

# PRISM

News of art and events

May 2022



ART 2022

E•X•H•I•B•I•T•I•O•N  
A•N•D S•A•L•E

Sponsored by The Maltings



Wednesday 27th to Saturday 30th July 2022  
Upper Dagnall Street Baptist Church Hall, AL3 5EE

[www.stalbans-artociety.org.uk](http://www.stalbans-artociety.org.uk)



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**Members' input is very popular so please carry on sending in your articles for inclusion in the magazine and your feedback.**

## Enclosed in this issue...

Exhibition Rules  
Exhibition Entry Form  
5 Exhibition leaflets

**PRISM** is published quarterly by  
St Albans Art Society  
**PRISM Editor:** Janet King  
**Associate Editor:** Edward Bevin

newsletter.saas@gmail.com  
www.stalbans-artsociety.org.uk

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**This is the 2022 Summer Exhibition edition of PRISM.**

**All the Show information can be found on pages 6-9.**

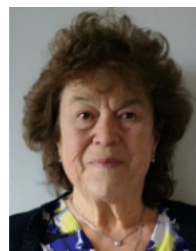
## Remember

All members and their guests are invited to the Private View on Tuesday 26th July and this year for the first time in the church hall, we will be serving wine, provided by our new sponsor The Maltings shopping centre.



2021 trophy winners:  
Jane Hollins and Frances Riddle

## SALLY WRITES...



Thank you to two well-loved members of the committee: **Janet Blackham** (*Membership Secretary*) and **Valerie Chivers** (*Treasurer*) are stepping down. They will be sorely missed by us all and especially the committee.

### Janet Blackham

Having joined the St Albans Art Society in 1991, Janet Blackham is a long standing, active member of the Society. She has always been willing to help, so when in 2007, the Chairman Mary Newbery's husband died unexpectedly, she offered to step into the breach and take on the role of Membership Secretary and was elected on to the committee in 2008. She has been an excellent 'first point of contact' for new members with her warm and friendly welcome. Then in 2015, with the help of Janet King, she added to her commitment and co-

organised the Society's Annual Summer Exhibition in the Old Town Hall. It was a great success, making a profit for the Society for the first time in many years. Since then the 2 Janet Blackhams have continued to co-organise this flagship event for a total of 6 times, including a venue change to Dagnall Street Baptist Church Hall when the Old Town Hall became unavailable.

After 14 years as

Membership Secretary and 6 years as Exhibition Co-organiser, Janet feels now is the time for her to step down from her roles on the committee. Her long experience, calmness, congeniality and advice have been invaluable, especially recently during the pandemic that has created chaos for the Society.



### Valerie Chivers



Valerie joined the Art Society committee as secretary in May 2019 when Sandie Ford stepped down to continue her role as Vice Chair. We are extremely grateful to Valerie for carrying out the secretarial duties so efficiently for us. When our treasurer Tracey Gent stepped down from the committee to become a full-time Mother, once again Valerie filled the gap and moved to the position

of Treasurer. Her position of secretary was taken up by Margaret Channon, our longest serving committee member. Valerie is now stepping down from the committee and we would like to say a huge thank-you to her for being so helpful and efficient in both roles she has undertaken. We'll miss her friendly face and clear reports at committee meetings but hopefully we will still see her at Society meetings.

**Our grateful thanks go to Janet and Valerie and we wish them well for the future.**

The AGM went very well considering we are not used to our new roles on the committee yet. I'm also glad to say that we were quorate as we had 25 people who made a valiant effort to attend for the evening, thank you. We have the new committee members that we needed so we can support the programme that we have in mind for the new season later in the year. We had two committee members step down they were Valerie Chivers who has served the Art Society as Secretary and later as Treasurer, she received flowers, a pot plant and a thank you gift token. Valerie had a tough job dealing with the bank through covid lockdowns, she fought and won the battle to get everything in order, which is much appreciated by the committee. Also, Janet Blackham was pleased to receive a life membership together with flowers and a pot plant, Janet has been our Membership Secretary for many years and has greeted everyone as they have joined the Society and attended meetings. Edward Bevin (ex-Chairman) mentioned how helpful Janet had been to him and seemed to

know all the right answers when he joined the committee. A great big thank you to both ladies. Two new people on the committee have taken on their jobs, they are Linda Warming as Treasurer and Jane Hollins as Membership Secretary, so a warm welcome to you both. We also have two new supporting committee members who are Chris Baker and Maria Hogg, a warm welcome to you too.

The rest of the AGM proceedings went as normal and was followed by a presentation given by Gordon Bridges our Website and IT Manager, about photographing artwork and uploading to our website. He reminded us that if we still have questions, we could always get in touch with him -

**enquiries.saas@gmail.com**. Our thanks to Gordon for all the tips and details given. A thank you to those ladies who were busy in the background providing drinks during the break.

Here is looking forward to a brilliant year ahead hopefully without any lockdowns.

**Margaret Channon**  
Secretary

## Website Design, Management and Support

Since 1999 **WordsAndPeople.co.uk** have created attractive, fast loading sites with helpful navigation and easy maintenance. We provide a complete end-to-end service including: Brand design, Design for web and print, Hosting, Support and Email.

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Email is best: [contact@wordsandpeople.co.uk](mailto:contact@wordsandpeople.co.uk) | 0208 207 6864 | [www.wordsandpeople.co.uk](http://www.wordsandpeople.co.uk)



Some of our recent website productions



[transformafrica.org](http://transformafrica.org)



[careexpertise.co.uk](http://careexpertise.co.uk)



[advocacyinbarnet.org.uk](http://advocacyinbarnet.org.uk)



[psandr.com](http://psandr.com)



[talkingimage.co.uk](http://talkingimage.co.uk)

St Abans Art Society Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2022		
	2021-22	2020-21
<b>CREDITS</b>		
Exhibition	5,930.71	-
Subscriptions	3,570.00	-
Net Income from life classes	60.00	-
Income from Workshops	2,030.00	-
Donations received	15.00	-
Bank Interest	0.24	1.00
Other, (banked)	-	-
Other, cash, float	20.00	-
	<b>11,625.95</b>	<b>1.00</b>
<b>DEBITS</b>		
Exhibition Scr costs	6,649.84	1,108.00
Next exhibition (2022)	-	-
Wednesday speakers	890.00	-
Workshop tutors and models	1,325.00	-
Room hire	994.00	53.00
Prism print	491.54	710.00
Prism Mail	465.30	471.00
Copying and printing (non Prism)	75.25	-
Postage (non Prism)	-	-
SAA Insurance	192.00	192.00
Website maintenance and domain	282.00	408.00
Other, sundries (from bank)	208.47	232.00
other, cash, flo, float	20.00	-
	<b>11,593.40</b>	<b>3,174.00</b>
<b>CREDITS</b>	<b>11,625.95</b>	<b>1.00</b>
<b>DEBITS</b>	<b>11,593.40</b>	<b>3,174.00</b>
<b>Excess or (-) Deficit</b>	<b>32.55</b>	<b>(3,173.00)</b>
<b>BALANCE SHEET</b>		
Brought forward from 31/3/2021	10,694.51	13,867.00
Credit, (Deficit) year to 31/3/2022	32.55	(3,173.00)
Uncleared cheque, item 42	50.00	-
Transferred to cash float	20.00	-
<b>Balance carried forward to next year</b>	<b>10,797.06</b>	<b>10,694.00</b>
<b>Funds held at 31/3/2022</b>		
Bank Reserve a/c	2,500.00	2,500.00
Bank Current a/c	8,257.06	8,194.51
<b>Total in bank</b>	<b>10,757.06</b>	<b>10,694.51</b>
Cash float	40.00	20.00
<b>Total funds</b>	<b>10,797.06</b>	<b>10,714.51</b>
<b>Examiners Statement</b>		
I have examined the above accounts, together with the supporting journals and receipts, and I am satisfied that they are a true record of the Society's transactions in the period covered.		
Mel Hillbrown BA MBA Honorary Independent Examiner		Date 18th April 2022

The Accounts show that our Society life slowly reverted to normal as last year went by.

The Annual Exhibition produced a loss of about £700, but this was after taking into account the usual cost of over £1,000 for storage of the display stands, leaving the overall outcome similar to that of pre-pandemic years.

Similarly, Saturday workshops were mostly well supported.

Unfortunately the same cannot be said for Wednesday Club Evenings, which have not generally been well attended. A combination of cold dark evenings and continuing fear of Covid have probably been responsible for this and the Committee are struggling to find a way forward. Zoom demos provide a massive choice of artists from all around the UK and the quality of viewing can be better than a live demonstration, but then there is a loss of camaraderie and discussion, which a live Club night brings. Members view on this matter are always welcome.

Our Life Classes too have had very low attendances since Christmas. Extra classes have now been added in June in the hope that lighter evenings and warmer weather will boost numbers.

However, I am pleased to announce that the Society made a small profit this year of £32.55, a great improvement on last year's loss.

My thanks go to our Honorary Examiner, Mel Hillbrown, who completed his examination so swiftly and who has agreed to continue as our Examiner for another year.

I have now retired and am please to hand over to our new Treasurer, Linda Warming.

**Valerie Chivers**  
Treasurer



# St Albans Art Society Summer Exhibition



At last, we can run our Exhibition without any Covid restrictions. This year we have 2 new organisers - members Jan Munro and Sue Bergquist - who plan to run the show on similar lines to the past few years. The **Private View** will be on Tuesday evening at 7.30pm and all members are invited to come along and enjoy a glass of wine. Inside this issue are 5 copies of the Exhibition leaflet, please encourage as many of your friends as possible.

There is a big, new development this year,



Sue and Jan have managed to secure a very good sponsorship deal for the Exhibition. Phil Corrigan, manager of **The Maltings** shopping centre in St Albans, has offered to pay all the cost of the hire of the hall and provide all of the drinks at the Private View. Additionally, he has made a room available at the Maltings to store all our screens and Exhibition equipment, amounting to another saving for the Society of over £1,000. Let's make 2022 Exhibition a success!

**T**he Exhibition this year will follow the proven, profitable format of 4 days. The venue will be in the same central location as in 2021, Dagnall Street Baptist Church Hall, just off the Market Place. See all the key dates in the panel on the right. Please put these dates in your diary.

## ENTRY PAPERS

Exhibition Rules and Entry papers are inserted in this issue of PRISM, please make sure you have returned the forms to Sue Bergquist including your payment not later than Sunday 26th June - **cheques made payable to St Albans Art Society.**

## VOLUNTEERING

The organisation of the annual Summer Exhibition is all done by you, the members and committee. Please remember to fill in any offer of help you can give to the Exhibition on the entry form.

Every exhibitor is expected to steward a 2 hour session. To book your time slot in advance of handing in your work please contact **Jan Munro** - contact details on the right. Otherwise you will be asked to fix a date at handing in.

## ARTISTS PROFILES ARE BACK!



This popular feature is an opportunity for exhibiting members to tell visitors about themselves and their work. It will take the

## EXHIBITION JOINT ORGANISERS

### SUE BERGQUIST

Telephone: 01727 837064

email: sue.bergquist@ntlworld.com

### JAN MUNRO

Telephone 07414 631995

email: janmunro2@gmail.com



## 2022 EXHIBITION KEY DATES

### SUNDAY 26th JUNE

Final date for entries

### MONDAY 25th JULY

Setting up and HANDING IN  
2pm-4pm and 5.30pm-7.30pm

### TUESDAY 26th JULY

PRIVATE VIEW 7.30 - 9.30

### WED 27th JULY - SAT 30th JULY

The exhibition will be open to the public  
daily 10am to 6pm

### SUNDAY 31st JULY

COLLECTION OF ARTWORK will  
be from 2pm - 4pm

● Please note the hall will be **CLOSED**  
on Sunday morning

## SUMMER EXHIBITION 2022

Continued from page 7

form of an A4 looseleaf folder with acetate sleeves. Artists will be in alphabetical order. Each profile must be no larger than A4 size and suitable to slip into an acetate sleeve. It can fill 1 or 2 sides, but must be on separate sheets, and can include pictures and words. Your 2 separate sheets will be displayed opposite each other to make a spread format. See photo on page 7.

● If you wish to participate in this idea, please bring your profile on the handing-in' day, to be added to the file.

### JUDGING

The St Albans Trophy and Challenge Trophy entries will be judged during the Exhibition by an independent judge from the art world. The Terry Biggs Cup, awarded to the overall favourite in the show, will be chosen by the visiting public. All the winners will be posted on the website: [www.stalbans-artsociety.org.uk](http://www.stalbans-artsociety.org.uk) and in the September issue of PRISM.

### GREETINGS CARDS PRICING INSTRUCTIONS

Each member can still submit up to 100 individual greetings cards as usual, but **ALL cards must have the same price of £2.50.**

No packs of cards accepted.

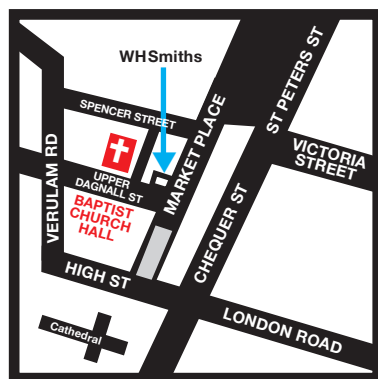
### PUBLICITY

Susie Ross has kindly agreed to take on this role again this year.

This issue contains 5 leaflets for you to distribute to your friends. Please spread the word. If you need more leaflets, contact Susie, email: [cactus.ross@btinternet.com](mailto:cactus.ross@btinternet.com)

For those members who use email, an A4 size digital file of the poster will be sent to you in the monthly online Newsletter. From this you can print out any larger posters for yourself to display in your window.

### EXHIBITION LOCATION Upper Dagnall Street Baptist Church Hall, AL3 5EE



### © Be careful not to infringe another artist's copyright!

The creator is the owner of the copyright. Copyright is an individual's right that creative people have over what they create and whether it can be reproduced. The creator owns the copyright to all original work they have produced, such as paintings, drawings, photographs, sculpture etc.

Remember, photographs are the copyright of the photographer! So creating an image from someone else's photograph or artwork, a newspaper or magazine or, importantly, from the internet is an infringement of copyright unless you have the licence of the copyright owner.

If the creator sells his work, copyright stays with the original artist and he can continue to use his image to produce other items such as greetings cards. The purchaser of the artwork does not buy this right.

To protect yourself, it is sensible to endorse any work with your name and the copyright symbol ©, but this is not essential. it is an automatic entitlement.

## IMPORTANT!

### SIZE RESTRICTION

For safety reasons, we have introduced a size restriction. No framed piece of artwork can be more than 30 inches along its largest dimension including the frame. Oversize artwork will be rejected.

### SAFETY REQUIREMENTS FOR PICTURE FRAMES

Poorly framed work may not be fit for sale and will not be hung. Nor can we hang pictures where paint is still wet or is not labelled clearly.

Use brown **picture tape**, not masking or Sellotape, to cover metal tabs used to hold picture securely in the frame. Picture **wire or cord**, not string, tied firmly to **D-ring fixings**. These should be screwed into the frame about 1/3 of the way down and should not protrude from the back of the work. They should be flush with the back of the canvas or painting. Tape around wire ends. Professional framing may differ slightly, but this usually meets all these requirements.



**IMPORTANT:** Leave enough slack on the wire to enable hanging, but isn't visible above top of frame.

**CLIP FRAMES ARE NOT ACCEPTABLE.**

### UNFRAMED WORK FOR THE BROWSERS

**UNFRAMED WORK** must be backed on to stiff card, wrapped in clear cellophane and labelled on the **front at the top** with the name of the work, price and the exhibitor's name. **Do not submit stretched canvases as Unframed Work** as they will be rejected.

### AN OPPORTUNITY TO PUT YOUR EXHIBITION ARTWORK ON THE SAAS WEBSITE EXHIBITION GALLERY 2022 [www.stalbans-artsociety.org.uk](http://www.stalbans-artsociety.org.uk)

Members who want to display a digital image of ONE of their works submitted for the 2022 Annual Exhibition can find the instructions on our website under the 'Annual Exhibition' menu.





## We are pleased to welcome the following new members

Mrs Marilyn Whittle	St Albans
Mrs Christine Browne	St Albans
Mr Phil Corrigan	St Albans
Mrs Ana Armasu	St Albans
Miss L Chen	St Albans
Gimara Duncan-Rice	Stevenage
Chloe Simpson-Southward	Harpenden
Michael Ritchie	St Albans
Anna Cross	Radlett

## TWO EXTRA LIFE DRAWING SESSIONS

Following the cancellation of 2 Life Drawing sessions in January due to covid and the cold weather, the Society has now managed to book 2 extra Life Drawing sessions in June.

● 15 June ● 22 June



**Karin Friedli** (above) who runs the Life Drawing sessions for us will be exhibiting at the Collective Gallery, 18 Holywell Hill, St Albans, AL1 1BZ, together with 2 other members **Judith Moule** and **Henriette Busch**.

**16th June to 2nd July**

The Collective Gallery is an artist run art project space for local artists, whose aim is to nurture creative talents and build a community of artists and local residents.

[www.collectivegallery.co.uk](http://www.collectivegallery.co.uk)

## TUTORED WORKSHOP

United Reformed Church, Watford Rd,  
Chiswell Green, St Albans, AL2 3HG  
10am - 4pm

## BIG HAIRY ANIMALS IN ACRYLICS Tutor: Lynne Davies

**Saturday 18th June**

Lynne will share the techniques she uses to paint hair and will also explain how to capture an animals' individual personality. There will be continued short demonstrations on different techniques.

The Booking Form was inserted in the March issue of PRISM. If you have lost this form, please email Sally Griffiths: [studios.saas@gmail.com](mailto:studios.saas@gmail.com)



## Landlines

Judith Moule, Henriette Busch  
& Karin Friedli

Contemporary landscape paintings

16 JUNE TO 2 JULY 2022 10 AM - 5 PM

PRIVATE VIEW 16 JUNE 6 - 9 PM

COLLECTIVE GALLERY, 18 HOLYWELL HILL,  
ST ALBANS AL1 1BZ



## EXPRESSIVE LANDSCAPE IN ACRYLICS Tutor: Mark Warner

Mark Warner delivered an enjoyable, inspiring workshop. He started by explaining his approach to painting with examples of his distinctive style and an initial demonstration. Mark started with the sky showing the mixing of colours and ways to add the clouds making a vibrant start to the painting.

Mark has a wealth of experience and he demonstrated his ways of developing a painting throughout the day with explanations of why he chose to use the different materials and techniques thus allowing participants to develop their own paintings using the techniques learnt. The demonstrations also included explaining his choice of colours, and how and why he made his marks. He also shared his choice of brushes, which were soft, how and why he used them.

## Helping individuals

The day continued with building up layers of the picture interspersed with valuable individual attention. Mark spent a great deal of quality time helping individuals by giving tips on how to develop their paintings, what works well, and ways of improving. His friendly, humorous and knowledgeable approach helped to make the day such a success.

A few of the comments from the participants were: 'I would come again' 'learnt new skills' 'demonstrates in depth,' 'thank you so much I had a lovely day.'

## BUILDING EXPRESSIONS USING COLLAGE AND ACRYLICS

Tutor: Jan Munro

Jan started off with sketching a design from a photo that was to form the structure of the painting and carefully explained what was needed to create a good one. Next Jan demonstrated numerous different ways to make collage papers which would be unique to each artist to be used across the painting. Everyone had so much fun creating the papers which were used to start the painting. Paint was used to pick out the houses finding the spaces to enhance and highlight the structures. Techniques of scraping, printing, pastels, ink and pen were demonstrated.

## An inspiring teacher

Jan is an inspiring teacher, being totally organised and prepared, she explained very clearly and precisely what each step would be. Throughout the day Jan's exuberance and passion was evident in her individual attention given to all participants.

The time flew by and super, quality pictures were created, although not finished. Even at the end review, Jan highlighted the good points and continued to inspire participants informing them what was necessary to finish their pictures.

Participants were very complimentary, summing up the workshop as an inspiring - learning new skills and with a certainty that you wouldn't expect anything less than excellence from a Jan Munro workshop.



## YOUR COMMITTEE

### CHAIR

**Sally Griffiths**  
chairman.saas@gmail.com

### VICE CHAIR

**Gordon Bridges**

### SECRETARY

**Margaret Channon**

### TREASURER

**Linda Warming**

### MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY

**Jane Hollins**

### PRISM EDITOR

**Janet King**

### WEBSITE & IT MANAGER

**Gordon Bridges**

### PROGRAMME SECRETARIES

**WORKSHOPS** Sally Griffiths

**LECTURES** Iris Green

### SUPPORTING MEMBERS

**Chris Baker**  
**Marialba Hogg**

[www.stalbans-artsociety.org.uk](http://www.stalbans-artsociety.org.uk)



### CONTACT EMAIL ADDRESSES

[enquiries.saas@gmail.com](mailto:enquiries.saas@gmail.com)  
for general enquiries

[newsletter.saas@gmail.com](mailto:newsletter.saas@gmail.com)  
for all enquiries regarding the magazine PRISM and the online monthly Newsletter.

[membership.saas@gmail.com](mailto:membership.saas@gmail.com)  
for all membership queries

[studios.saas@gmail.com](mailto:studios.saas@gmail.com)  
for all programme queries

### VENUE for MEETINGS

**Marshalswick Community Centre,**  
The Ridgeway, St Albans, AL4 9TU.

### VENUE for WORKSHOPS

**United Reformed Church,** Watford Rd,  
Chiswell Green, St Albans, AL2 3HG

## Bucks Art Weeks 2022 11th- 26th June



Along with many other artists, SAAS members Linda Cavill and Sally Bassett are taking part in 2022 Bucks Art Weeks in June.

**Linda** will be at Holy Trinity Church, Penn Street, Amersham, HP7 0PX showing with a large group of artists from 11th to 19th June 10am to 4pm daily. With a lovely pop up cafe serving delicious cakes!

**Sally** will be at Garage Art Gallery, Sker Cottage, Station Road, Aldbury, Herts HP23 5RS. 11-12 June and 17-19 June  
Website [www.sallybassett.co.uk](http://www.sallybassett.co.uk)

[www.bucksartweeks.org.uk](http://www.bucksartweeks.org.uk)



**Art on the Common in Harpenden** is Hertfordshire's premier outdoor art event. It takes place in a wonderful location on a tree lined section of the Common close to the Town Centre. AL5 2HU.

The two day event showcases the very best of local art. On the Saturday AOTC will coincide with the Harpenden Carnival!

[www.artonthecommon.co.uk/](http://www.artonthecommon.co.uk/)



## 2022 Herts Open Studios 10th September to 2nd October

Opportunity to meet and get to know the amazing talented artists in our Hertfordshire community. **See back cover.**



## The Ayot St Lawrence Art Show

Now in its 47th year, the 2022 Ayot St Lawrence Art Show will be held between **Saturday 18th and Monday 20th June 2022** in the beautiful Palladian Church, Ayot St Lawrence, Herts, AL6 9BZ

Each year the Art Show attracts many hundreds of visitors. The success of the Show is ultimately down to the quality of the artwork. They have a fantastic range of artists, many of whom exhibit every year in a variety of styles and mediums including oil, water colour and acrylic. In addition to the framed art available for



sale, there is a much sought-after selection of unframed art, and a variety of art-based greetings cards designed by the artists.

£2.00 for adults

[www.ayotartshow.co.uk](http://www.ayotartshow.co.uk)



## Childwickbury Arts Fair 2022 1st -3rd July

A showcase of art and crafts, in the beautiful grounds of the Childwickbury estate near St.Albans, Herts, AL3 6JU. Witness the creative process in action and engage with over 60 artists and craftspeople from all over the UK. A relaxed atmosphere provides an informal gallery experience where you can buy directly from the artists.

### ADMISSION

Adults £7.00 Seniors £6.00  
Child (5-15) £4.00 Under 5 FREE  
Friday 1st July (HALF PRICE ENTRY)  
No advance tickets, purchase at venue on the day.  
Free parking

[childwickburyarts.com/](http://childwickburyarts.com/)

## Big Art Fair 15th - 17th July

The Big Art Fair at Hitchin Town Hall has become an event which visitors look forward to every year. This year is no different; with space for over 50 artists, artisan-makers and designers it promises to be outstanding.

Hitchin Town Hall, Brand Street, Hitchin SG5 1HX is just off the High Street and close to the Market Place. It will be brimming with an amazing array of work, from classical to contemporary.

[www.hvaf.org.uk/our-events/big-art-fair](http://www.hvaf.org.uk/our-events/big-art-fair)



## RA Royal Academy of Arts Summer Exhibition 2022

Burlington House, Piccadilly, London, W1J 0BD  
**21 June — 21 August 2022**  
The annual celebration of art and creativity continues in 2022, This year, the theme of the exhibition is Climate: whether as a crisis or opportunity, or simply our everyday experience, it is an all-embracing and urgent subject.

[www.royalacademy.org.uk](http://www.royalacademy.org.uk)



# Brilliant Van Gogh portraits exhibition at the Courtauld



**W**hen an artist in the 19th century struggled to make ends meet and was on the verge of being a down and out who was almost desperate to fill his canvases with portraits, but he had no cash to pay for sitters, there was only one alternative: look in a mirror and paint yourself.

This is exactly what that iconic master Vincent van Gogh (1853-1890) did. His 35 self-portraits and two drawings survive to this day, all created in just three and a half years from the spring of 1886 to the autumn of 1889 when he was between 33 and 36 years old. His appearance is instantly recognisable throughout the world with strong, characteristic features – the red beard, the ginger hair and those piercing follow you everywhere green eyes, as they did at the Courtauld art gallery, which recently reopened following an impressive refurbishment.

Without doubt, this small retrospective, which sadly came to a close earlier this month of just 16 self-portraits of the great man was not only a mighty feather in the cap of the Courtauld chiefs, but a high class, terrific way of launching the 'new' gallery. Many critics gave the show five stars. If it were possible I'd have awarded it 50!

Some of the works in the show were last together in Van Gogh's studio and had never been reunited until this exhibition. Wow! And this is the first time the full span of his self-portraiture had been explored in over 25 years.

And so this remarkable show gripped us as we cascaded through the various faces of the Dutch artist, from his anguished, profound looks highlighted by a classic demonstration of the impasto technique, to his glares against the background of outrageously coloured brush strokes you'll never see anywhere else. The portraits seemed to fill the gallery with magic and mystery and almost give us an insight into what was going on in his head during a life full of turmoil and pathos.

This exhibition was the first to explore the span of Van Gogh's self-portraiture and offered us a unique and remarkable chance to observe both his creative and personal development in his relatively short career. Here we were able to study his genius – amazingly not recognised in his lifetime – his passion for the colours of nature and perhaps above all his utmost resilience throughout his life.

It is a fact that everyone knows that Van Gogh chopped off his right ear when he must have been in the middle of a parlous state of mind. His self-portrait with Bandaged Ear he painted in 1889 may have been seen on numerous occasions as reproductions find their way everywhere. However, to see the original seems to tell us all about the turmoil he was actually going through. There he is in his winter's coat and hat and heavily bandaged ear. He has anxiety written all over his face. This is possibly was his greatest portrait.

The exhibition featured paintings from major international collections, including the Van Gogh Museum and the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, and the Kroller-Mullert Museum, which houses the second largest collection of Van Gogh's paintings, the Rat Institute of Chicago, the Detroit Institute of Arts, Hartford CT, the national museum, Oslo, the Musee d'Orsay Paris, and London's National Gallery.

On loan from the National Gallery of Art, Washington DC, was a particularly bold canvas apparently completed in a single sitting. He is dressed in his artist's smock

and clutching few brushes in his hand - a familiar guise. There is something mysterious in this work, highlighted by the strong orange beard and ginger hair contrasted with the vivid blue coat.

There is also another similar portrait he painted in early 1888. This painting seems to me to be the extraordinary result of self-

examination with a variety of complementary colours. Here the great man has a grim look, palette in his right hand, half a dozen brushes showing. And telling us, above all, the illuminatory side of his character. Van Gogh attached the greatest importance to portraits as he once wrote in one of his numerous letters.

And then there is the poignant painting of the artist wearing a sun-beaten straw

hat. The shadows and the tight mouth suggest a man suffering both physical and emotional stress. And yet, despite all the personal gloom which gripped the artist over several years, this exhibition left us with a sense of admiration. And he never received any tuition...



*Vincent Van Gogh's self-portraits, The Courtauld Gallery. Ended earlier this month*





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# HERTS OPEN STUDIOS 2022

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