



FALMOUTH DECORATIVE AND FINE ARTS SOCIETY

Synopsis of lectures 2016 - 2017

16 September 2016 ***Gypsies, Tramps and Thieves: the Representation of the Working Classes in Art***

Linda Smith

This lecture looks at ordinary working people: skilled and unskilled workers in both urban and agricultural environments, craftsmen, artisans, shopkeepers, domestic servants, entertainers, prostitutes, beggars, paupers, slaves. Throughout the history of western art, they have always been there: for centuries as mute observers, background detail or comic relief. But as the world changes, art changes, and this talk will discuss the move of low-life subject matter from the despised and vulgar fringes of popular taste into the respectable mainstream; and out again into political radicalism and avant-garde edginess.

14 October 2016 ***Carver to the Crown Court, Grinling Gibbons***

Launce Gribben

This lecture deals among other things with work Grinling Gibbons undertook for royal palaces. It shows in detail the technique by which the world famous lime wood carvings, realistic to the point of deception, were made and fixed in place. The lecture contains an analysis of the changes made by Gibbons to the décor of the Queen's Chapel of St James's Palace (Inigo Jones) together with an account of his development as a designer from 1670-1699.

11 November 2016 ***Picasso and his Women***

Valerie Woodgate

Picasso told his biographer, John Richardson, that his work was like a diary – "To understand it, you have to see how it mirrors my life". This lecture examines the way Picasso's emotional life influenced what he painted and how he painted it. His response to each new love in his life can be seen in the different styles in which his many women were represented. When he fell out of love, that fact would be revealed first in his paintings. The lecture concentrates on the seven most important women in his life (two of whom he married).

9 December 2016 ***How Pleasant to know Edward Lear***

Tim Stimson

Edward Lear's "Book of Nonsense" has never been out of print, but what isn't realised often is that he made his living producing topographical watercolours of great delicacy. "A man of original and versatile genius": ornithologist, diarist, musician, traveller- this warm and delightful human-being expressed his simple philosophy through timeless humour. An illustrated lecture focussing on his biography with quotations from his writings throughout.

13 January 2017 ***Smiths, Singers and Shape-shifters in Celtic Art***

Justine Hopkins

Celtic Art is one of the most spectacular examples of human response to natural forms. From cups and weapons to the covers of sacred books, the rhythms and shifting, near-abstract forms express concepts and beliefs as well as a functional response to the shape and use of the objects themselves. The lecture concentrates on the distinctive development of the Celtic style in Britain, where it survived after Roman expansion extinguished it elsewhere. Starting around 300BCE with the earliest examples of characteristic British design, it traces the interaction of pure Celtic ideas and techniques with elements from Roman, Pictish and Anglo-Saxon cultures, culminating in the great Christian flowering of the 7th century AD.

10 February 2017

The Sumptuous World of Indian Textiles from Punjab to Coromandel Coast

Jasleen Kandhari

Discover the regional variations of Indian textiles from the Punjab and Gujarat to Bengal and Coromandel coast. Understand and appreciate the materials, production techniques and designs like the boteh or paisley motif in Kashmir shawls.

10 March 2017

Two Americans in England: Sargent and Whistler

Marina Vaizey

The careers of two American expatriate late 19th century artists equally well known in England, Europe and the United States. John Singer Sargent's personality was both charming and enigmatic, and he had a flamboyantly successful career as a society portraitist. More innovative, less ingratiating, Whistler's art is that of the evanescent atmosphere; he signed his paintings with a butterfly, but he was just as much a gadfly.

7 April 2017

Vietnam: Ancient and Contemporary Artistic Heritage

Denise Heywood

This lecture explores the artistic culture of Vietnam. It includes the architectural legacy of French colonialism in the cities, especially Hanoi. It also highlights Saigon's French opera house and cathedral. It touches on the vibrant modern culture, revived since the turbulent events of the 20th century, revealed in the stylish costumes of Vietnamese women and, most especially, in contemporary painting, a fusion of eastern and western influences. The lecture looks back to the ancient ruins of the Cham kingdom, through the French scholars who uncovered them, and shows the sculptural heritage of these war-like yet profoundly artistic people during the 2nd -14th centuries who repelled the Mongol armies of Kublai Khan. First Hindu, then Islamic, they carved sanctuaries dedicated to the god Shiva. Finally, it explores the art of the Nguyen dynasty at Hué, with its Imperial Palace, a replica of the Forbidden City in Beijing.

12 May 2017

"Mr. Five Per Cent" & The Calouste Gulbenkian Museum, Lisbon

Edward Saunders

Calouste Gulbenkian was born of Armenian parents resident in the then Ottoman Empire and was given an international education culminating with a first degree in engineering from King's College, London in 1887. Amongst the earliest to realise the importance of oil to the 20th century, Gulbenkian played a pivotal role in the formation of many of the world's major oil companies and thereby rose to become one of the richest men between the two world wars. He amassed a magnificent, wide-ranging collection of works of art. When Germany invaded France in the 2nd World War, Gulbenkian was living in Paris he sought refuge in Lisbon where he then remained until his death thirteen years later. He left the bulk of his wealth, including his collection of works of art, to a Foundation established in his name for charitable, artistic, educational and scientific purposes and in 1969 the museum housing his collection was opened in the centre of Lisbon. The lecture will trace the background of this extraordinary man as well as his Foundation, but will concentrate on the supremely beautiful works of art in his museum.

9 June 2017

AGM & Contemporary Cornish Art – A Curator's choice

Catherine Wallace

This lecture explores contemporary Cornish art through a Curator's eyes. The coastline and landscape of Cornwall feature in John Miller's figurative/spiritual paintings, Neil Pinketts' expressive works, and Kurt Jackson's mixed media paintings. Paul Lewin's plein air views are analysed alongside those by Robert Jones. The super realism of Diane Ibbotson and Ashley Hold RWA contrast with the abstraction of Martin Grimshaw and Neil Canning. Naïve artists Bryan Pearce, Joan Gilchrest and Christopher Tate are also included. The sculpture of Tim Shaw RA and Reece Ingram and humorous automata by Paul Spooner, Keith Newstead etc. complete this personal tour.