

ArtNews

Berkhamsted Art Society
December 2024 – No. 402

2 Another Successful Fair



4 A Warm Welcome



5 Plein Air painting In winter



10 Van Gogh
– Poets and Lovers



11 Art Dates
for your Diary



12 What's On at Berkhamsted Art Society



13 Jumpers & antlers



Another Successful Fair



This year's BAS Winter Fair closed its doors on Sunday 10 November after a hugely successful 3 day event: "the best since our records began!"

The Fair had more exhibitors, more visitors and more sales than in previous exhibitions.

From first thing on Friday morning, a steady stream of visitors came through the doors until closing time on Sunday.

Sunday's Remembrance Day parade and other local events meant that many more people than usual popped in to see the Fair while they were out in Berkhamsted.

The first sale came within the first half-hour: contemporary abstract artist Pauline Maddocks sold her 1 metre x 1 metre acrylic abstract "Ode to Joy" for £1,100.

From then on, sales continued steadily with greetings cards proving ever-popular. Ceramics, folios and resin artworks also sold better than in the spring fair.

School parties from Bridgewater and Swing Gate schools were invited to visit and the children added paintings on the theme of light and dark to the displays. Katie Jones, Carol Giggs, Krystina Cheshire and Susan Chester

gave instructive talks about their work to small groups.

Children visiting with their parents at the weekend were offered the chance to join in with painting, collage or stencil with all eight places as the painting table fully occupied and - on occasions - several children waiting to take a turn.

This year saw 18 first-time exhibitors. Liz Grammenos was one. "I felt very much like the new girl at school! However, from the moment I joined the queue to check in my paintings, I was made to feel so very welcome and immediately felt at ease. I was in awe of the beautiful work that was arriving."

"The hanging team did an awesome job with the volume of paintings to show and produced an exhibition that really flowed. I also loved the idea of getting the children involved - brilliant (if somewhat scary!) The whole weekend was a highly enjoyable experience. Many thanks to all involved!"



Elsbeth Robertson was another new member who decided to exhibit. Elspeth works with the natural world, using trees, leaves, flowers, and insects. "At the moment I am exploring the art of eco printing using only leaves and flower petals; I'm learning the different colours and shapes that each plant produces."

She exhibited two eco prints, printed cards and small sketchbooks.

"This was the first time I have exhibited with the Berkhamsted Art Society and it was wonderful to show my work alongside some very talented artists with many different styles.

"The energy and enthusiasm of BAS members is infectious!" she said. "My thanks to everyone for being so welcoming."

First-timer Pauline Maddocks visited the fair last year and was impressed by what she saw.

"I've previously exhibited at galleries in London and decided to exhibit five large acrylic canvases here" she said.

Pauline was thrilled with the feedback and was astounded to be told that her painting Ode to Joy sold quickly the first morning.

"Maybe the buyer had already seen it on my Instagram page and decided to buy it then?"

Pauline added that she really enjoyed the whole experience including meeting fellow members.

Andy Hill recently joined BAS and has attended a couple of the organised events.

"I was delighted to be able to both exhibit and spend a reasonable amount of time at the fair over three days. The display team did an absolutely stunning job from receiving a mass of pieces on Thursday evening to displaying the art beautifully."

Other highlights of the Fair included Laurence Kiddle's demonstration of lino cutting and printing.

Brian Bennett's landscape painting was also sold by sealed bids, raising a substantial sum for Macmillan Cancer Support, the charity of choice of Brian's family.

The Private View

Artists and guests mingled at Friday evening's private view, giving everyone the chance to view the fair and chat with like-minds.

Anne Smith once again made a variety of delicious canapes and snacks which were much appreciated. While the dark evening sadly discouraged some people from venturing out, those who made it thoroughly enjoyed the evening.

Toby Hodgson's daughter, Elsie, who is studying photography, took photos of the evening. They can be found in a gallery here:

<https://sites.google.com/view/berkhamsted-art-society-member/home>

ArtNews

A Warm Welcome

A warm welcome to all new members who we look forward to meeting at our events soon.



Mary Pomeroy

I teach art, through Buckinghamshire Adult Learning mostly, and am particularly enjoying pen, wash and acrylics at the moment.

Mrs Rae Baker

Hi, I'm Rae. I'm a self-taught artist who started painting during Covid. I'm thoroughly in love with painting with Gouache and create magical and mystical landscapes.

George Woolaghan

I can draw well and would like to join the society.

Steve Thompson

I'm married with two adult daughters. A common story: I loved art but work got in the way. So I'm largely self-taught with occasional art classes.

Denise Bryant

I'm interested in meeting new people and learning about all types of art.

Elizabeth (Liz) Grammenos

I have recently moved to Wigginton to be near my son and his family. I belong to Amersham based Beechwood Artists and take part each year in Bucks Art Weeks in St Michaels Church Amersham. Since lockdown, I have been enjoying the Berkhamsted Creative Challenges and would very much like to join this art group. I enjoy painting in acrylics mostly and from imagination, mood or memory.

Plein Air Painting In Winter



While some artists prefer to paint outside only on balmy summer days, other hardier souls are happy to brave all weathers and carry on regardless.

Jackie Henderson and Andy Lee are among the plein air fans in BAS who paint in most weathers, letting little put them off venturing outside.

For Jackie, preparation is key. "I always have a checklist of things to take with me".

"As well as my easel and painting materials, I double check the weather forecast and take, amongst other things, several layers of clothes, waterproof footwear, woolly hats and peaked caps. With our notoriously unstable weather, it pays to think of all eventualities," she said.

Jackie was brought up in the equestrian world so she knows to be prepared for all weathers.

In cold conditions, Andy Lee uses a battery heated vest and pocket warmers that can be slipped into his tubular gloves.

A down jacket, fleece lined trousers and snow boots keep the cold at bay.

Over the past year or so, Andy has painted alongside Lynda Monk, Rosalind Morgan and more recently, Sara Williams.

Sara also favours layering clothes so she can adapt to changing weather conditions. Standing in one position for any length of time means it's easy to feel cold quickly, although the key is not to become so bundled up that freedom of movement becomes restricted. A recent outing saw her wearing seven layers, plus heated socks.

What else should go on the checklist? For Jackie, an insect cream is important, particularly when painting near the canal or reservoir near her home in Wilstone.

"The effects of light on water fascinate me, but irritating insects can sometimes be an issue when painting close to water".



It's not just insects that can be a problem. Jackie's rural landscapes often include cows, who can be curious and approach quite closely as a group.

"I try to get them to move away from me but they always seem fascinated by what I'm doing.

In the end I have to resort to shouting and waving my arms at them or even - on one occasion - opening a tube of titanium white in front of them. They clearly didn't like the smell so it acted as a good deterrent!"





A low sun can sometimes be just as much of a problem as bad weather.

Andy commented: "I recently had a painting day with the Wapping Group at Gravesend when the drizzle turned to heavy rain. The only shelter was under a jetty where the rain dripped through; we needed to tip the water out from our palettes every so often. We persisted but when pub time came, it was very welcome! Despite the weather, it was a very enjoyable and memorable day," he said.

Extreme cold and snow can add some unexpected touches.

Andy painted a couple of watercolours whilst on a skiing holiday at Mont Geneve. "When it started snowing, I tried to keep going until I was forced back to my hotel. Once the paintings had dried, I realised that the snow crystals falling on the wet paint had added an unplanned special effect - a happy accident!"



One of Andy's plein air winter scenes

Jackie has a passion for rural landscape painting and enjoys using a sombre and sophisticated palette on damp and gloomy days. She often uses a minimal palette of subtle greys and greens to create a soft mood.

Bad weather can obviously present challenging conditions, especially when it is windy. Andy, Jackie and Sara all agreed this can be the toughest weather to cope with.

Jackie's solution is to put something heavy like a stone or log into a fabric bag to sling under her easel to stabilise it, but being constantly nudged by the wind is still difficult.

Rainy days surprisingly, aren't off-putting - again, you just have to be prepared. Andy wears a Barbour jacket and uses a vented umbrella for protection, though juggling umbrella, paintbrush and paints isn't easy. He also ensures that he has prepared his boards with a ground prior to venturing out.

Painting outside in heavy rain though, can be especially challenging.



"As a tonal painter I believe strongly in mixing colours from a minimal palette and have been known (for fun) to do a "lucky dip" into my bag and paint with whatever three tubes come out! It's very freeing!"

"I enjoy painting outdoors all year round as each season has a character all of its own, with conditions changing week by week and even hourly."

"I have my favourite places but I see something different every time I go. I try to capture its essence in paint and learn something new every time," she said.

The benefits of plein air painting in the beautiful Chilterns countryside often mean sightings of wildlife, including in Jackie's case, regularly seeing kingfishers and even, on one recent occasion, hearing the boom of a bittern.



Jackie at the reservoir ... on the day the bittern "boomed."

People can sometimes be a distraction, especially if they want to stop and talk at length. Andy Lee's technique for getting rid of unwanted visitors is to persuade them that his painting companions "are much more interesting than me - they soon wander off to talk to the others!"

How long is long enough in plein air? While Andy might spend several hours at the easel, Jackie sometimes finds that 50 minutes is enough to capture what she calls "the truth of the moment".

"I'm not necessarily aiming to reach perfection when outdoors as I sometimes use the session for note taking".

"My plein air paintings are often small - meaning I can have up to four on my easel at any one time - and they then inform my bigger work in the studio," she said.

"Quick spontaneous studies take around 15 minutes, but otherwise 50 minutes might extend to 90 when conditions are favourable".

While the warmer weather and the return of David Satchel's evening plein air sessions can't come soon enough for some of us, Jackie and Andy continue to brave all weathers to keep painting.



Hints and tips

- If the weather looks iffy, try and get the main value structure blocked in the first 15 to 20 minutes, sketch and take notes
- Quick, small studies can be useful to capture the various light effects
- An umbrella in bright sunshine can prevent the sun from altering how colours appear on your canvas. What looks bright out of doors can appear dull and dark when brought inside
- A misting bottle can be useful for watercolour to control the wetness of the pigment and keep the painting alive
- Paint close to your car and/or scope out possible shelter before you set up
- On a sunny day try to work in the shade
- On a cold day wrap up warm and don't stay out too long
- Carry a minimal amount of gear, it's quicker to set up, and quicker to pack down if the weather turns
- Go out with an open mind to find the best subject

Andy Lee

www.aleegallery.co.uk

[@artandylee](https://www.instagram.com/artandylee)

Jackie Henderson

[@paint_jackieh52](https://www.instagram.com/paint_jackieh52)

David Satchel's plein air sketching evenings return in June 2025. See the [BAS website](#) for more details.

Painting the Dalai Lama

Part 3: Bridgid Marlin's 40 minutes are up and the Dalai Lama reacts to seeing his scarcely begun portrait

He turned to Mr. Chimme, who was standing like a sentry, ready to usher us out of the room, and spoke to him in Tibetan. Mr. Chimme left the room looking annoyed. Then the Dalai Lama motioned to me to stop packing up my paints.

"I was just wondering..." he said, and told me he had sent Mr. Chimme to ask the next people due to have an audience, if they minded if I stayed and painted His Holiness at the same time. Relief flooded over me. I felt like a condemned man reprieved. As I spread my paints out I heard Mary go and sit at the back of the room. At last I could relax, no one was watching me paint! As I worked I took it all in, the people coming from all over the world – to many this was the high point of their lives.

As one American couple left I glanced up at the Dalai Lama and got a shock. His face looked as though a light had been switched off, he was completely inward, his face like a mask. Then, as the next visitors arrived, His Holiness looked up, ready to greet them, seeming refreshed and renewed from some inner source. These visitors were an Indian couple with a young Swiss schoolgirl, her hair in blonde plaits. She spoke earnestly to His Holiness. She said her father was a rich sports manufacturer, and she had been spoiled all her life. But then she had heard of the terrible fate of the Tibetans, and the struggle of the Dalai Lama to help his people, and she wanted to do something for him. One day she saw a photograph of his riding an inferior exercise bicycle, and this gave her an idea. She had asked her father to help, and had brought, all the way from Switzerland, the finest exercise bicycle that there was. As she spoke, two grinning young monks brought in a large white exercise bicycle.

The Dalai Lama's face broke up with laughter (I groaned inwardly, as I was fixing his eye). The girl asked if she could photograph him on the bicycle, promising him that it would never be used for publicity, but treasured by the family. He jumped up, and went to the gleaming bicycle. His top robe was in the way, so he tossed it off, leaving a yellow top and maroon skirt. He pedalled happily, grinning like a small boy, while the girl took a picture. Then she got up to say goodbye, and asked, "did you use your old bicycle a lot?"

There was a little pause. "Sometimes," said His Holiness.



At last it was time for me to pack up and go.

I went up to him to thank him, and looking into his eyes, I had a strange experience. I felt as though I were bathing in an ocean of love, swimming and luxuriating in a boundless divine element. It was as if he knew all about me – all my faults – and loved me anyway. I

In another moment I had another shock. In a flash I saw that I, too had an ocean of love inside me, but something – a thin shadowy self – was barring the way and preventing me from expressing it. And then in another blinding flash I saw a great vision: I saw that everyone in the world had an ocean of love inside that was struggling to be expressed!

"It's all the same!" I cried out to the Dalai Lama, hardly knowing what I said. He laughed and nodded, looking as pleased as if I were a child who had got a sum right.

Mary came forward and I finished packing up my things. It was time to say goodbye. I stretched out my hand to shake his in farewell, but secretly I longed to give him a kiss on the cheek, but didn't dare. He was, after, a God-King to his people.

But just as if he was reading my mind, he leaned his cheek forward so that I could give him the kiss. Then he opened his arms and gave me a bear hug! It was wonderful – both human and spiritual and strangely comforting. It became ever after, the high point of my life. Then he gave Mary a hug and showed us round the rose garden.

Then it was time to say a final goodbye. Greedily I stepped forward, hoping for another hug, but was stopped in my tracks with a shock I was never to forget. The Dalai Lama's eyes were smiling down at me still, but they were as distant as the twinkling stars, three galaxies away.

I wouldn't have dared to touch him.



Van Gogh – Poets and Lovers

at The National Gallery, London — a personal view by Louise Williams

There are many full reviews of this exhibition to be found online, so instead, I am going to describe two works from this exhibition that made me want to look further.

The Large Plane Trees (Road Menders at Saint-Remy) 1888

Not having seen this painting before I am struck by its forceful perspective and the high key tones. It reflects the light of the region and holds a wealth of textured brush marks and harmonising colours. The figures in the painting are real. They are going about their daily business unaware of Van Gogh's presence. The title of the painting focuses on the two men with a barrow working on the road. They could be missed as they merge into the surrounding colours.

Other figures include women dressed in long black coats and colourful shawls. It's a glimpse of an everyday scene.



The thick trunks of the trees make me think of an enduring and solid presence whilst the life around them comes and goes.

The flecks of mauve work so beautifully with the autumnal foliage and the small details of doors and windows give me a sense that everything is in its place.

Park at Arles with a Corner of the Yellow House 1888

It's a pleasure to see Van Gogh's ink drawings up close and in real life. He uses an array of marks, curves and straight lines to create a rich texture. The ink marks vary from light to dark adding accents to the scene and increasing a sense of perspective. In the top right hand corner is the Yellow House so often featured in Van Gogh's life story. There are no solid outlines so the trees blend into the background drawing us into the scene and the soft grey/brown colour of the ink adds a softness to the atmosphere. This drawing makes me want to pick up my sketchbook and try my own version, but somehow on the train journey home, that is forgotten.



Park at Arles

There are over 60 works in this exhibition which is breathtaking given that they were all painted in just over two years. We know that Van Gogh's mental health deteriorated over the time that these paintings were made, however when I look at his work, I feel that Van Gogh may have been painting the kind and positive world that he wished for himself.

Exhibition runs until 19 January 2025

A Few Dates for your Diary

If you're looking for some inspiration in the dark days of winter, here are a few exhibitions to consider.

Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery

Wildlife Photographer of the Year

If you missed this world-renowned exhibition in London, it is on loan from the Natural History Museum until 20 April 2025.

Ashmolean Museum, Oxford

Anselm Keifer: Early Works

A major exhibition that runs from 14 February 2025 to 15 June.

Tate Modern

The first major exhibition of American artist Mike Kelley: *Ghost and Spirit* runs until 9 March 2025.

Solid Light

Step inside Anthony McCall's sculptures of light. Until 27 April 2025.

Electric Dreams - Art and technology before the internet.

Discover how artists used machines and algorithms to create mesmerising and mind-bending art between the 1950s and early 1990s. Until 1 June 2025.

Tate Britain

Turner Prize

Explore the best of British art from vibrant drawings

to intriguing installations. Until 16 February 2025.

National Gallery

Discover Constable and the Hay Wain

Find out what lies behind the making of *The Hay Wain* and its iconic status in British art. Until 2 February 2025.

Parmigianino: The vision of Saint Jerome

Rediscover this Renaissance masterpiece on public display for the first time in 10 years. Until 9 March 2025.

National Portrait Gallery

Francis Bacon: Human presence

Fifty portraits show how Bacon challenged traditional definitions of portraiture. Until 19 January 2025.

Royal Academy

Michelangelo, Leonardo and Raphael.

See some of the finest examples of Italian Renaissance drawing. Until 16 February 2025.

Brasil! Brasil! the birth of modernism

How 20th century art in Brazil interpreted the vibrancy of everyday life. 24 Jan to 21 April 2025.



Anselm Keifer

Design Museum

The world of Tim Burton

The fantastical world of Tim Burton's remarkable creations. Until 21 April 2025.

Courtauld Gallery

Monet and London: Views of the Thames

On until 19 January... apparently sold out but let's hope they release more tickets.

What's On at Berkhamsted Art Society

14 January - Zoom watercolour demo: 'Canal scene' by Catherine Beale SWA 7 - 9pm

20 January - Zoom life drawing hosted by Cheryl Gould 7 - 9pm

10 February - life drawing with a clothed model at the Court House, Berkhamsted 7.30 - 9.30pm (note new start time)

18 February - picture framing: framer Andy Harris will offer tips and hints on mounts, glazing and frames at the Court House, Berkhamsted 7.30 - 8.30pm

18 March - talk by Gary Tomkins, Senior Art Director: Art and design in British cinema - Star Wars to Harry Potter' (title tbc) at the Court House, Berkhamsted 7.30 - 9.30pm

24 March - life drawing at the Court House, Berkhamsted 7.30 - 9.30pm

12 April - life drawing at Hastoe Village Hall 9am - 1pm £15 per person

28 April - life drawing at the Court House 7.30 - 9.30pm

Note new start and finish times for monthly life drawing.



Jumpers, antlers, earrings ... and a sporran



As you can tell from the photographs, our lovely BAS members really entered into the Christmas spirit. Bill looked particularly fetching having teamed a Grinch jumper with his kilt.

David arrived looking like a country squire, a more subtle look than his Father Christmas outfit last year but nevertheless very fetching.

We welcomed new members Jane and Beryl. Jane was sporting a particularly fine set of antlers.

It was good to see Peter mobile after his knee operation which seems to have been very successful. However, I'm not sure he will be doing the conga at Christmas.

Chatter inevitably turned to Christmas plans and who was cooking and who was having a year off. For the first time ever, Ian and I are going out to a restaurant for our meal; in fact we will be at the White Horse where I know we will be well looked after by their lovely waiting staff. I might have to have a quiet word with our waiter to sneak a couple of sprouts onto Ian's plate like I usually do!

This was probably the best attended of all our coffee mornings and as I looked around the room I was so thrilled to think how successful the coffee mornings have become. Everyone says how friendly Berkhamsted Art Society is and as I listened to the sound of laughter and saw the smiles on everyone's faces I would have to agree.

Wishing you all a very happy Christmas and a healthy new year. I hope Santa brings you lots of lovely art materials.

See you in 2025!

Catherine and Ian

And In Other News...

A few recent, arty, news items that may have escaped your notice.

It's official - art is good for you!

Looking at real art is good for you, according to a recent study in the Netherlands.

A neurological study has revealed that real works of art in a museum stimulate the brain in a way that is 10 times stronger than looking at a poster.

Using MRI scans and eye tracking technology, researchers found that real art evokes a strong response in the part of the brain associated with consciousness, self-reflection and personal memories.

Posters of the same painting don't elicit the same response.

So now you know what **real** art does for your brain!

The future of art?

A portrait of eminent English mathematician and codebreaker Alan Turing has become the first artwork by a humanoid robot to be sold at auction, fetching over \$1million (£566,000) in New York.

The 2.2 metre portrait, titled A.I. God. Portrait of Alan Turing, was created by Ai-Da, the world's first ultra-realistic robot artist.

Ai-Da has been assigned a female form with black hair, a bob haircut and robotic arms by its creator, British art expert Aidean Meller. The name is a tribute to Ada Lovelace, one of the pioneers in computing.

Ai-Da used cameras in its eyes to look at a picture of Turing and create preliminary sketches.

It then painted 15 individual paintings of Turing's face, each of which is different, depending on how the algorithm interpreted the photo. Each one took the robot around six to eight hours to complete.

The robot was then tasked to choose and assemble them into the final painting. In the end it used three as well as a painting of Turing's Bombe Machine, his codebreaking device. The painting was then enlarged onto the final canvas.

Turing was chosen as he predicted the rise of computers and AI.

Makeover For Underpass

Artists have transformed two pedestrian underpasses at the Magic Roundabout in Hemel Hempstead, thanks to a community mural project.

The aim was to create a welcoming, safe, happy and calm space for people to walk through and enjoy.

Hemel-based artist Anna Schofield worked with local young people to design the mural and more than 15 artists from Dacorum Creatives and volunteers helped to bring it to life. The abstract, colourful design uses vibrant colours and patterns designed to promote wellbeing and enhance the local environment.



ArtNews - info

Do you have any comments on ArtNews or ideas for future editions?

Please do get in touch!

Written by Penny Clifton Designed by Brian O'Carroll

Penny Clifton

clifton2022@outlook.com

Brian O'Carroll

hello@brianocarroll.photography

www.brianocarroll.photography

Berkhamsted Art Society Committee Members

Chairman	James Honour	01442 879632
Treasurer Membership Secretary	Ian Jones	01442 876034
Secretary	Suzanne Selman	
Social Secretary	Catherine Archer	
Facebook	Tracy Dudley	
BAS News	Penny Clifton	
	Lindsay Stillwell	
	Anne Smith	