



# BROADBRUSH

Newsletter of Woking Art Society

AUTUMN 2025

## CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

### SUE HINTON

When it comes to my Autumn Report and, indeed, the whole of the Autumn issue of Broadbrush, it's always a bit of challenge since it follows the summer break when there's not been a lot happening in Woking Art Society. In this issue I want to look forward more than looking at what's gone; but, first, I need to bring you up-to-date.

Sadly, the Society's membership numbers continue to trail those of previous years. Each year there are people who choose not to renew their subscriptions for a variety of reasons, but we have almost always made up the number with new members by the end of that year.

We ended 2024 with 138 members and currently we have only 126 members, including 11 who have joined since January 2025.

Why does this matter? Well, it's always good to enjoy the company of and share art-related activities with like-minded individuals and new members bring fresh ideas that encourage us to look at things differently. Equally important, Woking Art Society is largely financed by subscriptions; fewer members means less income to fund everything we do. Ultimately, that means we would have to charge more for everything, which is something I and my fellow committee members are keen to avoid.

So, I would encourage everyone to actively promote the Society at every opportunity and if you need some leaflets to help you, for example, if you have an exhibition somewhere, please let me know as we have plenty in store.

On a more positive note, our Programme Secretaries have continued to impress with the variety of demonstrations they've set up for us. July saw Fiona Hooper 'working with knives', something she uses extensively in her work, usually working in oils.



On this occasion she was painting a still life, which looked good enough to eat!

We met Cathy Read at our first meeting after our summer break. Her forte is creating urban landscape paintings that reflect city life, using masking techniques with ink and watercolour. She proved to be a personable demonstrator with a relaxed and chatty style.

At our October meeting we enjoyed Brendan Smith's demonstration, ending with a vibrant, textural acrylics landscape of an autumnal scene.



September saw our final scheduled exhibition of the year, our traditional 'outdoor' exhibition and sale in Mercia Walk. With the Farmers' Market also taking place on Saturday, 13 September, Woking was quite busy, providing additional footfall that translated into a good number of sales – 12 in all, five cards and seven framed works. The sales total of £965 compared to just £390 at the June outdoor exhibition.

**Looking forward...** before the end of 2025, we have two more demonstrations that look to be as interesting as those we've enjoyed to date:

**1 November:** 'Creative acrylics' with Jenny Muncaster

**5 December:** 'Wildlife in coloured pencil and watercolour' with Chris Church

Looking even further forward, I'm delighted to tell you that, following this year's success, the Lightbox wants us back in the Main Gallery for our 2026 Exhibition. But instead of it being a 'Summer Exhibition' it looks like being a 'Spring Exhibition' with provisional dates from Saturday 7 March to Sunday 22 March 2026, with handing-in and installation during the week prior.

Look out for more details in the coming months.

## MEMBERS' NEWS

### TJ CIPULLO

#### SKETCH CLUB, WEST HORSLEY PLACE

As well as taking a stall at the Lightbox's Christmas Festive Late event coming up on 27 November, Tracey has been participating in the five-week 'Sketch Club' running on Thursday mornings from 4 September to 2 October at West Horsley Place. It's run by Jane Allison, President of Guildford Art Society, and provides the opportunity to explore the manor house's interiors, grounds and gardens with sketch books and paints in hand. Two of Tracey's watercolours are included below.



<https://westhorsleyplace.org/whats-on/sketch-club>

### SAMARA COOKE

#### EXHIBITION, DENBIES

Samara is a member of the Surrey Hills Plein Air Painters and has recently been exhibiting with them at Denbies Wine Estate in Dorking.

### YANA LINCH

#### A BUSY YEAR

2025 has been busy for Yana. She started off the year with her first solo exhibition at the Riverhouse Barn Arts Centre in Walton-on-Thames in February and followed it up in March with the Surrey Contemporaries' Exhibition at Denbies.

Yana then collected the Judges' Award at our Summer Exhibition in June, before exhibiting with Guildford Art Society and at the Landscape Art & Art in Mind Exhibition at London's Brick Lane Gallery in August. And to round it all off,

Yana was exhibiting at Warwick Fusion Art show, along with Hannah Bruce, in September.

### ASKA GOUGH

#### GUILDFORD FESTIVAL OF THE ARTS

Aska was one of several Woking Art Society members who joined other local and emerging artists in participating in the first Guildford Festival of the Arts last month. The festival's stated aims are to revitalise local arts spaces, connect new audiences to visual arts, and foster community through shared cultural experiences, and to establish Guildford as a vibrant arts hub.

Bringing together local art groups like Guildford Arts, Lockwood Studios, Experience Guildford and New House Art Space, venues ranging from G-Live and the Guildhall to Art & Grind and The Star Inn hosted art exhibitions and creative activities. Aska hosted a four-hour drop-in workshop at the Yvonne Arnaud Theatre's Mill Studio, demonstrating her mixed-media techniques and encouraging visitors to get hands-on with textures, pigments and materials.

### SIMON KIDD

#### GLASGOW GALLERY OF PHOTOGRAPHY

Simon was delighted to have one of his pictures selected for an international photography exhibition. The 'Ethereal' exhibition is being held the Glasgow Gallery of Photography from 3 to 31 October.

The image was inspired by a rose transforming into a rosehip in Simon's garden. The image sparked a deeper exploration of the garden's overlooked details that has grown into a whole body of work on botanicals that can be viewed here:

<https://>

[www.simonkiddart.co.uk/hcbwbotanical](http://www.simonkiddart.co.uk/hcbwbotanical)



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# YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS MATTER!

## TELL US WHAT YOU WANT

At this time of the year the Society's committee is putting the final pieces of the following year's programme together. Rooms at The Vyne and Brookwood Memorial Halls have already been booked for the whole of 2026.

Our Programme Secretaries, Tracy Aldous and Tracey Cipullo, have been talking to artists and agencies for several months to find demonstrators for our monthly meetings and tutors for our workshops. They will already be thinking about suitable people to invite for 2027 too, because the best artists are often booked months, if not years, ahead.

Woking Art Society exists for the benefit of its members; so, it's important that we present members with a programme that they will enjoy.

That means you need to tell us what you want to see and do. If you know of a particular artist you'd like to see or there is a specific medium or subject you'd like to know more about, let our Programme Secretaries know.

Your feedback on events would also be very welcome; for example, if one of our demonstrators is particularly interesting, let Tracy and/or Tracey know. The artist may offer workshops where you can learn more about their techniques.

**Email your ideas and thoughts at any time to:**  
[wasworkshops@gmail.com](mailto:wasworkshops@gmail.com)

## WE NEED MORE HELP

Woking Art Society does not employ anyone. Everything that happens is the result of individuals who volunteer their time and expertise.

As the saying goes: '**more hands make light work**' and that applies whether we are talking tea- and coffee-making or organising exhibitions.

If you regularly attend meetings, **please sign up to help with teas** for at least one month in the year. Don't leave it to the same people every month. Although we have cover now for November, we still need a couple more people for the December meeting and more will be needed throughout next year.

**The chart to sign up on is always available at meetings or you can email Anne Dear directly:**

[annedear@outlook.com](mailto:annedear@outlook.com)

While Joanna (Aska) Gough, Tracy Aldous and Tracey Cipullo are relatively new to the **Society's Committee**, most members have been in place for quite a few years and some of us are ready to lighten the load, either by passing over or sharing responsibilities.

Specific areas with which your committee would currently appreciate more support include:

**Administration** – eg membership record-keeping and/or logging exhibition entries

**Managing exhibitions** – in particular those in Mercia Walk

**Publicity** – eg managing the website, helping maintain a consistent online presence and/or liaising with local news providers

**If you can help with any of these tasks – and, ideally but not essentially, are also willing to join us as an active committee member – I'd love to hear from you. Please use my usual email to find out more:**

[sue.wokingart@btinternet.com](mailto:sue.wokingart@btinternet.com)

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## FEATURED MEMBER

*The last issue of Broadbrush was a bumper edition with lots of news and reviews around our Summer Exhibition at the Lightbox, leaving no room for a 'Featured Member'. Now we're picking up the thread and our latest member to be featured is Aska Gough, who has been a member of Woking Art Society since December 2021 and our Secretary since January 2025.*

*Aska is Polish-British and her name is short for Joanna. She describes her work as 'multi-media' and when you look at the range of materials she brings to it, you will understand why.*

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### ASKA GOUGH

#### MY JOURNEY INTO ART – from words to art and back again

People often tell me my art is unusual, unlike anything they've seen before. If that's true, perhaps it's because the path that led me here has been a little different too.



Although creativity was always present in my life, for many years it ran quietly in the background while I built a career in linguistics and translation. With two Master's degrees and a PhD, I lectured and researched in higher education, focused on words, meaning and communication.

Over time, though, I began to sense the limits of language and what it could not quite capture. When life grew heavy and I needed another outlet, I turned not to words but to art. Gradually, I discovered a different kind of language: one of colour, texture, form and energy. In 2020 I began exploring art more deliberately, experimenting with materials and techniques. The freedom of not having formal art training was both daunting and exhilarating, but I think it helped me find my unique voice.

When the stars aligned in 2024, I stepped away from academia to pursue art more fully. In hindsight, it was not a sharp break but an evolution. Today I see myself as both a mixed-media artist and a researcher, exploring how art can be experienced through multiple senses and how inclusive audio description might widen its reach.

In a way, I've come full circle. I once relied on words but found them inadequate, which led me to art. Now, as an artist, I return to words again, wanting to use them to make art accessible to blind and neurodivergent audiences. What once felt limiting has, in a strange turn, become a source of empowerment.

Although still early in my art career, I have been encouraged by recognition. One of my pieces, 'The Way Out,' received a highly commended at Woking Art Society's Summer Exhibition 2025, and I was chosen as cover artist for the Guildford Institute's seasonal brochure.



*Working on 'The Way Out'*

I was also accepted to speak and show my artwork at the Visual Science of Art Conference 2025 in Wiesbaden, Germany. Alongside these, I have participated in exhibitions, run open studios and led multiple workshops.

Community matters deeply to me. I volunteer with several local arts organisations. As well as serving on the committee for Woking Art Society,

I support both Guildford Arts and Lockwood Studios. These organisations have given me platforms to exhibit, but also networks of dialogue and collaboration that are invaluable for any emerging artist.

## MY PRACTICE, PROCESS AND MATERIALS

My studio is on Prey Heath in Woking, surrounded by woodland and heathland, which are a source of inspiration and materials too!

I guess, in hindsight, not following a formal art curriculum freed me from convention and allowed me to embrace materials that felt unexpected yet natural in my hands. I work with tree bark, twigs and other organic matter alongside raw minerals, crystalline formations and gemstones. These are fused with epoxy resin, texture pastes and coloured with pigments to create layered compositions that are as tactile as they are visual.

Texture plays a central role in my practice, and I love the contrasts and harmonies that emerge: rough bark and smooth resin, raw stone and metallic shimmer, cracked-earth textures and polished gemstones.



The creative process itself is also very important for me.

It often begins long before I enter the studio, for example on walks collecting bark, or in gong baths where I cleanse and recharge crystals.

I rarely use brushes. I prefer to handle materials directly – mixing, moulding, sticking, pressing or pouring are all part of an embodied and intuitive way of working, which I love.

Sometimes I start with a clear idea for a piece and the colours and materials follow on; at other times I let the materials lead me until form and meaning emerge. Through experimentation, I invent my own techniques of working with resin, textures and pigments. Since I get bored easily, I'm always looking for something new. Recently, I started using collage inspired by a Woking Art Society demonstration!

## INCLUSIVITY, ACCESSIBILITY AND RESEARCH

Accessibility and inclusivity are guiding principles at the heart of my practice. I believe art should not be a closed world accessible only to the few, but open to diverse audiences, to multiple senses, to interpretation and participation.

My workshops are called 'Be Brave' for a reason. I encourage people of all ages and backgrounds to explore their creativity, even if they have never thought of themselves as artistic. These free workshops are about giving people the confidence to explore their creativity, to discover the wellbeing that comes with it, and feel that art belongs to them too.

I want the idea of inclusivity to extend beyond the artwork itself and beyond purely visual ways of experiencing art. This is why I am developing research into how art can be created and experienced by blind and neurodiverse audiences.

I am particularly interested in haptic exploration and in how inclusive, AI-based approaches to audio description might help narrow the accessibility gap and open the conversation around art to more diverse audiences. This is still in its early stages but is already shaping the direction of my practice. I am in talks with academic partners and organisations for the blind to explore how to move these ideas from concept to reality.

This forward-looking approach is present in a planned project tentatively called '*Mineral Matters*', which has three aims: to deepen my material knowledge of stones and minerals; to explore haptic and multisensory art for accessibility; and to engage blind communities in creative workshops.

Looking back, the path from linguistics to gemstones, from seminar rooms to crystals in a gong bath, may seem unusual. Yet for me it all connects.

Whether through words or materials, I have always been interested in how we create meaning and connection. My hope is that by following this path, I can create art that is inclusive, engaging and open to many ways of experiencing.

<https://www.askagough.co.uk>

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## THE LIGHTBOX

*The Lightbox Gallery and Museum, to give it its full name, has played a significant role in the activities and success of Woking Art Society in recent years. Indeed, many of our members are regular visitors to the gallery and most will have visited at least once since it became the home of the Society's main annual exhibition in 2010.*

*Having just received some good news about its future funding, I thought members might be interested to know a little more about the Lightbox.*

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### **For example, did you know it was designed by the firm behind the London Eye, Marks Barfield Architects?**

With environmental sustainability at the core of its design, the building was purpose-built to be a physically accessible hub and, as an independent charitable trust, the organisation had a mission to 'inspire creativity and foster a connected community by providing welcoming and inclusive access to art and culture'.

Since opening its doors in 2007, the Lightbox has staged award-winning exhibitions alongside contemporary art programmes for adults, families and schools, attracting an estimated 1.5 million visitors including 500,000 schoolchildren (source: [GetSurrey.co.uk](http://GetSurrey.co.uk)). It also looks after three collections – Woking's heritage, Joan Hurst sculpture and the Ingram Collection – and has a thriving café and retail outlet on the ground floor.

But all that was put at risk when one of its primary stakeholders, Woking Borough Council, was declared bankrupt in 2023.

The Council had awarded an annual discretionary grant to the Lightbox under a 2003 service agreement and in 2022/23 this totalled £425,000. Initial fears that all funding would cease meant there would be an enormous hole in the Lightbox's finances. Closure was a very real prospect for several months while government and other officials deliberated over ways to resolve the Borough Council's financial problems.

Thankfully, the Lightbox was recognised as a valuable asset not just to Woking but to the wider Southeast England region. Cutting off all funding was ruled out; but the grant was to be severely reduced and the management team at the Lightbox was faced with the challenge of adapting its operational model to become much more commercially oriented, while also finding alternative funding to secure its future.

Having obtained a grant from the Arts Council and a payment of £130,000 funded via the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, the Lightbox remained open but with a significantly reduced budget for 2024/25.

Savings had to be made and measures implemented included cutting staff numbers and working hours, as well as restricting gallery opening to five days a week instead of six.

Membership fees and entry charges for exhibitions in the upstairs galleries were also increased. However, increased entry fees have also been offset to a degree by the introduction of '**Pay What You Wish Wednesdays**' whereby, until at least December 2025, on Wednesdays between 10.30 am and 12.30 pm, visitors can explore all the gallery spaces without buying a Day Pass. They are simply invited to make a donation, but there is no minimum amount.

**General admission to the entire ground floor space – including the courtyard, café and shop – remains free.**

### **WHAT DOES THE FUTURE HOLD?**

Woking Borough Council has recently confirmed a new funding plan for the Lightbox through to 2027/28, with a grant of £150,000 in the current financial year that will reduce by £25,000 in each subsequent year.

In addition, the Lightbox is the only Arts Council England visual arts National Portfolio Organisation in Surrey and its programmes are supported by Esmée Fairbairn Collections Fund, National Lottery Heritage Fund and Garfield Weston, who support vital work with artists, heritage and audiences.

These combined resources have put the Lightbox on a firm financial footing for the foreseeable future, and through to its 20th anniversary.

Check out the website – <https://www.thelightbox.org.uk> – to see the full range of activities and events planned in the coming months, from exhibitions to workshops and talks.

Coming up next month is:

### **CHRISTMAS FESTIVE LATE** **27 November 2025**

The Lightbox is looking to build on the success of a similar event that proved popular last year. The Christmas Festive Late will run from 5-8 pm and will include free entry and gallery talks, live music, shopping, food and drinks plus a pre-bookable art workshop.

At least two of the Society's members have signed up for stalls. **Anne Dear** will have a craft stall selling her jewellery and small items such as coasters, while **Tracey (TJ) Cipullo's** table will offer mini paintings and her artwork printed on items including greeting cards, coasters, mugs and tea towels.



## **DON'T LET REJECTION GET YOU DOWN!**

*Since our Summer Exhibition at the Lightbox, a couple of our artists have asked me what was wrong with their work and why it got rejected. With that in mind, I want to reassure everyone that **there was nothing 'wrong' with any of the work that wasn't selected** and it's important not to take rejections personally.*

Woking Art Society has operated a selection process for its annual exhibition for many years. Partly this is because we want to ensure we show the very best work but, primarily, it's because we have to reduce multiple entries to a manageable number to fit the limited space available – typically 80-90 paintings (depending on size) from 140-150 submissions.

This problem is faced by the organisers of all open competitions, from the UK Colour Pencil Society, which usually accepts approximately 30% of around 300 entries, to the Royal Academy, which selects 1,000 from over 30,000 entries. Regrettably – but inevitably – some people will be disappointed.

Our own judges are briefed to select based on composition, use of colour, originality and techniques deployed, as well as ability to evoke emotion or tell a story. But they are only human!

Each is a specialist in a particular field and/or medium; each will have their own preferences. So every decision will come with an individual's unconscious bias towards subjects they like or are comfortable with. In addition, pictures that have something a bit different about them will often attract by standing out from others on a similar theme.

***Don't be disheartened and please don't let rejection deter you from entering other competitions or exhibitions.***

There is no dishonour if your work doesn't get in. Put it down to the circumstances on the day and try again, because your rejected submission may be selected next time, on a different day, with different judges. It has happened on more than one occasion at Woking Art Society; indeed, a painting rejected for our annual exhibition one year was awarded a highly commended at the next.

## THINGS TO SEE AND DO

### TEXTILE ART EXHIBITION: HEAR MY VOICE

#### WEST HORSLEY PLACE

There is a lot happening at West Horsley Place these days from nature walks to creative workshops and from theatrical performances to educational tours. If you are attending an event during October, you can also enjoy a variety of textile artworks that will be showing in the manor house and walled garden.

'Hear My Voice' seeks to reveal the layered histories of women whose lives are woven into the fabric of West Horsley Place. In a partnership with the University for the Creative Arts, Farnham, a series of textile art installations has been created in response to hidden and forgotten stories by artists including Beverley Ayling-Smith, Anne Jackson, Alice Kettle, Carol Quarini and Machiko Agano.

To find out more, check out West Horsley Place's website: <https://westhorsleyplace.org>



### PAY IF AND WHAT YOU CAN DAYS

#### First Wednesday of every month

1 October 2025 – 1 April 2026

Admission at Watts Gallery, Compton, near Guildford, is usually £18 for an adult covering the main gallery, Limnerslease Artists' Home, the Sculpture Gallery, Watts Cemetery Chapel, the grounds and gardens. However, on the first Wednesday of every month until April 2026, you can choose to pay or donate what you wish on the day.

For full details of everything that's going on, go to the website: <https://www.wattsgallery.org.uk/visit>

Watts Gallery is open from Wednesday to Sunday and on Bank holidays, from 10 am.

There are plenty of things to see and do at Watts Gallery and Artists Village, including pottery, craft and oil painting workshops, some currently with a festive theme. **Always free to visit** are an **excellent café** and the **Watts Contemporary Gallery**, sited above the shop in the Visitor Centre and where currently there are two exhibitions.

#### WATTS CONTEMPORARY GALLERY

### Peter Brookes: Political Cartoonist of The Times

Until 23 November 2025

This exhibition features over 40 original cartoons by the award-winning cartoonist. The collection of works in ink and watercolour covers the major political events and figures from the turbulent last 18 months, from war in Ukraine and the Middle East, to the churn of British politics and the world of Trump.



### Jonathan Chiswell Jones: 50 years a potter

Until 24 November 2024

Jonathan Chiswell Jones is one of the world's pre-eminent makers of lustreware and this exhibition celebrates 50 years of his work.

Initially inspired by the work of William De Morgan, his lustreware includes plates, dishes, vases, jars and tiles and comprises over 70 new works, all of which are for sale.



## WATTS GALLERY

### WOMEN OF 'OUR TIME'

Until 30 November 2025

Continuing the women theme, Watts Gallery itself currently has what it terms a 'celebration of inspiring women' to support the 175th anniversary of the birth of Mary Watts.

The 'Our Time' initiative is a partnership between HMP Send, the Michael Varah Memorial Fund (MVMF) and Watts Gallery Trust that started in 2009. It enables serving women prisoners to improve their confidence, mental health and wellbeing to develop a range of skills by taking part in weekly art workshops.

As part of their admission price to Watts Gallery, visitors to Limnerslease can see a new decorative dinner service, created by nine artists from HMP Send.



Inspired by the Famous Women Dinner Service designed in the 1930s by Vanessa Bell and Duncan Grant, the Women of 'Our Time' Dinner Service is based on imagining a range of contemporary guests that Mary Watts might invite to a dinner party, with the decorated ceramic plates laid out on the table where these guests would sit.



## GOYA AND MIRO

### ADAMS GALLERY, DORKING

Until 2 November 2025

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

Celebrating the work of two Spanish masters, this exhibition features etchings by Francisco Goya and a selection of lithographs by Joan Miró.

The Los Caprichos etchings were published in 1799 and Goya is thought to have sold only 27 copies before withdrawing them from circulation due to the Inquisition. Most of the remaining copies of the edition were purchased by King Charles IV of Spain. The work was an enlightened, tour-de-force critique of 18th century Spain, and humanity in general.



Miró's early work was influenced by movements, including Fauvism, Cubism and Dadaism, but he was particularly associated with the Surrealists although his innovations in the field of abstraction used none of the superficial devices of the other Surrealists.

Miró created a world populated by strange configurations in vivid colour and made many prints throughout his career. In 1954 he was given the Venice Biennale print-making prize.



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## THINGS YOU MAY FIND INTERESTING

### EXPERT ADVICE ON SOCIAL MEDIA AND WEBSITES FOR ARTISTS

I think most creatives, whether amateur or professional, would acknowledge that social media has an important part to play in promoting both artists and their work.

Equally, I'm sure I'm not alone in being very wary of social media. I don't know how best to use it although I do know it takes a degree of dedication, not to mention time, to ensure it is effective.

If you are thinking of developing an online presence and you'd like to know more about how best to approach the task, you may find an article published in August 2025 on the **Jackson's Art Blog** of interest. It's written by **Claudia Kennaugh**, who sees the internet as useful, but just one tool in a larger box.

You will find the full article here:

[Social media blog](#)

#### Coaching webinars with Claudia Kennaugh

Claudia Kennaugh founded Art & People, a Bristol-based art advisory service offering guidance to artists and collectors, having previously been a gallery manager, art advisor and partner of the Hollywood Road Gallery in London.

Art & People provides professional development support to artists with one-to-one coaching sessions, online tutorials and workshops. In partnership with organisations including Bow Arts Trust, Spike Island and Wimbledon Art Studios, Claudia helps to foster thriving artist communities with engaging group sessions.

Accessibility to art advice is key and this year Claudia shared her expertise as an artist mentor on the BBC One TV programme *'Make it at Market'*. She has also been working with Jackson's to create a series of live webinars that explore key topics of interest to artists.

At a cost of just £10 each, these seek to offer expert advice and practical strategies, as well as inspiration. Two more webinars are scheduled for this year: *'Licencing your artwork'* on 29 October; and *'Working with galleries'* on 17 December 2025.

To find out more or book a place, click the link:

<https://www.jacksonsart.com/artist-ganda-expert-coaching-webinar-claudia-kennaugh>

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### THE CADMIUM AND COBALT DILEMMA – THE RISKS (OR NOT)

Over the years I've heard quite a few discussions and comments about the toxicity of paints, in particular cadmium and cobalt pigments.

I'm an advocate for commonsense and wouldn't dream of sucking my paintbrush, so I've never really given too much thought as to whether they are hazardous to health or the environment. However, an article by **Evie Hatch** published earlier this year **on the Jackson's Art blog** takes a detailed look at the risks associated with using these colours and it makes interesting reading.

Perhaps not surprisingly the conclusion is that, in the hands of a responsible individual, cobalt and cadmium pigments pose little risk. Ultimately it comes down to choice and the vast ranges of modern paints available enable artists to make informed decisions about what's best for their own personal use.

The European Artists' Colour Commission gives recommendations for the responsible handling and disposal of artist paints. You can view and download the PDF from the Jackson's Art blog.

The full article can be found here: [https://www.jacksonsart.com/blog/2025/04/16/cadmium-and-cobalt-and-the-risks-or-not/?utm\\_campaign=cadmium\\_cobalt\\_risks&utm\\_source=kaviyo&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_content=bnl220425&\\_kx=rnop\\_CFWVDrSzazV93Ofx5TuKHYtnVnGmi8MiAaVE-NtGpqUFYouBr2783aDPpd.Yxbst5](https://www.jacksonsart.com/blog/2025/04/16/cadmium-and-cobalt-and-the-risks-or-not/?utm_campaign=cadmium_cobalt_risks&utm_source=kaviyo&utm_medium=email&utm_content=bnl220425&_kx=rnop_CFWVDrSzazV93Ofx5TuKHYtnVnGmi8MiAaVE-NtGpqUFYouBr2783aDPpd.Yxbst5)

## CREATIVE EXPRESSION

### CELEBRITY ART...

It's always been the case that celebrities who produce artworks will get the sort of publicity (not to mention prices!) that lesser-known artists can only dream of.

Having recently published four new limited edition prints to add to his 'Rainy Day' collection, Sir Billy Connolly's art has been in the news recently. Now aged 82 and suffering from Parkinson's, he says that drawing has given him a new lease of life and that he finds inspiration in many things, including memories of his life.

'**Saturday Night**' was apparently inspired by touring with Elton John in the 1970s.



'**Fly away Peter**' was inspired by a painting that Billy saw in Australia of a melancholy man surrounded by birds. He created this alternative version with a multicoloured figure surrounded by birds with humorous facial expressions.



Both are available as signed prints in editions of 295 for £1,250 each:

<https://www.castlefineart.com/collections/billy-connolly>

### INEBRIATES' ART...?!

The photo below appeared in the Daily Telegraph in August, showing double yellow lines newly painted on a road in Old Hunstanton, Norfolk. With a heading of 'Curve Appeal' the paper suggests the council operatives may have painted them *"after a few pints in the pub"*!



## THE SYCAMORE GAP TREE



This famous Northumberland tree hit the headlines for all the wrong reasons when it was illegally felled in 2023 causing widespread outrage. It's been interesting to see how many times it's been in the news since, with subjects ranging from its monetary value to signs of re-growth from the stump. These are two recent stories.

### UNDER A PATIO!

As reported on the BBC website, North Yorkshire-based gardener Howard Dawson lifted a paving stone that had been stacked on his patio for a few years and saw an image of what appeared to resemble the much-loved tree formed by dirt and dust. He called it a 'remarkable likeness' to and a 'miraculous representation' of the Sycamore Gap Tree.



## AS WORKS OF ART

The National Trust has launched a creative commission to mark the legacy of the Sycamore Gap Tree and to 'inspire a renewed connection with nature'.

To quote from its website, the Trust:

*'...is inviting artists, organisations and creative agencies to submit proposals that will breathe life into the wood saved from the felled tree. This extraordinary opportunity will see up to five shortlisted artists receive funding to develop their ideas, with one final concept selected in early 2026.'*

*The commission aims to transform the story of the Sycamore Gap into a powerful symbol of hope, creativity and connection with the natural world. Around half of the tree's timber will be made available for the project, and proposals should explore themes such as:*

- Our collective relationship with nature
- Memory and place
- Community and belonging

*Final concepts should also reflect the National Trust's wider goals: restoring nature, tackling unequal access to green spaces and heritage, and inspiring millions to care for the environment.'*

A shortlist of five artists or collaborations will each receive £5,000 to develop their proposals. A public vote will help to determine the final selection alongside a team of experts. The winning proposal will be announced in February 2026.

The closing date for expressions of interest is Monday, 17 November 2025 and an information pack can be downloaded here:

<https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/visit/north-east/hadrians-wall-and-housesteads-fort/honouring-the-legacy-of-the-sycamore-gap-tree-a-new-creative-commission>

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## COMPETITION OPPORTUNITIES

### DISCERNING EYE DRAWING BURSARY

**Deadline: Thursday 16 October**

The Discerning Eye has offered artists a Drawing Bursary and exhibiting opportunity as part of the ING Discerning Eye Exhibition at the Mall Galleries in London since 2002. A shortlist of five artists will be selected to show their work and receive £150. One winner will be awarded the £1,500 prize.

UK-based artists are invited to submit a minimum of two or ideally three artworks, which must not exceed 50 cms on all sides, including the frame or support.

There is an entry fee of £5 per artist.

For more information and to enter, click here:

<https://artopps.co.uk>

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### GREEN AND STONE WORKS ON PAPER 2026

**Deadline: Tuesday 2 December**

Green and Stone are inviting submissions for a four-week art exhibition in the heart of Chelsea.

The competition is open to two or three-dimensional works from artists, designers and makers, amateur or professional, from anywhere in the world. Works must be made on paper or with paper. All mediums are welcome, including but not limited to painting, drawing, sculpture, mixed media, photography, print and textile.

Works must be available for sale from January to February 2026. They must have been made in the last three years and not previously been exhibited in London. They should not exceed 100 x 100 cms.

Entry is £15 per artwork, with a maximum of three artworks.

For more information and to enter, click here:

<https://artopps.co.uk>

### JOHN RUSKIN PRIZE 2026

**Deadline: Tuesday 2 December**

The John Ruskin Prize is open to entries from artists, designers and makers, amateur or professional, from anywhere in the world. This year's theme is 'Patience in Looking, Truth in Making' and work in any medium is welcome, from painting, drawing and sculpture to textiles, film, performance, sound, installation and digital.

The selection panel will shortlist up to 50 artists and select work for inclusion in an exhibition at Trinity Buoy Wharf, London, from 29 January to 8 February 2026.

Four winners will receive prizes totalling £9,500 comprising a First Prize of £3,000, the Alan Davidson Under 26 Prize of £1,000, Ruskin Mill Trust Prize of £3,000 and the Chelsea Arts Club Award of £2,500.

Work must have been made over the past four years and entry fees are as follows:

**Standard entry:** 1 artwork £25;  
2 artworks £40; 3 artworks £50

**Under 26 entry:** 1 artwork £20;  
2 artworks £25; 3 artworks £38

**International digital entry:** 1 artwork £15;  
2 artworks £20; 3 artworks £30

For more information and to enter, click here:

<https://artopps.co.uk>

## OPEN CALLS FROM MALL GALLERIES

### THE PASTEL SOCIETY

**Deadline: Friday 14 November 2025**

Artists are invited to submit work in pastel and dry media (pastel, pencil, charcoal, crayon, chalk, and more) for the Pastel Society's 127th Annual Exhibition, sponsored by Caran d'Ache.

#### Eligibility

Any artist aged 18 or over may enter, from anywhere in the world.

Artists may enter a maximum of six works each, from which up to four works per artist may be selected.

Work must have been completed within two years prior to the exhibition and not have been exhibited previously at Mall Galleries.

Works should be no larger than 2.4m along the longest dimension.

All works must be an original creation by the artist.

#### Acceptable media:

All types of pastel including soft pastel, hard pastel, oil pastel, ink pastel, water-based pastel, conté crayons or sticks, sanguine, and other dry mediums that are similar in their application including charcoal, chalk, and pencil. Mixed media and three-dimensional works are welcome where pastel or another dry media is the primary medium.

#### Entry fees:

Maximum entries: **6**  
Per entry: **£20.00**

### ROYAL SOCIETY OF BRITISH ARTISTS

**Deadline: Friday 9 January 2026**

Artists are invited to submit works for exhibition alongside members of the Royal Society of British Artists at the RBA Annual Exhibition 2026.

The competition is open to artists of all backgrounds and to works in various media, including painting, sculpture, printmaking and drawing.

Successful applicants can expect:

- To have their selected work included in the RBA Annual Exhibition at Mall Galleries and online
- Eligibility to win prizes and awards worth over £20,000
- An invitation to the Opening Reception
- The chance to sell their work
- To be part of a network of exhibiting artists dating back to 1823 when the Society was founded

#### Entry fees:

Maximum entries: **6**  
Per entry: **£20.00**

*For more information about either competition and to apply, visit the website:*

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