

Ipswich Art Society

Registered charity no. 219257
www.ipswich-art-society.org.uk

Issue 74
August 2019

newsletter

From the Chair

Our flagship, the Ipswich Annual Open Exhibition was a great success again this year. The Opening was particularly vibrant, and the number of works shown was increased over previous years. The 'Feature Exhibition' this year was Ken Cuthbert's 90th year retrospective – fascinating to see such a swathe of Ken's work in one room. See the full report below. One change this year was the different relationship with the Museums Service, which despite some trepidations initially, did afford us the opportunity to make useful adjustments to the running – which both the Art Society and the Museums Service found very successful.

A snag on the horizon is that the Gallery will be closed for much of next year for repairs to the roof. This will mean that for 2020 we will need to secure a one-off venue, or maybe more than one if necessary. The search is on, and there will doubtless be logistical complications to work through as it will be a new set-up. We are also in the early stages of planning a collaboration between Members of the Ipswich and Colchester Art Societies. As we are low on committee numbers, we have decided that the Talk Series will not run for the next season as we will be fully absorbed on securing (we hope!) these exhibitions. If anyone would like to step forward and take this on, or discuss with a committee member what the job involves, we could review this decision.

We note with sadness the death of David Thompson, a very illustrious former Chairman of the Society – a rare talent indeed. Please see reflections from Malcolm Moseley in the Obituary.

Dates for your Diary

31st October: Private View of a Members' exhibition 'Small Works' at Artspace, 64, Thoroughfare, Woodbridge, to which all are invited: 6 -8pm. The exhibition is open from 1st to the 13th November.

15th November: Opening of the Anna Airy Award Exhibition, University of Suffolk, Waterfront Building from 6:30 – 8:30pm. The Opening and prize-giving at this youthful exhibition is always abuzz with energy. It runs until 1st December.

142nd Annual Open Exhibition

The Annual Open Exhibition was a great success, with the Opening event particularly well-attended. It was a lively affair with speeches from our President Judith Lockie, Councillor Carole Jones the Arts Portfolio holder, and the Mayor Jan Parry. The Mayor, who proved herself to be remarkably interested and well-informed about the local art scene, chose the striking geometrical image of *Felixstowe Cranes* by David King. Our thanks to the selection panel: Mark Beesely, Jen Hall, Jude Lockie, Sula Rubens and Andrew Casey.





The larger number of works – some 274 – presented an eclectic mix as ever. Nonetheless, the show formed a very harmonious whole, thanks to the marvellous hang by Jen Hall, assisted by Sammi Wong of the Museums Service. Several visitors separately commended the hang to me – as their first comment on the show. The labelling of each work (rather than numbers) added to the professional look – thanks to hard work by Maggi Hayward, who also produced the catalogue content. We had greater control on the processes and timings this year which created opportunities to improve various aspects of the running, owing to the fact that we hired the Gallery outright, rather than sharing the

responsibilities, which had led to some communication problems last year (though both sides did a great job in mounting a particularly complex show).

The most striking difference this year was that fact that we provided the invigilators for the whole run of the exhibition – 5 weeks. Very many thanks to all those generous Members and Friends who joined the rota (several of whom had not submitted works); often for more than one slot. The head of the Museum Service called in a few times informally to see that all was running OK. He guessed that most of the invigilators would not know who he was and therefore would be a 'silent shopper'. He let me know that he felt that having people from the Society as invigilators, who knew about the art and artists, and who were enthusiastic, added a great deal to the visitor experience.

This year, the 'feature exhibition' was a retrospective of our accomplished former President Ken Cuthbert. This being Ken's 90th year – though who would believe it? – it presented the opportunity to show a range of works over Ken's long span of works and styles. This feature exhibition brought many extra visitors to the Open, and vice-versa, which is very good to see. One visitor was Andrew Clarke of the East Anglian Daily Times, resulting in a major illustrated article in that organ, thanks to the auspices of his host, Andrew Casey. Many thanks to the helpers at hand-in, portering, make-good etc: Malcolm Moseley, Barry Marshall, Sue and Colin Slee, Jan Watson, Chris Edmondson, Maggi Hayward, David Howe, Peter McCarthy, David King and Richard Pinkney (who told me it was the 350th occasion he had mounted / demounted an exhibition!)

AGM Summary

The AGM was held at the Co-op Centre on 26th March. There was good attendance – no doubt assisted by the evening's special feature. This was a talk by Sue Wallace Shaddad, who gave a fascinating history of her mother's achievements. Many will remember Anne Paterson Wallace, a long-serving and Honorary Life Member, her influential contribution to the Society, her artistic achievements and the creation of a collection commemorating her grandfather, the Glasgow Boy James Paterson. Sue, in her turn, showed an impressive range of her mother's own work – one of which was at the time on show at the Ipswich Gallery as part of the 'Women 100' exhibition.

Our President, Jude Lockie opened the meeting with thoughtful reflections on the past year, and emphasising the playful and inventive role of art and artists for the year ahead. The arrangements for the Annual Open Exhibition were discussed, particularly around the invigilation by our membership. Many helpful volunteers added their name to the rota at the end of the evening. The meeting also discussed the policy for selection of works. With more time available in which we will have unfettered access to the Gallery for set-up, the committee has designed a process which will help minimise the likelihood of having all of an artist's work rejected – whilst maintaining it as a selected exhibition. The finances of the Society look sound, helped by a generous legacy from the widow of Alwyn Adcock, a former Member and Secretary. The sound financial position of the Society is due to the hard work and professionalism of Chris Edmondson, our Honorary Treasurer. Absent on this occasion through illness, he was warmly thanked by the whole meeting.

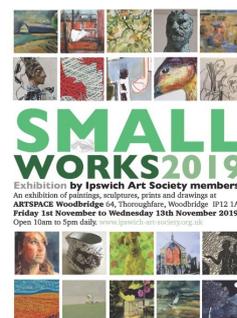
Talk Series

We had two excellent talks last season. As an experiment we moved the timing of these to the Spring, and to the afternoon rather than our customary Winter evening slots. The experiment proved a success, as the attendance was up on last season. The balance is between a more conducive climate for travel, against the difficulty for people who are working during the day. The numbers spoke on this balance! The first was by Di Grace, who described how her book with Gwynneth Reynolds on 'Remembering Benton End' came about. The story of the live-in art school run by Cedric Morris and Arthur Lett-Haines was fascinating. The audience was further swelled by those whose interest lay in the subject of irises, which seem to have been an integral (and also further professional) component of the enterprise: a special moment in history, the kind of thing one couldn't imagine ever being repeated. The second talk was by Bill Crow, on the remarkable Samuel Rabin. A protégé of Adolphe Vallette of the Manchester Art School, he became pupil and then teacher at the Slade... as well, bewilderingly, an Olympic medallist in wrestling and professional singer and actor. Bill was a very engaging and entertaining speaker with a great turn of phrase.

The search for a venue for next year's Annual Open Exhibition, and accompanying re-design of the logistics, will occupy the committee a good deal. Coming on top of the extra exhibitions and activities, and a gradual eroding of the number of committee members, we will not be able to organise a Talk Series for next spring – unless someone would like to step forward and offer their services. Please get in touch with any committee member if you would like to do so.

Small Works Exhibition

Following the success of the last two years' pre-Christmas selling exhibition for Members, we will be running a similar show this year. As previously, it will be at ArtSpace in the Woodbridge Thoroughfare. It will be somewhat earlier this year, and so as not to stretch the Christmas season beyond its limits (which doesn't stop most commercial outlets!) it will be titled 'Small Works', reflecting the main criterion of the show. It will run from 1st to 13th November, 10am to 5pm daily, with the Private View on the Thursday evening before: 31st October, 6 – 8pm.



Anna Airy Award Exhibition

Following hot on the heels of the Small Works exhibition, will be the Anna Airy Award .Exhibition, to be held at our customary venue, the University of Suffolk. Thanks to the tenacity of Jan Watson, this landmark event continues to flourish and expand its reputation. The University organisation has undergone some structural woes, but Jan has kept the enterprise on the rails and we are pleased to say that it will be opened on the 15th November in the Waterfront Building foyer from 6:30 – 8:30pm. It is well worth attending to see the energy and ambition of the young people the event attracts. Once again we are very grateful to the Arts Society South East Suffolk for very generously sponsoring all the prizes. The exhibition runs until 28th November and, being at the university, is open most hours of the day, so do drop in.

Website

If you haven't already, take a look at the website. It is looking very professional, and gives us the opportunity to publicise up-to date notifications to complement the paper-based Newsletter. Do send details of any events you are involved in that will be relevant to our membership and wider followers of our activities. In particular, Members are invited to send in their information and regular updates to their images for the Artists pages, so that the website is kept fresh and topical. Several Members have sent information to

Maggi Hayward (to whom we owe a vote of thanks for all this work) so the pages are looking excellent. Any artists that may have overlooked this opportunity and would like to be reminded of the format for the information – have a look at the site or email ipswich.art.society.publicity@gmail.com You can also follow the Ipswich Art Society Facebook page, which had a reach of over 1500 around the time of the Annual Open Exhibition, and further social media links are planned.

Members' Activities

RA Summer Exhibition Works by Hilary Bartholomew and Peter McCarthy have been accepted for this year's Royal Academy Summer Exhibition. Congratulations!

Our President in Japan In November, Jude Lockie is going to Tokyo to take part in a show of woodblock prints at Gallery Rutan, in Ginza, with Yoshisuke Funasaka and his three foreign students, an American, a Malaysian, and Jude. She was his first foreign student, in 1975-76. Returning many times, she was awarded a scholarship in 1990-91, for further studies. Having kept contact over the years, a group of friends and students are going to a hot spring resort in the mountains during the show. Afterwards she is to visit Kyushu, the southernmost large island, to meet a friend who originally came from Framlingham!

New Members A special welcome to Stephen Abbott, Nick Carter, Pat Jourdan and Allan Williams.

Obituary David Thompson, past Chairman of the Society - A reflection by Malcolm Moseley

I have a sense of awe about Freda and David Thompson – one a successful and popular actor and the other a key player in the continued rise of the Institute for Contemporary Arts at a critical period in its history. I knew of his achievements there before I met him, championing Abstract painting in Britain during a period of loss of confidence in the genre. David was also intelligent, articulate and passionate – a superb critic, essayist, writer, arts and theatre director full of ideas and imagination. He was also clear-thinking charming and driven with huge knowledge in many areas. His support and generosity for the Ipswich Art Society signalled his strong and focussed leadership. I liked him and always cheered up knowing Freda and David were across the room at a Private View or function, with a smile and a wave. A brief chat was forthcoming and great fun.

Our Society owes a lot to David for giving us a sense of direction, modernity and purpose. And of course his wonderful support for the then neglected works of Harry Becker. We are lucky to have known and worked with him, and our love goes to Freda – always at his side. David adored drawing and saw this as the major area of any art practice; and of course once again, he was right.

Additional words from the current Chair: If I may, I would like to add a few words of my own. My introduction to David Thompson was to receive a gracious and well-crafted letter following the first exhibition that Ipswich Art Society managed to stage at the Ipswich Gallery. Clearly this letter was the product of an intelligent mind and a sharp wit. We met subsequently at his house and as well as confirming the impression I had gained from his letter, David generously donated a collection of books to the Society. Amongst these is a book of his own on Raphael – which is quite the most eloquent and perceptive book on art that I have read. The collection also includes the compendium account of *Arte Inglese Oggi*, a British Council exhibition mounted in Milan to promote modern British Art abroad, and for which David was on the selection committee. These books are available to our membership, and a full listing is available on request.

**Please send information for the next Newsletter on ideas, shows, news, details of exhibitions etc. to Stephen Cassidy, Newsletter Editor, 62 Constable Road, Ipswich IP4 2UZ.
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Many thanks to Christine Thompson for Newsletter and other postings.