

THE NEWSLETTER

Issue No.2 – November/December 2004

Trudy's Chairwords

What a good start to the new ADFAS season! Janet Canetty-Clark's opening lecture about Venice was delivered with her usual passion and vitality, linking music with colours, history with art and architecture and giving her enthralled audience plenty of reasons to visit or revisit this beautiful city. This month's lecture on Vermeer, with particular reference to conservation, gave an insight into the working world of Jørgen Wadum, whose expertise lies in the research of painting techniques dating back to the 16th and 17th centuries. Both speakers received an enthusiastic response from members and visitors.

The other good news is that ADFAS membership has increased for the first time for several seasons. I would like to take this chance to welcome new members and to thank our loyal bedrock membership for its continued support. I hope that you will all enjoy the programme the committee has put together for this season - the lectures, guided visits, study day etc. As always, any ideas for future events are very welcome.

We were very fortunate in having two generous sponsors for the November lecture. The Hilton Antwerp came up trumps again with the provision of a beautiful and popular venue AND served complimentary drinks after all! Over the years, ADFAS members have been very appreciative of this generosity and it was with great sadness that we learnt of the sudden death of the General Manager of the Hilton, Marc de Punt, who had endorsed the annual support of our society.

And once again, Diamond Tenders (Belgium) NV, the sponsor of a number of past ADFAS events, contributed

towards the cost of the lecture, this time in celebration of the Company's 10th anniversary in Antwerp. Thank you to both sponsors.

I hope that many of you will be free to join the ADFAS tables for supper at the Rubenshof on 6th December. If not, then try to make it for the lecture, *Angels, Cherubs & the Hosts of Heaven*, which, unusually, will begin at 8.30pm.

Trudy Debiice

Our lecturers for December and January

FRANCES FELDMAN

While working as a guide for the Johannesburg Art Gallery, Frances Feldman co-founded The Decorative Arts Society in Johannesburg. For seven years she organised the society and arranged its lectures, and now is its patron. In 1984 she organised Art and Antiques courses for Phillip's and Sotheby's, and for the last few years has been a partner in a Bond Street shop which deals in early Portrait Miniatures.

ALEXANDRA DRYSDALE

Alexandra Drysdale gained a First in Fine Art from Chelsea College of Art in 1985 and has been painting and exhibiting her work ever since. Her lectures aim to open people's eyes to the language of painting in a new and exciting way.

SUPPER AT THE RUBENSHOF

Monday, 6 December 2004

A pre-lecture supper is planned for ADFAS members and their guests, a chance to begin the Christmas season in the relaxed and friendly ambience of the Restaurant Rubenshof and to socialise with other members in a way that our regular lecture evenings rarely leave time for.

Menu

Soup of the day or Cheese croquettes
Steak with pepper sauce or Fried cod fillets, served with French fries
Sweet or coffee

Price: Euro 18.60 per person

(This does not include drinks, which will be charged separately).

Time: 18.45 for 19.00 hours

Please note that in order to have the time to enjoy our supper, the lecture will start at the later time of 20.30 hours.

Please call Trudy or Gilberte (numbers on last page) by Wednesday, 1st December at the latest if you would like to join the supper party. It would be helpful if you could also let us know your choice of menu. Payments are to be made on the night.

IMPORTANT:

December's lecture will start at the later time of 8.30 pm

**Café/Restaurant Rubenshof (first floor), Groenplaats 9, 2000
Antwerpen (tel: 03/231 59 52)**

Monday 6 December 2004
ANGELS, CHERUBS & THE
HOSTS OF HEAVEN
Lecturer: Frances Feldman

After searching the internet for a long time I found a website that dealt with characteristics of angels and I thought I might disclose you some of the secrets!

Angels are created from "light". The Arabic word for angel is *malak*. According to its root form, *malak* means "messenger," "deputy," "envoy," "superintendent," and "powerful one." The root meaning also implies descent from a high place.

Angels move very rapidly and permeate all realms of existence. They also descend into the hearts of Prophets and saintly people to bring them inspiration.

Some angels represent species of earthly creatures, and control and protect them.

There are *various classes of angels*. One class is engaged in constant worship; another worships by working. These working angels have functions that resemble human occupations, like shepherds or farmers. In other words, the face of the Earth is like a general farm, and an appointed angel oversees all of its animal species by the command of the Creator.

Angels carry out whatever God commands them. These beings are never promoted for what they do, for each has a fixed, determined rank and receives a particular pleasure from the work itself, as well as a radiance from worship.

Angels are neither male nor female and they have no evil-commanding souls. They do not sin or disobey.

There are *different kinds of angels*. Besides those deputed to represent and supervise various species on the Earth and present their worship to God, there are four Archangels and the angels who carry God's Throne.

What is certain is that I found more pictures and paintings of angels on the web than I found explanation about these creatures. It is true that these

symbols of innocence and purity have always been with us, in every time and culture.

GDB



Madonna and Child with Angels
by Sandro Botticelli (1465)
National Gallery of Art, DC, USA



The Sistine Madonna, details of the Angels
by Raphael (1513-1514)
Gemäldegalerie, Dresden



Angel with a Violin
by Melozzo da Forlì (c.1480)
Vatican

Monday 10 January 2005
RED VIBRATIONS
Lecturer: Alexandra Drysdale

We all know that RED is the favourite colour of children; that it is used in advertising to evoke erotic feelings (red lips, red cars, etc.); that red traffic lights and brake lights announce danger; that infrared radiation feels warm and pleasant; that shame or anger colours our face red, etc.

But did you know that RED is supposedly the first colour perceived by Man? Or that brain-injured persons suffering from temporary colour-blindness can perceive red before they are able to discern any other colour?

In antiquity the protective powers of the colour red against evil influence were common belief. Objects, animals and trees were covered in red paint, warriors painted their axes and spear-catapults red to endow the weapons with magic powers. Roman gladiators drank blood of their dying adversaries to take over their strength. In other cultures, the newly born were bathed in blood of particularly strong and good looking animals. Red painted amulets or red gems, such as ruby or garnet, were used as charms against the "evil eye". Wearing a red ruby was supposed to bring about invincibility. Red bed-clothes were customary in Germany up to the Middle Ages as protection against the "red illnesses", such as fever, rashes or even miscarriages (a famous example is Jan Van Eyck's *Arnolfini Wedding*, painted in 1434).



Arnolfini Wedding
by Jan Van Eyck (1434)
National Gallery, London

In Europe, up to the time of the French Revolution, strict clothing regulations were enforced and pure colours were reserved exclusively for the nobility. Preparation of pure bright colours from natural sources was very tedious, which is why wearing red coats was the exclusive right of the nobility in medieval times and it also announced the power over life and death of those wearing red robes like kings, cardinals, judges and executioners.

Comments on lectures and visits by ADFAS members

Please send us your comments and we will publish them. Thank you.

Janet Cannetty Clark on Venice and Her Music (October 2004)

The lecture opened with the sounds of Monteverdi's *Orpheus* while we gazed at slides with panoramic views of Venice. What a beautiful way to introduce "La Serenissima" as Venice used to be called!

Mrs Canetty first commented on the importance of colour in music with pictures from the San Zaccharia Church: musical angels on the altarpiece by Bellini (1505) and a marvellous angel playing the Viola da gamba by Carpaccio. To emphasise this aspect of music, our lecturer made a side comment based on the 1935 work of the Australian artist Roy Denestre called "A rested phrase from Beethoven's 9th Symphony in Red"!

To show that the lives of the Doges of Venice were continually filled with music, we looked at paintings by Bellini (the Piffari's in the courtyard) and Bassano (the musicians accompanying the Pope and Doge parading in Venice).

While our lecturer explained the architectural importance of the interior of San Marco, we listened to Adrian Willaerts' music with echo effect (two brass groups), followed by the music of Giovanni Gabrielli with double choirs in opposite side galleries. It is this split double choir that initiated the concerto form in music.

Pictures of the Rialto Bridge, the Bridge of Sighs, the isle of San Giorgio Maggiore with its Palladian style church, the Baroque architecture of several Palaces and paintings by Lotto, Bassano and Canaletto were enhanced by music from Monteverdi and Vivaldi.

In this wealthy 16th century Venice, the Camerata, a group of rich men, surrounded by objects of antiquity, invented the Opera genre with beautiful recitatives. Special buildings for entertainment were built and later

in the 18th century Vivaldi, the brilliant Venetian violinist and composer, gave music lessons to the orphan girls of the Ospedale della Pietà.

Although Venice lost its independence in the 19th century and economic decline followed, the city continued to attract many artists. Wagner orchestrated here the second act of his opera *Tristan and Isolde*, the first performance of Stravinsky's *The Rake's Progress* took place at La Fenice, and Benjamin Britten saw the first performances of two of his operas, *The Turn of the Screw* and *Death in Venice*, also at La Fenice.

This most interesting lecture ended as it started with panoramic views on Venice, but this time accompanied by the glorious music of Vivaldi.

GDB

Jørgen Wadum on The Girl with the Pearl Earring (November 2004)

What an evening! I had the impression that Jørgen Wadum took us into the restorer's room and disclosed to us the most incredible secrets!

Two projectors and two screens enabled him to show us a painting or details of a painting before and after restoration, or a painting and a detail in close-up. It was all very technical and I am not sure I understood everything, but I was mesmerised.

Using X-rays of Vermeer's paintings the lecturer showed us exciting details like that microscopic white dot in the corner of the mouth of *The Girl with the Pearl Earring* or the discovery of a patch of blue sky that was not part of the original Vermeer's painting!

It is often said that Vermeer was a slow painter, but in fact he painted rather quickly and then it took him a long time to finish, because he was continuously checking the colours, and the light reflections. It is those light

reflections that are the most characteristic feature of a Vermeer painting!

The painter certainly knew the *camera obscura*, but he didn't use the technique in his paintings. What he did use, was the technique of lining out the perspective with a string from a certain point, the pinprick.

He often painted with expensive ultramarine colour and he even dared to paint over it. He played with the effects of light, using sharp contrast for light on dark colours and haziness for dark on light colours. From Da Vinci he learned to use cone shaped shadows. He not only took into account the reflection of outside light, but also the reflection from light colours. The magnified copper button of a chair showed a three dimensional reflection!

Jørgen Wadum also made us discover why the one painting is probably not a true Vermeer and why another is no longer a fake Vermeer!.

It was all extremely interesting, but I was often so busy trying to understand what the lecturer was saying, that I just forgot to take notes!

GDB

The red of the cardinal's robe in Raphael's painting below demonstrates his rank and importance in society.



Portrait of a Cardinal by Raphael
(1510/1511)
Museo del Prado, Madrid

DATES TO REMEMBER

6 December 2004	ADFAS lecture <i>Angels, Cherubs & the Hosts of Heaven</i> Lecturer: Frances Feldman (preceded by dinner – see this Newsletter)	Rubenshof, 1st floor	8.30 pm
14 December 2004	ADFAS Committee Meeting (if you have anything you would like brought up at the Committee meeting, please get in touch with Trudy Debice or Gilberte Du Bois)		
10 January 2005	ADFAS Lecture <i>Red Vibrations</i> Lecturer: Alexandra Drysdale	Rubenshof, 1st floor	7.30 pm
7 February 2005	ADFAS Lecture <i>How is it Made? A Closer Look at Silver</i> Lecturer: Dr Helen Clifford	Rubenshof, 1st floor	7.30 pm
7 March 2005	ADFAS Lecture <i>Spoils of War – The Displaced Art of WWII</i> Lecturer: Rev. Donald Easton	Rubenshof, 1st floor	7.30 pm
19 March 2005	ADFAS Study Day At the renewed Photography Museum - further details in the next ADFAS Newsletter		
4 April 2005	ADFAS Lecture <i>Cities of Vesuvius: Art and Everyday life in Ancient Pompeii and Herculaneum</i> Lecturer: Dr Neil Faulkner	Rubenshof, 1st floor	7.30 pm
9 May 2005	ADFAS lecture <i>Velasquez, the Great Magician</i> Lecturer: Douglas Skeggs	Rubenshof, 1st floor	7.30 pm

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With thanks to this month's contributors:
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