



THE ARTS
SOCIETY
SOUTH WEST
LONDON

NEWSLETTER 2024



The Arts Society South West London (reg. charity no. 1195700) is a member society of The Arts Society

President: Lady White

Dear Members,

It is always exciting when the new Newsletter arrives, and we hope that you find something of interest in the 2024 programme. Please add dates to your diary now.

For the lecture programme, the topics for two of the months chose themselves. In September an exhibition about Van Gogh will open at the National Gallery so, for that month, we will look at the artist's life and work and consider the question 'Why, given the lack of success in his lifetime, is he so popular now?' Another easy choice was the lecture for May since it coincides with the 150th anniversary of All Saints Church on Putney Common. Outwardly the church looks unremarkable but, inside, you cannot fail to be impressed by the beautiful stained glass windows designed by William Morris and Edward Burne-Jones. An Arts and Craft treasure on our doorstep! Former Chairman, Liz Hamilton, has kindly agreed to take us round on a guided tour.

And the other lectures? Well, what better time to look at Charles I (King and Collector) than at the moment when we have another King Charles or to consider the life of Frederic, Lord Leighton, just when his refurbished studio-home (Leighton House) has opened again.

Our lectures cover a broad range of topics and thanks go to Lael Nelson and Ruth Dover, for choosing them with such care. Thank you also to Sue Tyce and Monica Marshall for providing refreshments at our meetings.



Jane Crang works tirelessly on the Visits Programme and a highlight for 2024 should be a day trip to Rochester, to visit the Cathedral and Restoration House (the latter so named because it hosted Charles II on the night before his return to London). Details of further trips and dates will be confirmed as the year progresses.

Our 2023 planned Away Day to Longford Castle never materialised but we hope to find a suitable date in 2024. In its stead, Jane organised private tours of the newly refurbished Kelmscott Manor (William Morris' summer retreat) and of Buscot Park (home to the Burne-Jones Briar Rose paintings.)

During 2023, Serrie Meakins joined the Trustees and has helped Travel Editions to devise an itinerary for the 2024 tour. Excitingly, it will be to Thessaloniki (with a related Study Afternoon in April). Thanks go to Serrie for volunteering.

What of 2023? Fuller details are in the Trustees' Annual Report but we hope that the images here from the tours to Northumbria and to Kelmscott and Buscot will remind you of some of the highlights. Others for which there are no images might be the visit to Kettles Yard (late 2022), the evening visit to



the College of Arms and the Chelsea Pensioner led tour of the Royal Hospital. We hope too that you enjoyed the wonderful lecture about Donatello in January, the enchantingly delivered talk on Sorolla and coped with the challenging lecture about performance artist, Marina Abramović!



Numbers at lectures have gradually crept up and we have continued to deliver the talks as hybrids for those unable to get to Putney. Technical assistance with lectures by Billy Thurston was invaluable.



At the end of our first full year as a Charity, we are proud to have awarded grants totalling £3,000. Of this, £250 was a TAS Community Grant that we applied for on behalf of FiSH in Barnes and to whom, subsequently, we gave more money for their art programme for dementia sufferers. Other grants, for art

materials, went to the Chaplain's Fund at Wandsworth Prison and to Holly Lodge in Richmond Park.

This message would not be complete without thanking Vice-Chair, Gwen Hewitt, and Membership Secretary, Winefride Bolton. Gwen provides invaluable back-up and helps promote the Society while Winefride acts as first point of contact for new members. Last but not least, special thanks must go to Kate Kirkland, our Treasurer, for her diligence and calm professionalism.

The group that runs TASSWL is small. We welcome new ideas, new skills sets and new suggestions and would be delighted if you would like to join us, just as Serrie did. It is a wonderful way to get to know people and, more importantly, to help shape the Society for the years to come.

Gill Grunwald

Gill Grunwald *Chairman*

SUBSCRIPTIONS & MEMBERSHIP

Subscriptions for 2024 are £45 single and £80 for joint membership.

Payments for 2025 will be due on 1 December 2024. If you pay by Standing Order, please ensure that they are set up for the correct amount. **Payments by cheque** should be made out to **TAS SW London** and sent to the address below:

The Treasurer, Kate Kirkland, 16 Westpoint, 49 Putney Hill, London SW15 6RU. (Tel: 020 8788 0559)

Only one reminder will be sent.

The Arts Society South West London is now a Charity and will benefit if you Gift Aid your subscription. **Please contact our Treasurer for details and a Gift Aid Form.**

WE WELCOME NEW MEMBERS. For membership enquiries please visit our website at www.theartssocietyswlonon.org.uk or email theartssocietyswlonon@gmail.com

NB: INSURANCE DISCLAIMER

The Arts Society South West London cannot be held responsible for any personal accident, loss, damage or theft of members' personal property.

Members are covered against proven liability to third parties.

LECTURES

**Venue: Dryburgh Hall, Putney Leisure Centre, SW15 1BL and by Zoom.
At 8pm on the second Monday of each month (excluding April and August).**

8 JANUARY

PORTRAITS OF 20th CENTURY BRITISH ARTISTS THROUGH THE LENS OF JORGE LEWINSKI

Lecturer: Pamela Campbell-Johnson

Born in 1921 in Lwow, Poland (now Ukraine), Jorge Lewinski has an unparalleled reputation for portraits of iconic British painters and sculptors of the 20th century. Based in London from 1942, he photographed over 300 leading British artists principally between 1962 and 1995. With an unapologetic focus mainly on 20th century Royal Academicians, the lecture considers Lewinski's portraits of some of the great 20th century British artists such as David Hockney, Henry Moore, Antony Gormley, Allen Jones, Michael Craig-Martin and Barbara Hepworth. Through Lewinski's work, the lecture explores the artistic contributions that these painters and sculptors have made/are making to the British art scene.

Pamela Campbell-Johnson has an MA Hons in Art History from St Andrews University and worked for over twelve years at the Royal Academy. She has devoted her career to the Arts through public speaking, guided tours and residential trips, with a particular focus on British Domestic Architecture and Modern British Art.



12 FEBRUARY

LONDON BRIDGED - 3,500 YEARS OF CROSSING THE THAMES

Lecturer: Charles Forman



People were bridging the Thames in the Bronze Age, 1,500 years before London Bridge was constructed by the Romans. In the 1,700 year wait for the next bridge, other crossings relied on watermen and horse ferries as traffic jammed the original one. The last 200 years have seen more than 50 new crossings over, and under, the river. Each has changed the city's genetic code. The lecture explores the way we have connected across the Thames and what it says about the culture of the capital through time.

Charles Forman is a London tour guide and lecturer, with a special interest in the social, architectural and artistic history of London. His talks focus on the forces that have shaped and changed the metropolis and the artistic and cultural heritage that it has left. During a four decade long career in housing (including the run-up to the 2012 Olympics) he has gained valuable insights into the development of the capital.

11 MARCH



THE ART OF THE JAPANESE GARDEN FROM TRADITION TO MODERNITY

Lecturer: Marie Conte-Helm

Japan's gardens are world famous. Nature and artifice are intriguingly combined in both intimate spaces and grand-scale gardens that surround palaces and Buddhist temples. Stone is used to provide structure, water to represent the life-giving force and plants to give colour throughout the seasons.



The famous Zen-inspired dry landscape gardens by contrast are packed with symbolic content.

Historical, religious and philosophical influences have informed the Japanese approach to the visual arts but the lecture will also draw upon wider examples to illustrate the distinctive qualities that the Japanese have brought to garden design in both modern domestic settings and Japanese gardens abroad.

Professor Marie Conte-Helm BA, MA, FRSA is a widely published and long-established lecturer on many aspects of Asian Art and East-West Encounters. She was Director General of the Daiwa Anglo-Japanese Foundation from 1999-2011 and more recently served as Executive Director of the UK-Japan 21st Century Group. She has received honours from both the UK and Japan for services to UK-Japan relations.

13 MAY

THE STAINED GLASS WINDOWS OF WILLIAM MORRIS AND FRIENDS

Lecturer: Geri Parlbry

At the height of the great Gothic revival in church architecture in the 19th century, stained glass windows enjoyed a renaissance. Already famous for their innovative designs, William Morris, Edward Burne-Jones, Dante Gabriel Rossetti and Ford Madox-Brown were responsible for some of the most beautiful windows of the 19th and 20th centuries. This lecture will look at the history of how 'The Firm' brought church windows to life with new vibrant colours and sensuous designs that often used portraits of their friends and lovers as models for the languid faces of the saints and the holy family.



Geri Parlbry is a former Fleet Street journalist. She has a Masters in History of Art from the Courtauld Institute and a Theology doctorate from Roehampton University. She has lectured for the past 18 years both in the UK and abroad and is principal lecturer on the South West Area Arts Society's Decoding History's Art course.

10 JUNE

LEIGHTON: FOLLOWER & BREAKER OF RULES

Lecturer: Sarah Ciacci

Frederic, Lord Leighton, was a bastion of the Establishment and of Academic Art in the late 1800s. However, he was also an experimental artist who explored the possibilities of the radical Aesthetic Movement which adopted critic Walter Pater's idea that 'All the Arts aspire to the condition of Music'. The lecture looks at his Academic Paintings, his Aesthetic Movement works and his pioneering work to raise the status of the decorative arts; in particular the collecting of Islamic tiles which are so beautifully displayed in his purpose-built studio-home. The lecture explores how he was both a follower and a breaker of art rules.

Sarah Ciacci has an MA in Modernist Art from University College London and has been an art specialist Blue Badge Guide for London since 2008. She runs tours, gives talks, and trains Blue Badge Guides for the National Gallery and other galleries. She is also a gallery educator, working for the Magic Lantern, and taught art history at Richmond University for a decade.



8 JULY

TRAVELLING WITH JOHN SINGER SARGENT

Lecturer: Mary Alexander

Born in Florence, to itinerant American parents, Sargent's life-long travels were international and frenetic.

A renowned society portraitist, his dramatic 1909 decision to refuse further commissions resulted in new found freedom. Embarking on a series of journeys to capture a 'sense of place', he indulged his love of all things 'curious':



jewel-like reflections on water in Northern Italy; light and intense heat in Morocco; the exoticism of Spanish dance; silver light in Norway; the grandeur of the Alps and Canadian Rockies; lush gardens in Florida and bright poppies in a Cotswold garden. Perhaps his most daring journey, undertaken in 1918, at the age of 62, was to the war torn trenches of France.

Mary Alexander is an experienced lecturer on the history of art and design, with BA Hons and MA degrees in History of Art from UCL. Previous lecturing experience includes Christies Education, London, the Open University, Manchester University Extra Mural Department and various antiquarian and arts societies.



9 SEPTEMBER

VAN GOGH

Lecturer: Lucrezia Walker

We all know van Gogh: Sunflowers, Starry Night, his self-portraits, the bright prismatic colour applied with energetic brush strokes. We know his life was not easy, but why is he so famous? What makes him possibly the best-known artist in the world? Why does every gallery gift shop have a Vincent item for sale? What makes his paintings instantly recognizable?

His failure to find sales or success during his lifetime, his suffering leading to self-mutilation and later to suicide at the age of 37 are all well known. So what happened during his short life, and afterwards, to transform him into the world's best-loved artist?

Lucrezia Walker is a London-based art historian and lecturer and has written several books on 19th and 20th century artists and art movements including ones on Gauguin, Manet, Degas, Warhol, Impressionism, Cubism, Surrealism and Pop Art. She delivers online courses and lectures for the National Gallery and is adjunct professor of Art History for the University of North Carolina's London Program.



14 OCTOBER

CHARLES 1: KING AND COLLECTOR

Lecturer: Barbara Askew



This lecture celebrates the approaching 400th Anniversary of Charles I's Accession to the throne in 1625.

Charles I amassed one of the world's greatest art collections. On becoming king, he purchased the fabulous art collection of the Gonzaga Dukes of Mantua, engaged Rubens to paint the ceiling of the Banqueting House and appointed Van Dyck as his Court Artist. But, in amassing his great collection, he bankrupted England and alienated his people. Charles I was Britain's most tragic monarch and yet he was also its greatest Royal Collector of Art.

Barbara Askew grew up in Eton with Windsor Castle as part of her daily view. She is a lecturer, examiner and course director on Blue Badge Guide training courses and an acknowledged expert on royalty and royal palaces. She has been the Site Liaison Representative at Windsor Castle for the British Guild of Tourist Guides since 1990 and regularly guides tours of the National Gallery, Buckingham Palace and Windsor Castle.



11 NOVEMBER

DAMIEN HIRST AND CONTEMPORARY ART

Lecturer: David Worthington



Damien Hirst is one of the UK's most controversial artists. His shark in formaldehyde made him a household celebrity and his antics, at the Groucho Club, fodder for the tabloids. He is seen as a joker who does not make his own art and steals ideas from others. This lecture aims to show his serious side; his artistic origins, his influences, and why he makes what he does. The aim is not to convert sceptics but simply to put him in context and provide an overview showing how his work is innovative, daring, and challenging.

David Worthington is a sculptor with a Philosophy and Theology degree from Oxford and MA's in both Visual Culture and Computer Arts. He was sculptor-in-residence at Glyndebourne in 2001 and was elected Vice President of the Council of the Royal Society of Sculptors in 2010. He has curated shows at Woburn Abbey, Glyndebourne and the Chelsea Physic Garden and has had solo shows at the Lightbox Museum, the Lefevre Gallery and the William Bennington Gallery.

9 DECEMBER

A TALE OF TWO CITIES - LONDON AND NEW YORK ON THE MUSICAL STAGE

Lecturer: John Snelson



The musical evolved in two great cities, London and New York and this lecture explores the metropolitan world of them as portrayed on the musical theatre stage, taking in ganglands, society haunts, suburbs and the centres of power. *West Side Story*, *Guys and Dolls*, *Sweeney Todd* and *Oliver!* are just a few of the shows that have put London and New York centre stage.

So what do metropolitan musicals reveal about the real cities and the characters that live there? Answers are frequently colourful, often unexpected, but always delivered through distinctive characters, striking images and memorable music.

John Snelson worked for the Royal Opera House for 20 years but has been fascinated by musicals all his life. He is a leading expert in British musical theatre and has lectured at the Royal Opera House, English National Opera, the Garsington and Glyndebourne festivals and for BBC radio. Currently he lectures at Goldsmiths, University of London.



VISITS

A charge is made and prior booking is required.

At present it is not possible to give firm dates for all the following but we hope to arrange visits and add more in 2024. We will update members via the website and by email.

MARCH 2024

WALKING TOUR OF WREN CHURCHES

This is a follow up to the lecture held in September 2023 about the churches built by Sir Christopher Wren after the Great Fire of London in 1666 and will allow us to visit some of those of particular interest.



18 APRIL 2024

ROCHESTER, KENT

A day trip by train



This will be a day trip with members making their own way to Rochester. Trains from London Victoria take 40 minutes. There will be a guided tour of the Cathedral followed by time for lunch before an Owner's Tour of Restoration House (the inspiration for

Satis House – Miss Havesham's home, in Charles Dickens' Great Expectations). The house dates back to the 15th century and has been lovingly restored by its current owners. Its name arose after Charles II slept there on the night before his return to London.

21 MAY 2024

ALL SAINTS CHURCH, PUTNEY COMMON

The church marks its 150th anniversary in May 2024 and is noted for the stained glass windows designed by William Morris and Edward Burne-Jones. The visit will be led by our former Chairman, Liz Hamilton, and will tie in with the lecture (in May 2024) on Stained Glass Windows by William Morris & Friends.



LIGHTBOX GALLERY, WOKING

This prizewinning gallery houses one of the largest publicly accessible collections of Modern British Art, and was on our list of visits for 2023. Its main focus is on the art movement that developed in the early and middle years of the 20th century and the sculpture collection includes works by Elizabeth Frink, Barbara Hepworth, Jacob Epstein and Eduardo Paolizzi. This year it hosts an exhibition by Grayson Perry.



JUNE /JULY 2024 (DATE TBC)

LONGFORD CASTLE

All day coach trip



This is a trip originally planned for 2023 but we were unable to find a suitable date.

Longford Castle, SE of Salisbury, was built in the late 16th century with an unusual triangular floorplan. In the 18th century, the second Earl of Radnor, employed architect James Wyatt to transform it into a hexagonal palace but the project was never finished and it was left to the fourth Earl and the Victorian architect, Anthony Salvin, to complete it.

One of the grandest stately homes in Britain, it has been the residence of one family – the Huguenot des Bouverie family (later Earls of Radnor) – for almost 300 years.

The Castle houses part of the National Gallery's art collection and we hope to arrange a special interest tour of the collection and the Castle. A possible stop on the way back might be ROCHE COURT, site of the New Art Centre (a gallery and sculpture park).



AWAY TOUR

THURSDAY 19 – TUESDAY 24 SEPTEMBER 2024

TOUR TO THESSALONIKI



Thessaloniki was the second most important city in the Byzantine Empire and contains many UNESCO world heritage sites. It was a vital centre for the Romans, as well as being the focus of Nazi attention in WWII.

The 5-night trip (arranged by Travel Editions) will be based in Perea, across the bay from the city. The trip will include a tour of Thessaloniki with visits to its museums and buildings of interest. There will be a whole day visit to the archaeological site and museum at Pella (where Alexander the Great grew up) and to the spectacular royal tomb of Philip II at ancient Aigai (modern day Vergina). A separate day trip will be to the neighbouring Halkidiki peninsula.

Although the tour is already fully booked, places may be available if there are cancellations.



STUDY AFTERNOON

Venue: Putney Library, 5–7 Disraeli Road, Putney SW15 2DR. Prior booking is required and a charge is made.

FRIDAY 26 APRIL – PM (TIME TBC)

THESSALONIKI – HISTORY, RELIGION & CULTURE

Lecturer: Dr. Paris Chronakis



The study afternoon is designed to complement the 2024 tour to Thessaloniki, but all members are welcome to attend.

Thessaloniki dates back to the 4th century BCE. It became an important centre during the Greek, Roman and Byzantine eras and a melting pot for various religions and cultures. The first lecture will look at the early part of its history with particular reference to some of the Macedonian and Byzantine sites to be visited on the 2024 tour.

The second lecture will focus on the last 600 years (in particular the 20th century) and the way that racial and religious tensions due to migration, war and forced displacement have shaped the modern city and what traces can be found bearing witness to the history of the city's ethnic diversity.

The two lectures below will be separated by a break for tea and biscuits:

Kings and Saints: Ancient and Byzantine Thessaloniki

The 'Jerusalem of the Balkans' and the 'Babel of the Mediterranean': Jewish and Ottoman Salonica in history and memory

Dr Paris Chronakis is a lecturer in Modern Greek History at Royal Holloway University of London specialising in the history and memory of the Modern Mediterranean. His work explores the transition from empire to nation-state, bringing together the interrelated histories of Jews, Muslims and Christians from the late Ottoman Empire to the Holocaust and the more recent effects of the Balkan War.