



Friends of York Art Gallery

NEWSLETTER - WINTER 2018/2019

SEVENTY YEARS OF GIVING ART

It was just a year ago that YMT made available exhibition space for this exhibition to celebrate the 70th anniversary of the founding of Friends of York Art Gallery by local citizens under the direction of Hans Hess. The timing was perfect because we had just completed an informal research exercise to identify the art acquired or conserved for the Gallery during that 70-year period.



The Curators invited Madeline Boden, Sue Smallpage and me to visit the Fine Art Store – something else that the Friends contributed to – to help select the works for display. The themes by wall space were Introduction, Landscape, Narrative, Portrait, Still Life, York and there were also free-standing plinths for ceramic works. Narrative panels traced the history of this charity, and its contribution to acquisitions, conservation, local education through school challenges, the annual MA research scholar bursary, and family activities. The support that the Friends received from Fiona Green, Jennifer Alexander and their curatorial colleagues ensured the success of this celebration!

In all some 54 works of art were displayed in Madsen Gallery 3, tracing the history of the Friends through the decades by contribution including 'Samson and Delilah' by Pieter Soutman (1949), 'Sir Herbert Read' by Brian Kneale (1960), 'Self Portrait' by William Peckitt (1968), 'Miss Elizabeth Heathcote' by Lewis Vaslet (1978), 'The Betrayal of Christ' by Carel Weight (1985), 'Minster Court' by Algernon Cecil Newton (1991), 'Jean Abercromby' by Allan Ramsey (2003), 'The Anonymous Rose' by Simon Periton (2011) and ceramics by Patrick



Part of the Exhibition.

Reed and Robert Brumby (2018). In addition the Curators created unique labels which identified an equal number of paintings, drawings and ceramics displayed in the other galleries to which the Friends had contributed.

In parallel with the preparation for this exhibition Lee Clark from the YMT Press Office arranged timely interviews for FYAG members with BBC Radio York, York Press, Yorkshire Post and Yorkshire Life. My thanks to Peter Miller, Charles Martindale, Dorothy Nott, Judith Glover and Louise Wheatley for participating in these interviews.

During the exhibition, May through to September, there were Wednesday lunch-time talks for a selection of the paintings and drawings. Anne Hall spoke about 'Surgeon Waiting' by Barbara Hepworth and related drawings by this

artist. Peter Miller's subject was Algernon Cecil Newton's 'Minster Court' and another work by Newton from the Gallery's collection which had been on display during the Nash exhibition. Louise Wheatley spoke about the portrait of Mrs. Brooke, placing it in a historical social context. 'The Betrayal of Christ' by Carel Weight, always a popular painting, received Dorothy Nott's attention. Linda Downey focused on two works by Mary Ellen Best, plus highlighted the limitations imposed on a woman artist in that period, and Abigail Jubb, the FYAG 2018 MA scholar, used three portraits on display to illustrate her talk on dress fashion. I spoke on Hans Hess at the opening of the exhibition and weeks later about two drawings by George Howard.

While the exhibition is now history the influence that Hans Hess had on the Friends continues. Judith Glover has revived one of his initiatives. The first of the Hans Hess Chamber Music Series took place in November, featuring Federico Pendenza, a PhD student in music at York University, on guitar. Held in the Medical Society Rooms on Stonegate, York, it was a sell out! We look forward to the next concert in 2019.

PETER GIBBARD

Chair

FRIENDS' TRIP TO GLYNDEBOURNE OPERA

Despite East Sussex being a fair distance from York the Friends' Glyndebourne trip proved popular, with around thirty people signing up.

Although Glyndebourne's production of *La Traviata* was the jewel in the crown of the three-day programme, we visited several other places both on the way down and on our return leg: English Heritage's Audley End; Brighton Pavilion; Eastbourne's Towner Gallery, home to an important Ravilious collection; Cambridge, where some went to the newly extended Kettle's Yard and others to the Fitzwilliam Museum.

The start of the Glyndebourne Autumn Tour is always held at Glyndebourne itself before it goes this year to Canterbury, Norwich, Woking and Milton Keynes. It is a great opportunity to experience the concert hall and its surrounding gardens in a rather more informal way than in the summer season



Friends taking part in the Glyndebourne Visit

– without having to wear long dresses/tuxedos and at a considerably reduced price. The Tour also has a reputation for identifying stars of the future. Many of us felt this was the case for the Armenian soprano who played Violetta: Mané Galoyan in a terrific performance from a young woman in her Glyndebourne debut. It was a memorable afternoon and evening – with the advantage of being taken back by coach along the dark country lanes of East Sussex to our Eastbourne base.

Because of its success this trip may well be followed by another, perhaps in a couple of years' time. Many thanks go to Dorothy Nott for her organisational skills – and her good humour.

JUDITH GLOVER
FYAG Secretary

FROM THE NEW FRIENDS MA RESEARCH SCHOLAR

My name is Lucy Booth, and it is my pleasure to introduce myself as the 2018/19 Friends of York Art Gallery MA Scholar. I will be researching the J.B. Morrell collection of Old Master prints, with most of my attention dedicated to the Dutch and Flemish Prints among the vast collection which amounts to over 200 works. This sub-section of the collection includes some excellent examples by well-known artists such as Rembrandt van Rijn and Wenceslaus Hollar, as well as several rather enchanting prints by some less researched artists. Morrell donated the collection in 1954, but it has subsequently attracted little attention in terms of either research or exhibition. I aim to redress this through my own research, and hope to participate in the October 2019 exhibition centring on Dieric Bous' *St Luke Drawing the Virgin and Child* (c. 1440-1475). I look forward to sharing the findings of my research with you at appropriate moments throughout the year.



Lucy Booth

I come from an Art History background, having studied at the University of Warwick previous to beginning my Masters here in York. During my undergraduate degree I was lucky enough to spend several months studying in Venice, as well as spending a month there working at La Biennale de Venezia. Accordingly, I am particularly aware of the vast levels of intercultural exchange throughout Europe, especially during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, enabled of course by trade routes and the increasing importance of trade as a socio-economic pillar in multiple countries. Such a development could only work to the benefit of art – if not necessarily the artist, as the case of Albrecht Dürer versus Marcantonio Raimondi illustrated – a fact which the highly portable nature of prints exaggerates. This is one of the reasons why I am so interested in both the art of this general chronological period as well as the role of the printing press (and prints themselves) in art, not just as a representative of a new aesthetic vernacular, but as a representation of the

model of society in Renaissance Europe. Other academic interests include Northern Renaissance art in general, Medieval Architecture (particularly ecclesiastical buildings – you can imagine my delight at studying and working so close to York Minster!) and house interiors, although very recently this last has been a private pursuit rather than an area of academic study. I draw great enjoyment from discussions – mostly surrounding art, as may be guessed, but I am willing to enter informed conversations about most things. Therefore, if you see me around the gallery and wish to say hello, have a chat about Netherlandish prints, Venice, or all of the above, I would be all too happy to participate.

I look forward to meeting some of you at the talk I will be giving in the New Year on Northern Renaissance prints, featuring some selections from the Morrell Collection, which I believe will be advertised shortly.

Until then, my best wishes,

LUCY BOOTH

HANS HESS CHAMBER MUSIC SERIES

14 November 2018 saw the first in our lunchtime chamber music series, held at the York Medical Society Rooms in Stonegate. University of York doctoral student Federico Pendenza, a prize-winning classical guitarist, gave a well-received concert that included music by Poulenc, de Falla and Turina, as well as the premiere of a piece written specially for Pendenza by Francesco del Nero.

We have named the series after Hans Hess, who was Director of the Gallery from 1947 to 1967. One of Hess's many achievements was to organise chamber music concerts. According to the Friends' archive these concerts were particularly popular, attracting some hundreds of people. Our lunchtime concerts are not on the same scale, since the Medical Society premises can hold a maximum of sixty people. However, the acoustic of these intimate surroundings is particularly suitable for chamber music and this was mentioned by several people in the overwhelmingly positive feedback that we received, including a piece in The Press by Martin Dreyer.

We intend to hold three such concerts each year and the next one is scheduled for 6 March 2019. Details will be included in the next events programme, which will be mailed out to members in February.

JUDITH GLOVER



Federico Pendenza

This newsletter is edited by Jim Sharpe. Please send items for the next newsletter to jim.sharpe@york.ac.uk.

FYAG is a registered charity, no 51000659 ISSN2045-1113

AROUND THE GALLERIES

There are some interesting exhibitions on offer in Liverpool in 2019. Tate Liverpool is continuing its 'Op Art in Focus' exhibition until 5 July 2020. This is one of Tate Liverpool's 'In Focus' Exhibitions, these being aimed at mounting 'displays of the Tate Collection dedicated to significant contemporary artists or movements'. Between 14 June and 10 November the gallery will be mounting an exhibition featuring 85 artworks (large paintings, drawings and sculptures) by the American artist and activist Keith Haring (1958-1990), a participant in the legendary New York art scene of the 1980s whose career was cut short by AIDS-related complications early in 1990. Also eagerly awaited is the Walker Gallery's forthcoming exhibition (15 March – 26 August) of works by Charles Rennie Mackintosh and his contemporaries who together created 'The Glasgow Style', the only major UK contribution to the Art Nouveau Movement.

A number of major exhibitions continue or will commence in London galleries. At the Tate Modern, 'Magic Realism: Art in Weimar Germany 1919-1933' continues until 14 July. Tate Britain offers 'The EY Exhibition: Van Gogh and Britain' between 27 March and 11 August, which brings together 45 works which demonstrate how van Gogh drew inspiration from Britain and how his work inspired British artists. Following this at Tate Britain comes 'William Blake the Artist' between 11 September and 2 February 2020, which will bring together some 300 works. Meanwhile, the National Gallery will be mounting the Credit Suisse Exhibition, 'Gauguin Portraits', between 7 October and 26 January 2020, which is apparently the first major exhibition of portraits by the artist.

Nearer home, the Mercer Gallery at Harrogate will be treating us to a major exhibition of works by local boy William Powell Frith ('William Powell Frith: the People's Painter') between 15 June and 29 September. Seeing a number of Frith's works together in one exhibition is, as I am sure most FYAG members would agree, an exciting prospect, not least because Frith paintings from private collections normally unavailable to the general public will be on display. The Mercer Gallery is also mounting an exhibition of views of the town entitled 'A Portrait of Harrogate', which will encompass paintings going back to Harrogate's early days as a spa town, relevant LNER railway posters, and the cartoons of Herbert Pickard Templar (16 February-3 June).

JIM SHARPE