



SEPTEMBER
21

Bruegel: The Seasons and the world
Gavin Plumley

The world of art came to be viewed differently after Pieter Bruegel the Elder was commissioned to create dining room paintings in Antwerp in 1565. He displayed landscapes during the course of the year and the landscape itself was the focus of the paintings, not the backdrop. Gavin explores paintings such as Bruegel's "Return of the Herd", "Hunters in the Snow" and "The Gloomy Day" and shows us a different way of looking at the environment and our place in it as it changes.

The Harvesters by Pieter Bruegel the Elder, (The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York-Rogers Fund., 1919-www.metmuseum.org)

OCTOBER
19

Tamara de Lempicka: Art Deco Diva
Alexandra Epps

Alexandra explores the story of Tamara de Lempicka and her self-invention. Originally an aristocratic fugitive from Russia during the Revolution, she later became an icon of the roaring 20s in Paris as she re-invented herself as a successful artist. Her distinctive style captured the changing morals of the era, portraying the wealthy and decadent European elite while boldly celebrating female sensuality.



NOVEMBER
16

The Culture of the Ukraine
Rosamund Bartlett

Rosamund traces Ukraine's complicated multi-ethnic history through the exploration of art and architecture in Kyiv and its links to Byzantium. She will also examine Odessa and Lviv and their ethnicities. Looking at Ukraine's history as a whole she focuses on rich folk lore in terms of songs and secret codes embedded in embroidery. All of which have impacted on modern painting, contemporary haute couture, Cossack dancing and borsch.



DECEMBER
7

From Cradle to Grave: The Iconography of the Nativity in late Medieval Italian Art
Helen McIlldowie-Jenkins

This lecture explores the Nativity icon from Orthodox East and its actual meaning, while also examining Late Trecento art and highlighting its differences. The talk traces the fascinating development of the image of the Nativity from its Byzantine roots to the devotional images of late 14th century Italy.



JANUARY
18



Murder Most Florid
Mark Spencer

This lecture explores mundane plants such as brambles and nettles and shows how they can be used to provide valuable insights into when a crime was committed. Prepare for stunning images of the natural world, including the natural evidence surrounding the disappearance of Charles Lindbergh's infant son.

FEBRUARY
15



Art Behind Bars: Breaking the Cycle of Crime, Prison and Reoffending
Angela Findlay

This lecture examines the potentially lifesaving role of arts as it looks at the lives and challenges of offenders. Angela explores art projects held in prisons and demonstrates how the process of creating art helps offenders confront their crimes and develop new life skills.

MARCH
21



Rene Gruau and the Art of Dior
Connie Gray

In her talk, Connie traces the life and art of Rene Gruau and examines why his imaginative and beautifully crafted art for Dior is considered amongst the most iconic fashion images of the 20th century. His flowing brush strokes promoted and defined the essence of Dior.

APRIL
18



The Birth, Growth and Influence of London's Great Auction Houses
Grant Ford

The auction house is the public face of the art market and its prices can make headlines around the world. Grant looks at the development of London's great auction houses, studying notable characters as well as controversies. With one eye on the past, he explores their current practice and future position.

MAY
16



Artist and Model: Whistler and Joanna Hiffernan
Joanna Rhymer

This lecture explores Whistler's enigmatic painting "Symphony in White, No.1: The White Girl." The role of Joanna Hiffernan in the artist's life is examined - was she simply his model and lover or was she a key figure in the development of modern art?

JUNE
20



Selfies, Self-Expression, Celebrity & the Victorian Carte De Visite
Mark Hill

We think we invented selfies but we didn't! In late 19th century a new craze gripped the world. Photography had just become popular and many could afford a portrait of themselves to share. This highly visual lecture examines the hidden meanings behind the poses, expressions, backgrounds and choice of clothes.

SPECIAL INTEREST DAYS



The Rivalry: November 9th 2023

While Leonardo da Vinci and Michelangelo are two of the most familiar figures in Italian Renaissance art, the antipathy that existed between them remains a story without an author. This lecture throws light on these themes and, using select examples of their works, attempts to

understand the motivations for their animosity. Particular emphasis is given to the commission bestowed upon them to undertake frescoes for the great chamber in Florence.

Exploring Handel: March 5th 2024

Peter Medhurst is a Baroque musician and travels the world as a pianist, singer and a scholar. His lecture will feature the genius of Handel, exploring his formative years in Italy before coming to London where he wrote 36 operas for the London stage. He worked with a range of singers and created individual areas to for each singer's voice. His music for the Royal Fireworks was first performed in London and became a favourite with audiences ever since.



DAY VISITS

St Albans June 20th 2023



A visit to St Albans is next on our list. Image credit: Geograph.org.uk

EXTENDED TOURS

Veneto and Venice October 2023



This 6 day trip includes guided tours of Vicenza, Padua and Mantua, each with its own fascinating history, art and architecture. In 2024 we intend to offer a trip to Ireland, the most requested destination in our recent survey. We are seeking an Extended Tours coordinator to ensure this goes ahead.

Lectures are held at Stratford Playhouse
14 Rother Street
Stratford-upon-Avon
CV37 6LU

Times:
Thursday mornings at 10.45am, repeated in the afternoons at 1.30pm

Details of all our trips and study days will appear in bulletins and on the website

Church Recorders

Jean Vaudeau



The record of church furnishings of St. Lawrence Church, Mickleton, Gloucestershire is now complete. In 2019 eight recorders began researching and documenting memorials, windows, woodwork, metalwork, textiles, stonework and documents within the church, which dates from the 12th century. The pandemic meant remote working for some time. STRADFAS members have had an opportunity to see a record before a bound copy was presented to the church. Thank you to all recorders.

Art Volunteering

Anne Maguire



Three establishments have benefitted from donations this year. Funding for an arts' project resulted in The Fred Winter Centre producing lanterns to commemorate personal losses during Covid, while Shotton St. Andrew's Primary school is preparing to use its grant to include all pupils in a piece of public art. With help from an Arts Society Community Grant, Welcombe Hills School has purchased a keyboard to enable senior pupils to participate in more music events. We hope to be able to help others in the future.

Newsletter & Programme 2023/24

Chairman's Report



As I look back on my first year as Chairman of STRADFAS, I realise it has not been as daunting as I had anticipated. Working with a dedicated team of volunteers, meeting new members and attending high quality lectures each month – what's not to like? But on a serious note, this year will see the resignation from the committee of some long-standing members and, during the interim, while we seek to find replacements, it may be that some of our activities will be put into abeyance for a short while (eg Extended Tours).

The Trustees and Committee have agreed to recommend a membership fee rise of below February's rate of inflation and are of the view that £52 per annum represents exceptional value for money. We hope you agree and look forward to welcoming you back – together with any friends you may wish to bring along – in the autumn.

Caroline Johnson



New members' coffee morning

This year we have been delighted to welcome 45 new members to STRADFAS. We held a slightly differently-constituted coffee morning in March, over the water in the Sports Centre, to include current volunteers and those who had indicated in the recent membership survey that they would be interested to help on lecture days. It was a sociable occasion, where committee volunteers outlined their current roles and members were able to chat, relax and make new friends. At the end of the morning, we had eight members signed up to help out with the range of elements underpinning our lecture days.

Day and extended visits

There have been three day visits during the past year beginning with a study of six Shropshire churches with Tim Bridges as guide. A private tour of Renishaw Hall in Derbyshire, the home of the Sitwell family, followed by a festive lunch in the restaurant proved to be a pleasant pre-Christmas experience. The most recent visit was to The National Gallery's 'After Impressionism' exhibition, which provided a fascinating insight into the development of art since.

May 2022 marked a tour of Kent beginning with Hever Castle, the childhood home of Anne Boleyn en route to Folkestone. The days combined history and gardens with visits to Canterbury, Margate, Dover, Sissinghurst, Great Dixter and finishing with Ightham Mote.

Barcelona, in October, provided the group with a rich tapestry of modernism, including Gaudi's La Sagrada Familia, Picasso and Salvador Dali, along with excellent weather and a very good hotel.



Heritage Volunteers

Kay Anderson

An exciting new Tudor-Costume project for the Shakespeare Birthplace will be starting soon. The costumes, adapted from paintings, will create an activity for visitors to the Birthplace, enabling them to feel part of the Tudor Experience by wearing clothes of the day. To enable ease of trying on, they will be made to open down the back, with ties. There are two outfits to be made, one for a male and one for a female. Volunteers are to be thanked for their help over the past six years.

