

THE NEWSLETTER

Issue No.4 – March/April 2005

Trudy's Chairwords

Those members and friends who missed the scheduled ADFAS lecture on silver in February may be unaware that at (almost) the last minute plans changed, due to the unexpected hospitalisation of Dr Helen Clifford, our NADFAS lecturer. With help from our sister societies in Brussels and The Hague, ADFAS was able to find a substitute speaker at very short notice and we were treated to the lively wit and expertise of Lieve Dejonghe, a freelance lecturer and art historian resident in Brussels. Lieve gave us a knowledgeable insight to the art movement *Cobra* and spoke with such mischievous delight that her audience was both enthralled and entertained. There were many requests from members afterwards for a return visit by our stand-in speaker and Lieve has said she will happily lecture for ADFAS again. We are very grateful that she was prepared to step in at such short notice and provide, in addition, a thoroughly enjoyable evening.

Unfortunately, the group visit to the Floris Jaspers Retrospective in Ostend had to be cancelled for lack of support but Maureen has now arranged a rather special visit closer to home, on Saturday 9 April (details below). I hope that the interesting venue and easier location will encourage more members and friends to participate.

Two committee members, Gilberte Du Bois and Angela Dodds, have recently attended the annual Mainland Europe Area and Directory Meetings held by NADFAS in London. Both these meetings help ADFAS to keep in touch with NADFAS House and other DFAS societies, raising any problems and exchanging ideas. They are also a huge help in the future planning of lecture programmes, which we hope you will all enjoy.

And speaking of Committee members ... PLEASE volunteer to help if you have any interest at all. Our next committee meeting is on Monday 25 April at 19.30. We would be delighted if any members would like to join us that evening, to see what committee work entails (wine and laughter included!) and to discuss the possibility of helping out next season. This is vital for the future of ADFAS!

Trudy Debrace

Hidden Treasures – Saturday 9 April

In 1901-03 a room in the historical building called *De Grootte Witte Arend* (The Big White Eagle), Reynderstraat 18 in the centre of Antwerp, was converted into a neo-gothic chapel devoted to Saint Charles. During the works, very rare 15th Century murals were discovered, representing Sibyls – female prophets from antiquity. The murals are still present, and new restorations have revealed captivating information. Up until recently the public could only look at these murals through a glass door. But Key Minnebo, who is well known to most of you, has obtained the exclusive rights – which is what makes this visit so special – to take people into the Chapel and view other art works.

The lecture will last for about one hour, and we can arrange to have lunch in the public area of the Grote Witte Arend afterwards. Lunch would NOT be included in the tour fee (which would be dependant upon numbers, but probably about €6.50 per person).

Latest date for putting yourself down for this visit is at our next lecture, 4 April; if you want to book now, please call me 03 238 29 51, letting me know if you want lunch afterwards or not, or else contact any member of the Committee.

Maureen Smith

Our lecturers for April and May

NEIL FAULKNER

Freelance lecturer (Honorary Lecturer at Inst. of Archaeology, Uni. College London), editor (Magazines: *Current Archaeology* & *Current World Archaeology*), writer, excavator & occasional broadcaster.

Has published 3 books, including *Hidden Treasure: digging up Britain's past*, to accompany the BBC TV series. Director of 2 archaeological field projects in UK, in one excavating an Anglo-Saxon village & cemetery, the other an Elizabethan mansion. Occasional TV appearances.

DOUGLAS SKEGGS

Lecturer on paintings since 1980, he has also conducted many tours around Europe. Cultural advisor to *Ultimate Travel*.

Has written & presented TV documentaries, notably the Omnibus programme on *Whistler* & the exhibition video on *William Morris*.

3 solo exhibitions of his paintings in England & Switzerland.

Has published 5 novels & a book on Monet - *River of Light* - which has sold 30,000 copies.

Our meeting place:

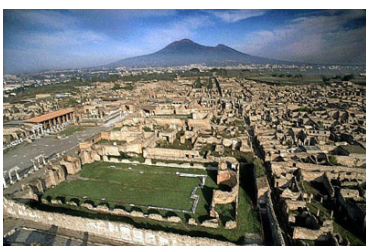
**Café/Restaurant Rubenshof (first floor), Groenplaats 9,
2000 Antwerpen (tel: 03/231 59 52)**

Monday 4 April 2005
CITIES OF VESUVIUS: ART AND
EVERYDAY LIFE IN ANCIENT
POMPEII AND HERCULANEUM
Lecturer: Neil Faulkner

Pompeii

In 79 AD Mount Vesuvius erupted and buried the ancient town of Pompeii in Campania with a seven-meter high blanket of ash and lapillus, small volcanic stones. The many archaeological digs that have been going on for decades in and around Pompeii have discovered many of the monuments that survived the disaster, such as the *Antiquarium* (where the casts of the inhabitants buried under the lava are kept), the Temple of Apollo, the Temple of Vespasian, the Slaughterhouse, the Temple of Jupiter, the Thermal Spa Bath-house and the Surgeon's House. Digs are still ongoing and recently work has been carried out to uncover all the parts of the *Casa del Bracciale d'oro* (the House of the Golden Bracelet), including the fountains in what was once the garden of this Roman *domus*, and fragments of numerous frescoes.

Pompeii is slowly returning to light and in a certain way, also to life. Recently an ambitious project was created: to recreate the ancient wine production of the city. The result is "*Villa dei misteri*", an extremely fine wine that is aged in oak barrels and is distributed in a limited edition.



Herculaneum

At various times Etruscans, Greeks and Romans all dominated this wonderful city that stands high over the sea, until it was completely destroyed in 79 AD by the eruption of Mount Vesuvius. The lava that exploded so violently over Herculaneum destroyed most of the buildings (unlike Pompeii) but saved almost all the objects that were inside the houses, as it covered them slowly. Thanks to this phenomenon, all kind of perfectly preserved objects can

now be seen: furniture, ornaments and also papyrus and wooden objects that can still be looked at today even though they were carbonized so many centuries ago. Gazing at these objects will help you to understand the habits and daily life of the population that lived there almost 2000 years ago.

(From the web:
travelplan "Cities of Vesuvius")

(For those who wish to know more about the archaeology of the Bay of Naples, Neil Faulkner recommends *Cities of Vesuvius, Pompeii & Herculaneum* by Michael Grant. The eruption of Vesuvius in 79 AD, which buried these two cities beneath several metres of ash and pumice, preserved the materials of the daily lives of their inhabitants and has given us a near-perfect representation of what life was like in a Roman provincial town.

Monday 9 May 2005
VELASQUEZ, THE GREAT
MAGICIAN
Lecturer: Douglas Skeggs

Diego Rodriguez de Silva Velasquez was born in Seville, Spain; his date of birth is not recorded but we know he was baptised on 6 June 1599. In his teens he studied art with Francisco Pacheco, whose daughter he married. The young Velasquez once declared, "I would rather be the first painter of common things than second in higher art." He learned much from studying nature. After his marriage at the age of 19, Velasquez went to Madrid. When he was 24 he painted a portrait of Philip IV, who became his patron.

The artist made two visits to Italy first in 1629 and again 20 years later. At that time he bought many paintings - by Titian, Tintoretto, and Paolo Veronese - as well as statuary for the king's collection.

Except for these journeys Velasquez lived in Madrid as court painter. His paintings include landscapes, mythological and religious subjects, and scenes from common life, called genre pictures. Most of his work, however, consists of portraits of court notables that rank equally with the

portraits painted by Titian and Anthony Van Dyck.

In 1660 Velasquez had charge of his last and greatest ceremony -- the wedding of the Infanta Maria Theresa to Louis XIV of France. This was a most elaborate affair. Worn out from these labours, Velasquez contracted a fever from which he died on 6 August 1660.

Velasquez was a master realist, and no painter has surpassed him in the ability to seize essential features and fix them on canvas with a few broad, sure strokes.

(From the web:
webMuseum, Paris)



Las Meninas (Maids of Honour)
1656-57.
Museo del Prado, Madrid

ADFAS Visit:
Friday 17 June
Katoen Natie Art Collection and
Dinner

Something very special to bring the present, successful season to a close: a visit to the private art collection owned by one of the big Antwerp *naties*. In their headquarters in the Van Aerdtsstraat, Katoen Natie has a collection of art ranging from items belonging to the Egyptian period of the pharaohs to works by artists from the Cobra movement.

ADFAS has arranged for an English-speaking guide (supplied by Katoen Natie) to meet us at 5.30 pm and take us around the collection. If we reach our maximum allowed of 20 people, this will cost €5 per person; we can then have dinner in the Katoen Natie private dining room afterwards.

Comments on lectures and visits by ADFAS members

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

Lieve Dejonghe on The Cobra Movement (February 2004)



The name Cobra came from the first letters of the home cities involved, Copenhagen, BRussels and Amsterdam.

The ideological and idiomatic basis for Cobra can be found in Danish art from the period 1935-1945. Asger Jorn (born in Denmark 1914-1973) was the major figure in Cobra. In 1948 Corneille (born in Liège 1922), Karel Appel (born Amsterdam 1921) and others started the 'Experimentale Group' and the magazine 'Reflex'. This group later became an important part of Cobra.

Strong colouring was typical for the artists of the group. They were influenced by fairy tales and myths, children's drawings, primitive art, and by the art of their contemporaries Jean Dubuffet, Paul Klee, Joan Miró and others. Impressions from these different fields made it possible for the artists to incorporate a variety of symbols and images from the fantastical and humorous to grotesque, absurd forms.

It was common for a group of artists or artists and poets to collaborate. Works consisting of a so-called *peinture-mot*, a poetry-painting, were typical for Cobra. The group also published magazines, organized exhibitions and polemic debates (in the Brussels café "Le Greenwich"). Cobra ideology manifested itself in all forms of art, particularly paintings, sculptures, ceramics and poetry.

Cobra was active for only three years, up until November 1951, after when it formally was dissolved by common agreement. Its revolutionary ideas and awakening of self-realization are still powerfully alive in modern art. The movement posed an important link between the rational and irrational, abstract and figurative and between art

and nature. Many members from the Cobra group have continued to develop on an individual path and for the most part have gained international acclaim. They inspired young artists such as Marcel Broodthaers, Maurice Wyckaert, Roel d'Haese, Bram Bogart, Reinhoud d'Haese and many others.

GDB

Spoils of War - The Displaced Art of World War II by Donald Easton (March 2005)

As an archaeologist, Donald Easton was asked in 1994 to confirm that certain objects now in the Pushkin Museum in Moscow formed part of the legendary Gold of Troy, which had disappeared from the Antiquities Museum in Berlin in 1945. It is in this way that he became involved in the subject of his lecture. A most intriguing subject. We all know that masterpieces were stolen or confiscated and transferred to Germany before and during WW II and that later it wasn't easy to know where each of these masterpieces had gone, whether they had been destroyed or were still being kept secretly in a salt mine, a museum's reserves or some another undisclosed place. But after the exciting lecture Donald Easton gave us, we are all convinced that the problems of displaced art won't be solved tomorrow or even in the near future. It is, as he said, still a total mess.

The story begins in 1938 when Hitler plans the purification of the arts. All non-Germanic, degenerated works of art by Communists, Freemasons and Jews must be destroyed! In Germany, Austria and Czechoslovakia collections were confiscated or bought up in order to enrich a Museum for the Führer in Linz. Awaiting its building, the collections came first to Munich. Later, when collections from Belgium, Holland and France were added to the plunder, many works of art were transferred to Berlin, where a special building was constructed to house them. By the end of the war, with the advance of Allied troops, space became a problem. Priceless works of arts were evacuated to bank vaults,

natural caves, salt mines; in general they went in an easterly direction. British and American art specialists in uniform followed the Western troops and had to try to prepare inventories of the works of art they found. But as Russian troops from the Eastern Front came closer and the German troops were in disarray, many art collections were often left to Nazi guards and Polish workers and as we all know, "First come, first served" became the rule.

After the war, the process of the return of and restitution for the stolen works of art began. In the West this could more or less be satisfactorily settled, but not with those items which were in Communist hands. It is only since the fall of Communism that the question of this cultural heritage has once again been put forward. Once more claims were registered, but first a legal framework had to be organized and the compilation of a good list, with all the necessary documentation it entails, is now the first and most important item on the programme.

It was a most interesting lecture by a true specialist, but what I personally also would have liked to hear and see was the story, travels, moves and restitution of a few well known works of art to illustrate the subject.

GDB

Katoen Natie Art Collection and dinner (continued)

Dinner (to be prepared by the Katoen Natie chef) will consist of a menu agreed beforehand, with aperitif, starter, main dish, dessert, tea or coffee and accompanied by appropriate wines; the cost for this would be €50 per person.

The reason for the late start to this visit (5.30) is because we can only see the collection after office hours; and we will have the Katoen Natie dining room to ourselves for the meal following the visit.

If you are interested in this visit, please contact Maureen Smith on 03 238 29 51, or sign the list at the April lecture, or at the very latest at the May lecture.

DATES TO REMEMBER

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 April 2005	“Hidden Treasures” – a visit to the St.Charles Chapel in De Groote Witte Arend Followed by lunch if wanted	Reyndersstraat	11.30 am
15-24 April	The Floralties of Ghent 2005 (Ghent's festival of gardens and flowers – held every 5 years)	Flanders Expo	8 am- 6.30 pm
25 April 2005	ADFAS Committee Meeting (if you have anything you would like brought up at the Committee meeting, please contact Trudy Debice or Gilberte Du Bois)		
9 May 2005	ADFAS lecture <i>Velasquez, the Great Magician</i> Lecturer: Douglas Skeggs	Rubenshof, 1st floor	7.30 pm
17 June 2005	Evening Tour (with guide) and dinner: Katoen Natie Art Collection	Van Aerdtstraat	5.30 pm

And don't forget, throughout 2005, the various concerts, exhibitions and other opportunities to celebrate 175 years of Belgium! Information available in local newspapers, radio, television and tourist offices.

2005-2006 Season:

3 October 2005	ADFAS Lecture, preceded by the AGM <i>Landscape into Sound</i> Lecturer: Digby Hague-Holmes	Rubenshof, 1st floor	7.30 pm
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ADFAS website – <http://home.tiscali.be/ADFAS>

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With thanks to this month's contributors:
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