break was having his degree show work taken up by Toby Webster of the Modern Institute (TMI). Much of Alex's work deals with our relationship to technology, and the connections between real and virtual worlds.

He had early success with Scotland, London and Holland, and had a two year residency in Amsterdam. In 2014 Alex was given a corridor in the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art, as part of the Generation 25 event, and his work was bought for the national collection.

Many of us found it difficult to read the meaning of Alex's sculptural work and our confusion deepened when Alan's final slide showed a very talented piece of representational portraiture. Perhaps members would have enjoyed some discussion about the motivation and triggers that changed the direction of Alex's work from figurative to more challenging abstraction, however the chairman did not allow time to explore the issues.



For the November 2014 presentation, **Roly Burn** introduced the life and work of **Alfred Sisley** (1839-1869) whose work had particularly impressed him during a visit to the Musee d'Orsay. Although born to English parents, Sisley grew up in Paris and went on to study with Monet, Renoir and Bazille, and hence was a member of the founding group of impressionism. Painting initially en plein air, using small unblended brush strokes, the impressionists were revolutionary in attempting to capture the light and feeling of a landscape, although the paintings were generally finished in the studio, adding the fine touches of detail (figures, flags etc) that really made the composition. Unlike Renoir, Sisley stuck to landscape painting, figures never having prominence in his works, although many feature buildings, bridges or other structures. While Monet, Renoir and others of the impressionists gradually gained in popularity and wealth, Sisley remained in their shadow, selling little work and remaining only one step ahead of the rent collector. Only after his death (from cancer) did his work start to come into demand. The members felt that Sisley's life could provide a film script to rival 'Mr Turner' and thanked Roly for his moving and informative presentation.

October14

In October, **Wendy Ranadé** introduced members to the work of Sally Strand, an American specialising in pastels, and the paintings of Ken Howard RA. Under the title "**The Colour of Light**", Wendy examined how Sally Strand achieves vitality in her pictures by bringing vibrant and complex colours into the whitest whites and the darkest shadows, and stressed how hard we must work to see the colours that are really there, not just the colour that we think should be there! The pastel of eggs in a bowl of water provides a good example of this (and illustrates Sally Strand's love of a challenge).



Ken Howard captures light with 90 minute studies, small oil sketches, that are then worked up in the studio. He tries to retain the spontaneous brushwork of the studies in the finished work, as Wendy pointed out, that is a skill that many of us struggle with. Howard is known particularly for his paintings of Venice, interior studio scenes, and beach studies. Many of his works use contre-jour to develop strong contrasts. Wendy touched briefly on the Japanese art of Notan, in which the subject is reduced to only two values, black and white, and she explained how this can help us to see our subjects more clearly. This example of Ken Howard's beach studies illustrates the intensity of light and the boldness of his brushwork.



September14

Our lunchtime workshops resumed after the summer break with **Steve Telford's** presentation on **Cubism**. Steve outlined the beginnings of Cubism, from the Salon des Independentes exhibition in 1908 (when Braque and Picasso exhibited the first cubist paintings), to the 1920s. The links with Cezanne, Gauguin and Seurat were discussed. Steve explored the adoption and development of Cubism by artists including Derain, Picabia and Duchamp. Members showed much enthusiasm for attempting their own Cubist style in the upcoming Club competition. The example illustrating this report is Picabia's "Udnie, (Star dancer on a transatlantic liner)".



More speakers would be welcome. Do you have an enthusiasm for an artist, school or genre that you would like to share with your colleagues? **Please go to the 'contacts' page in the menu above and send a message to Ian Davison if you want to join in.** Advice and help can be given if you want to use pictures on projectors or laptops.

CLUB WIN "GREAT ART" AWARD



Those members who buy materials from Great Art Supplies will have noticed a write up with photos on our Club, in the May edition of their magazine.

We were one of several clubs reviewed and awarded a voucher for £350 worth of art materials for club use. The write up profiled the history and facilities the Club has to offer potential new members.

Louise Rose, Great Art's marketing executive, was particularly impressed with our full time studio facilities and friendliness of members she met. None of the other clubs reviewed appear to have the studios facilities we enjoy on a daily basis, most only meeting once a week at most. Let's hope other North East artists reading the piece are encouraged to join us.

see Links page for Great Art online

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