



The Royal Society of British Artists

NEWSLETTER AUTUMN 2011

A Message from James Horton PRBA

Even though the annual show still seems a way off preparations have been underway for some time to ensure that we can produce an exhibition that is every bit as good and impressive as the last one.

The relationship with NADFAS to promote young artists grows in strength every year. This year there were nearly three times the submissions, from the regions, from which to choose work to show alongside the members at the annual show. The standard was also higher than ever making selection difficult and Carole Hubble and myself both commented on the fact that some of the paintings would almost certainly have got in on the normal selection.

Likewise, the standard of work at the National Students' exhibition held at the Mall Galleries in July, meant that the selection to show with us contains some very impressive pieces of work which will not in any way look out of place alongside the members.

The drive to promoting and encouraging young artists to be associated with us at the RBA is one of the most exciting and rewarding projects we have been involved with for many years.

Good things are also happening at the FBA and a major refurbishment of the East Gallery, made possible by money from the Threadneedle Asset Management, is about to take place. This will result in an up to the minute exhibition area which will reveal the original windows, thus creating natural light, and provide a new elevated area to show sculpture in a most effective way that hitherto has not been possible. All of this will eventually be of enormous benefit to us as a society.

Once again we are aiming to produce a first rate catalogue thanks to the valuable input from members with the necessary expertise, in particular Chris Myers. The FBA is now involved in an attempt to standardize the production of catalogues for all societies and ours has been used as a form of benchmark in style and format.

As in recent years we shall be arranging a number of workshops and demonstrations during the exhibition. These have proved to be very popular with visitors who are keen to see how paintings and prints are put together with expertise by various members. Any member who feels they may be able to contribute to this please get in touch.

The RBA is fortunate enough to have amongst its members many of the most gifted and talented artists working in Britain. The last few exhibitions in particular have demonstrated that we are capable of mounting a first rate show of contemporary work of the highest standard and I am confident that members will, as before strive to exhibit the very best of their work.

Members' News

Malcolm Ashman

Earlier this year Malcolm exhibited with the Royal Society of Portrait Painters at the Mall Galleries and has continued working on a series of small scale pieces to be shown at pre{faces}, the launch of a portrait project by 3 artists based at Bath Artists' Studios.

The artists will spend the next three years painting the people of Bath and staging a series of pop-up exhibitions throughout the city. The project can be followed online at www.faces-bath.co.uk

Malcolm also exhibited 60 new landscape paintings at a solo show with Denise Yapp Contemporary Art at Whitebrook in Monmouthshire, 9th September - 8th October.

New landscapes and portraits can be viewed at www.malcolmashman.com

On 10th & 11th November he will be exhibiting at the Life! art event in aid of Helen & Douglas House, hospice care for children and young adults, at Delfina, 50 Bermondsey Street, London SE1 3JG

Christopher Hall writes

From November through to January I shall be exhibiting about twenty paintings at the "Museum of Modern Art in Wales", the Tabernacle, Machynlleth - Mid Wales. To most a fairly remote location nevertheless a beautiful and spacious privately run Art Centre, incorporated in a large Georgian house and adjoining handsome redundant chapel in the centre of a small Welsh market town. The Private view is on November 15th and two other painters are exhibiting in other rooms. There will also be concerts in the Chapel. All good fun !

Julia Sorrell writes

Within a few days of doing Twitter, I was asked to write the following article for the Save Our Woods online magazine. <http://saveourwoods.co.uk/get-involved/love-trees/an-appreciation-of-trees-by-julia-sorrell/>

I have a similar article going up on the Woodland Trust website and another article is apparently being printed in the November edition of 'The Artists'. Finally, any other RBA members who might have had an asthmatic reaction to white spirit might be interested my impromptu and rather light-hearted endorsement of Zest-It as non allergenic alternative on YouTube as well as on the Zest-It website:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wlzBidg2iiQ>

The articles and YouTube videos also describe the work I have been doing painting wood and trees on Norfolk Wildlife Trust reserves.

Hilary Frew writes:

For me this has been a busy summer. I will have three sculptures in the Battersea Affordable Art Fair this month, like quite a few other RBA members, I believe. I recently had work in the Wisley RHS gardens in a mixed exhibition, and also a piece in Guildford Cathedral for five weeks. In August the Cork Street Open Exhibition sold one of my sculptures .

Cheryl Culver writes:

I have written three articles for the Artist Magazine, called 'Can the artist still continue to be Computer ILLITERATE in the 21st century. Is artistic skill enough in today's world of computers and technology'. These will be published in the Jan, Feb and March issues 2012. I have also illustrated these articles.

I have work going into the AAF with the Karen Taylor Gallery and three paintings in the Russell Gallery Christmas show. The SCA exhibition in Shrewsbury is up and running and we spent a pleasant if cold week in Shropshire.

Unfortunately I fell off my bike in France and fractured my left arm, four days in hospital having had it pinned and plated. Luckily it was my left arm, but it has slowed me down a bit but I'm having physio exercises trying to bend and straighten it.

Peter Kelly writes:

I shall be taking part in the Royal Society of Marine Artists, Discerning Eye, and New English Art Club exhibitions at the Mall Galleries in October and November, the Small Paintings Group exhibition at the Red Rag Gallery, Stow-on-the-Wold in December and a Two-Man Show with Brian Davies at John Adams Fine Art, Ebury Street in November to celebrate twenty-one years of our connection to the gallery.

Sue Champion

As well as showing with the Russell Gallery at the affordable art fair this October, Sue is having an exhibition of new work at the Twenty Twenty Gallery from 5th to 30th November, 3-4 High Street, Much Wenlock 01952 727952

www.twenty-twenty.co.uk

John McCombs writes

As president of the Manchester Academy of Fine Arts all my energies are directed toward securing exhibitions for our society. The academy is 152 years old and still considered to be the most prestigious Art Society in the north of England. Early next year MAFA will be having a 10 week exhibition at Buxton Art Gallery and in the

summer of next year will be exhibiting at Bury Art Gallery in celebration of the Queen's Jubilee. The Academy has over 100 of the finest artists in the north of England, some of its past members have been Ford Madox Brown and LS Lowry.

Personally my own gallery here in Delph continues to show a changing exhibition throughout the year with its ongoing title "Paintings of Delph -The People and the Place"

Peter Newsome writes:

The professional photographer Simon Stanmore is currently building a portfolio of portraits of British sculptors in their studios. I was privileged to be the subject of his recent shoot and was very pleased with the result. His portraits can be seen at <http://www.simonstanmorestuff.info/>



Peter Newsome in his studio photographed by Simon Stanmore

Geedon Gallery

Jacqueline Taber has told me about the autumn exhibition at the Geedon Gallery which runs from 8th-23rd October 11am-5.30pm daily and then by appointment until 15th December. RBA members Denis Syrett, Martin Leman, Jill Leman and Janet Golphin are exhibiting.

Jaggers, Fingringhoe, Colchester, Essex CO5 7DN

01206728587

www.geedongallery.co.uk

Ruth Borchard Self Portrait Exhibition

The Ruth Borchard Self Portrait Exhibition is taking place at the Kings Place Gallery, 90 York Way / London N1 9AG from 14 Oct to 25 November.

Jill Leman, Nick Tidnam and Alfred Daniels have pieces in the Exhibition.



Jill Leman Self Portrait with Cat

Social Gathering of RBA Members in Surrey

The social gathering this year was held at Ann and Trevor Heat's farm in Surrey on Sunday 18th September.

Those members who stayed for the weekend met on the Saturday evening for a very enjoyable meal at the Barley Bow pub.

On the Sunday morning about 30 members and guests descended on the Heat's for morning coffee at about 11am. There had been rain the previous night but the weather on the Sunday was sunny and mild. Members put on their wellington boots and went on a very interesting (if somewhat muddy) ramble with Trevor through their woods and farm.

After we arrived back at the house we all sat down to a delicious barbecue in their garden which was prepared by friends of Ann and Trevor. It was a lovely way to spend a Sunday with good friendship and excellent food.

Our grateful thanks to Ann and Trevor (and the caterers) for all their kind hospitality.

Judith Gardner



RBA Members and friends at Trevor and Ann Heat's Farm

The Marianne von Werther Memorial Award

Through the generosity of supporter of the RBA who left the Society a legacy, the RBA is able to fund one student each year to attend the British School in Rome. The most recent RBA Rome Scholar is **Lewis Hazelwood-Horner** who has written a short account of his stay in the eternal city:

I had never been to Rome before and found it has so much to offer in terms of, its architecture, cultural heritage, sculptures, paintings, people, street life and because of this I will always want to return .I wanted to explore a different view of Rome so I focused my interest on an everyday aspect of life in Rome ,in particular its Market Squares, Gelateria's and Bars. I found what I was looking for in the Old part of the City near the Pantheon:

The British School became my home for 4 weeks this summer. It's a Lutyens building in a picturesque setting with great accommodation and facilities conveniently situated adjacent to the Beaux Arts Gallery, on the edge of the Borghese Gardens. Each evening I would sit in the courtyard with the other artists and scholars and we would chat about our day. We talked late into the night discussing Art and Architecture. On days off I would play tennis with the other scholars. I met many interesting people on the trip with whom I am still in contact.



Villa Borghese Gardens

The trip encouraged me to take a closer look at figure sculpture, taking a keen interest in Michelangelo's work such as 'La Pieta' in the Vatican and his 'Moses', this has encouraged me to continue my learning at the London Atelier of Representational Art at Bermondsey where I'm making studies of casts. I am starting on the pathway to making painting my profession. The Marianne Von Werther Memorial Award/Rome Scholarship was a great opportunity for a young artist like myself; I thoroughly enjoyed the trip and would urge other artists to strongly consider applying for this scholarship because it is such a wonderful opportunity to be given by the RBA.



Roman Rooftops

The Italian People are fantastic, they are very accepting of working artists and this helps a lot as much of my time there was spent working outside creating over 40 small oil studies on board and filling two sketchbooks. In the mornings I would sit in a bar or Gelateria and observe people going about their early morning business of ordering an espresso and at midday I would watch people turn up for their lunch; I was never once told to move on; it was actually the complete opposite, the bar staff would offer encouragement and members of the general public would take a keen interest in what I was doing. On occasion the staff would even bring me small espresso's as tokens of appreciation and in the Gelateria's, small pots of ice cream whilst I was working on their portraits.

I have brought back many fond memories from the trip, the one that stands out most was actually the last day where I visited Giolitti to say goodbye and they presented me with an unforgettably huge leaving ice cream .

RBA Annual Exhibition 2012 Dates

Hand in for members work - Friday 13th and Saturday 14th January

Private View - Tuesday 28th February

Exhibition Opens - Wednesday 29th February

Candlelit Supper - Saturday 3rd March

Exhibition Closes - Saturday 10th 1pm.

AGM - Saturday 10th 2pm

RBA Christmas Buffet 2nd December 2011

The RBA Christmas buffet lunch is on Friday 2nd December. Please see attached pdf file booking form for this enjoyable event.

Email addresses and the 2012 RBA Exhibition catalogue

Less and less communication these days takes place by letter or indeed by telephone and we all receive many more emails than either letters or telephone calls. If the internet has become the new postal service, surely the RBA catalogue should reflect this fact of life. I suggest that RBA members should be allowed, even encouraged, to have their email addresses and websites included in the forthcoming 2012 catalogue. This information could be printed in relatively small text under the telephone numbers and would not take up a large amount of space. Both potential clients and colleagues would be able to make contact much more easily. We also have to bear in mind the increasing costs of postage and recognise that in future more and more communication within the Society will be by email. Those few members who are still without email, could enter the email address of a 'buddy'.

Exhibition Reviews

Degas and the Ballet – Picturing Movement

Royal Academy of Arts 17th September to 11th December 2011

Degas acquired a reputation during his life time (and reinforced after his death) of being a conservative, stick-in-the-mud whose academic training and isolation in older age set him aside from younger artists and progressive movements taking place in the early 20th century. The facts are quite different. Degas did indeed enjoy an academic training at the Ecole des Beaux Arts in Paris, studied the masters in Italy and constantly emphasised the need for observation and drawing very much in the Ingres tradition. But none of this background alters the fact that Degas embraced modern technology in his later years and was constantly experimenting with new media.

In the 1880's Degas became fascinated by the experiments of Eadweard Muybridge and Etienne-Jules Marey who were both experimenting with multiple exposure photographs of animals in motion and birds in flight. Degas was interested in how the human figure changed as seen from different angles and began making small models in wax and plaster to experiment with poses which he then translated into pastels or oils. (None of his many wax models were cast in his life time, but after his death 74 wax pieces were cast in bronze.) 'The Little Dancer' was the only piece of sculpture that Degas exhibited in his lifetime, but it had an enormous impact when shown at the 6th Impressionist Exhibition of 1881. So interested was he in photography that he bought his own camera and took many photographs of his models and friends, who are often seen sitting patiently while Degas fussed over his camera.

The exhibition reveals the experimental aspect of Degas' work which I, like many, had tended to overlook and there are many stunning pastels and oils which have not been shown in this country before.

So is this a good exhibition? I learnt much about Degas's fascination with photography, the moving image and his constantly enquiring mind. The exhibition is intelligently presented and, by focusing on one theme, is indeed thought-provoking. The negative aspect is that there are too many similar images by Degas, just too many ballerina paintings, drawings and pastels which ultimately prove repetitive. The lighting levels are also so low that the whole exhibition, presented on dark brown walls, has a slightly depressing atmosphere. In this dark atmosphere the labels are virtually impossible to read, typed as usual in a font that is too small for the eyes of older people. Despite these minor criticisms it is an exhibition which no practising artist should miss and it will not be travelling to any other venue either here or abroad

John Martin : Apocalypse

Tate Britain

21st September 2011 – 15th January 2012

It's not often that you go to an exhibition that completely changes your perception of a period of art history, but the John Martin exhibition at Tate Britain did just that for me. I had always seen Turner and Constable as the leading Romantic painters in Britain in the early 19th century, and I knew very little about John Martin. But here is a highly successful artist whose work was shown to an estimated 8 million people, painting dramatic scenes of Biblical stories and apocalyptic visions. His work is a mixture of Delacroix and Cecil B DeMille, vast in scale, rich in colour and movement and populated by thousands of film extras. He must have been much better known to the general public than either Constable or Turner. Martin also produced the most marvellous mezzotints, a printing technique appropriately known in French as 'maniere noire' because of the rich, deep, velvety blacks it produces.

We have often produced unusual and totally original artists in this country – Samuel Palmer, William Blake, Stanley Spencer – and John Martin is another wayward genius from the British Isles. There were very few people in the gallery when we visited (apart from Cinzia Bonada who was also enjoying the exhibition) and I suspect my enthusiasm for Martin’s work reveals my bad taste, but do get along to see the most spectacular show in London.

Julian Halsby



John Martin : Destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah 1852