

THE NEWSLETTER

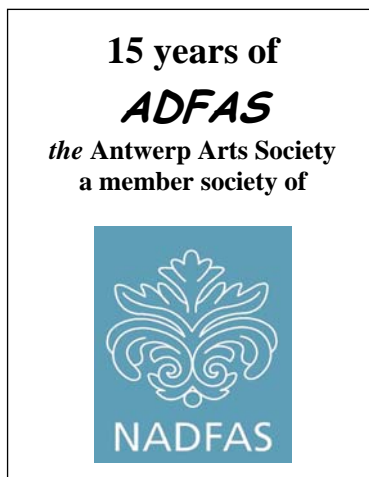
Issue No.1 – September 2006

Trudy's Chairwords

The start of this ADFAS season is a milestone in the Society's history. It is fifteen years since the Antwerp Decorative & Fine Arts Society was inaugurated. Those of us who have been members since 1991 have experienced a variety of venues, numerous committees and an undiminished enthusiasm for the Arts. We have had the opportunity to listen to 112 illustrated lectures of variable quality (but who would want to miss the outstanding ones!) and to take advantage of the many well-organised guided visits to exhibitions and places of artistic and historical significance. In addition, the ADFAS Volunteers have worked on a total of 14 conservation projects in the city's churches and museums, gaining a fine reputation for reliability and hard work and much admired by NADFAS.

Sadly, declining membership numbers, in common with all the Antwerp expatriate-founded clubs and societies, has meant that ADFAS has struggled to survive over recent years. It also means that the committee has to be less ambitious when planning extra activities. Gone are the days when we could easily count on 15 – 20 members signing up for a weekend in Lille or London. In recent seasons, an increasing number of planned full or half-day visits have had to be cancelled for lack of interest. This is not surprising when membership hovers around 50.

The October lecture will be preceded by the AGM. At the final meeting of the present committee, ADFAS finances came under close scrutiny. The figures indicate that, even with viable savings on some costs (e.g. always accommodating the lecturers with a member, never in a Bed & Breakfast), there will be a deficit next season (2007-8) unless the subscription is raised substantially. Last season's



sponsorship, the tombolas and commission from sales at the art exhibition, enabled ADFAS to end the season in credit. Calculations show that by 2007-8, ADFAS will need a minimum of 47 members paying a subscription of Euro 75 each in order to break even. This is an important issue. I do hope that as many of you as possible will attend the AGM this year; it is your Society and your views should be heard.

I hope that you will all agree that ADFAS is worth supporting. It is unique in what it offers in Antwerp and I, for one, have found the lecture programmes interesting and illuminating, if not always what I expected from the titles! So it is with anticipation and optimism that the committee invites you all to begin the 2006-7 season with a complimentary pre-lecture drink on 2 October, a celebration of the last 15 years and a toast to the future ...

Forthcoming ADFAS visits

VISIT to the new Palace of Justice in Antwerp

With Key Minnebo as our guide - Friday afternoon, 20 October 2006 at 2 pm

For this visit we are fully booked with our maximum of 20 participants.

The list of participants will be on the notice board at the October lecture.

The price per person is Eur 4 and I will take your money on the lecture evening or on the day of the visit. We meet at 1.45 pm at the foot of the main staircase on the Bolivarplaats.

A visit to the new Felix Archives is planned in Spring

As soon as we have more information, it will be announced at the lectures, in the Newsletter and on the Website.

2 October 2006

The first lecture this season promises to be a very interesting one (read all about it on the next page). However, first we are holding our Annual General meeting, which will start promptly at 8 pm, and that in turn is preceded by a welcoming drink on the ground floor of the Rubenshof, to celebrate the start of 15th season of ADFAS meetings and lectures. This starts at the earlier time of 7 pm.

GDB

Our meeting place:

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

The October and November lectures

Monday 2 October 2006
LIFE AND ART IN ANCIENT
EGYPT
Lecturer: Nicole Douek

Most of what we know about life in Ancient Egypt concerns the pharaohs and the lives of the nobility, the priesthood, the army and of course their gods. Little is known of how the vast majority of the ordinary citizens lived, the masses who toiled in the workshops and ploughed the narrow strip of fertile land along the banks of the Nile. There is, however, one exception – the people of one very special village, Deir el-Medina.



Remnants of the houses in Deir el-Medina

Deir el-Medina was on the opposite side of the Nile from the city of Thebes (modern day Luxor) and there was a particular reason for this: it was inhabited by the workmen and artisans whose work included the building and decoration of the tombs of the pharaohs in the Valley of the Kings. Their talents brought them a better standard of living than that of the peasants who tilled the fields. For nearly 500 years during what is known as the New Kingdom (during the 18th, 19th and 20th Dynasties, around 1570-1070 BC), Deir el-Medina and its inhabitants flourished; it was gradually abandoned, and then ransacked, during the Third Intermediate Period that followed the death of Ramses XI at the end of the 20th Dynasty.

It was first excavated some hundred years ago by Ernesto Schiaparelli, with considerable valuable work being carried out later by Bernard Bruyère and Jaroslav Cerný. In the years since then, the exploration of Deir el-Medina has yielded a huge quantity of artefacts and texts written on ostraca or papyri, offering a unique view into the daily life of an ancient Egyptian community.

AMD

Monday 6 November 2006
LEOPOLD II, KING OF THE FIN
DE SIECLE
Lecturer: Lieve Dejonghe

King Leopold II (1835-1909) succeeded to the Belgian throne in 1865 following the death of his father, Leopold I, who was the first King of the Belgians. Cousin to Britain's Queen Victoria, he joined the Belgian Army as a young man and in 1853 married Marie Henriette Anne von Habsburg-Lothringen, daughter of Joseph, Archduke of Austria.

Outside Belgium, Leopold II is chiefly remembered as the king with colonial ambitions; he was the founder and sole owner of the Congo Free State, a private company set up to extract rubber and ivory from that country, his representatives there relying on slavery to do so. He has been held responsible for the deaths of millions of Africans in the process.

However, although extremely unpopular and disliked by his people by the end of his reign, today Leopold is known by many in Belgium as *le Roi-Bâtisseur*, or Builder-King. Using the profits he obtained from the Congo, he commissioned a great number of buildings and urban projects in Belgium (the Royal Glasshouses at Laeken, the Cinquantenaire Park in



Leopold II, King of the Belgians

Brussels, Tervuren's Royal Museum for Central Africa, Antwerp's magnificent Central Station, the thermal baths in Ostend, to name but a few), and was responsible for building the wide boulevards and avenues

which surround the old centre of the City of Brussels. You may admire him or loathe him, but it is thanks to Leopold that Brussels is the majestic and gracious city that we see today.



The Cinquantenaire's triple arch in the snow

GDB

Our October lecturer

NICOLE DOUEK

Nicole Douek, who has a diploma in archaeology from London University and is a BA Hons in Ancient History and Egyptology from University College, London, is a freelance lecturer at the British Museum and the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. She lectures to a number of archaeological and historical societies, and to the University of the Third Age; she has also made several television programmes on Ancient Egypt. She has been involved in excavations at Memphis (with the Egypt Exploration Society).

Our November lecturer

LIEVE DEJONGHE

Lieve Dejonghe has a degree in Art History from the University of Leuven (Belgium) and in English from the University of Villanova (Pennsylvania, USA). She is professionally active as an independent free-lance lecturer at several museums in Brussels and as a tour guide in Belgium, and in that capacity is well known to ADFAS; we last saw her as our guide to the *Symbolism in Russia* exhibition in Brussels.

Other items of interest

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

The ADFAS Art Exhibition

The Eye of the Beholder.....did you buy at the 4th ADFAS Art Event?

For me the 'event of events' of ADFAS has been the art exhibitions and the June 2006 event, the fourth that has been held, was a winner in terms of venue and attendance. The founding principle of creating an opportunity to provide art-graduates with exhibition wall-space next to established artists is a unique contribution which ADFAS can be proud of, as I am sure most members will agree.

Our house displays various past purchases from the previous exhibitions although this time we did not find any works appealing enough, or at an appropriate price to buy; nevertheless others did and at the opening evening it was reported that there were five declared intentions to buy and over the exhibition three of the four graduates sold some of their exhibits. Not that there was much time for me to gaze at the exhibits as my contribution to the evening was pulling seemingly endless numbers of wine corks for what I guessed were in excess of 300 attendees at the opening.

Reflecting on these events my first recall is the moment was when, under the watchful direction of René Dujardin at the first exhibition, we stood back, the hanging complete, to admire the effect when one sculpture dropped off its fixing and broke in half! This repaired sculpture is now part of the ADFAS inventory seeking a home. My best moments remain when looking at the bronze eagle of Michael Bracke, which we bought at the second event and now graces our Antwerp garden.

I am sure we all thank the committee for their time and effort to manage what is, in fact, a rather complex event to arrange. They now have a couple of years to catch their breath before hopefully planning the 5th in 2009!

John Lawrence
(Chair 1991-1998)

End of Season Dinner Tuesday 27 June 2006

A group of 17 ADFAS members and friends met at ZOZAN's carpet exhibition and Restaurant on the Lambermontplaats. The in-depth explanation on Kurdish carpets and the way they are woven, was not a very conventional lecture! We sat on the carpets, with a drink in our hands, while the restaurant owner showed different kind of rugs and carpets. Some made in camel hair, others in cotton and used to eat off, or for packing ingredients, but then also a lot of wonderful bright coloured woollen rugs and bags. They all have names, but as I was not taking notes, I forgot most of them!



Jaff Kurd Bagface Late 19th C

Kurds are an ancient Indo-European language group from the Middle East. Kurdistan spans the junction of Iran, Iraq, and Turkey. The "Kurdish" language has two main branches Kurdish and Kurmanji.



Contented members of ADFAS after their introduction to Kurdish carpets

The food afterwards was light, delicious and very exotic and so was the presentation of the food. Being in good company and enjoying the pleasant conversation afterwards, I think most of those present had a very nice evening.

GDB

WHAT'S COMING UP in Antwerp?

Museum Mayer van den Bergh

Until 29 October

Dutch masters of the golden age. 17th and 18th century Dutch painting from the collection of the Museum and the Smidt van Gelder collection.

Museum Vleeshuis

Reopened on 2 September 2006

Sound of the city, a prelude to the new museum of Antwerp.

Van Mieghem Museum, Beatrijslaan on Linker Oever

Until 29 October 2006

Exhibition "Met één voet in Amerika" ("With one foot in America").



*The KBC Tower or Boerentoren,
Antwerp*

Boerentoren & Co, Schoenmarkt 35, Antwerp

16 September until 3 December 2006

75th birthday of the Boerentoren, symbol of innovation and modernity.

Rockoxhouse, Keizerstraat 12, Antwerp

16 September until 3 December 2006

Exhibition: Tower City.

DATES TO REMEMBER

2 October 2006	Complimentary drinks in honour of the 15th anniversary of ADFAS, followed by: the ADFAS AGM and then by our lecture: <i>Life and Art in Ancient Egypt</i> Lecturer: Nicole Douek	Rubenshof, 1st floor	7 pm 8 pm 8.15 pm
20 October 2006	Guided tour of the new Justitiepaleis (Guide: Key Minnebo)	Further information from Gilberte Du Bois	2 pm
24 October 2006	ADFAS Committee Meeting (if you have anything you would like brought up at the Committee meeting, please get in touch with Georgina Murphy)		
6 November 2006	<i>Leopold II, King of the Fin de Siècle</i> Lecturer: Lieve Dejonghe	Rubenshof, 1st floor	7.30 pm
11 December 2006	<i>The Cup that Cheered: Tea, Coffee and Chocolate in the 18th Century</i> Lecturer: Dinah Reynolds	Venue to be announced	7.30 pm
8 January 2007	<i>The Rake's Progress: Stravinsky, Hogarth and Hockney</i> Lecturer: Janet Cannetty-Clarke	Rubenshof, 1st floor	7.30 pm

ADFAS CONTACTS

Trudy Debice	Chair	03/646 07 17	tjdebice@skynet.be
Georgina Murphy	Secretary	03/225 21 38	georginabmurphy@gmail.com
Edgard Hubert	Treasurer	03/232 62 37	edgardhubert@hotmail.com
Gilberte Du Bois	Volunteers & Outings	03/230 98 72	gilberte.dubois@belgacom.net
Angela Dodds	Membership & Programme	03/230 39 36	angela.dodds@skynet.be
Maureen Smith	Membership	03/238 29 51 (GSM: 0478/344 094)	ipdc@scarlet.be
Helen Vinckier	Ordinary Member	03/384 01 56	

Newsletter Editors: Angela Dodds & Gilberte Du Bois

ADFAS website – <http://www.ADFAS.org>

(Webmaster: Janet Hammersley)

Bank account number: 610-1114400-58

With thanks to this month's contributors:
Trudy Debice, Angela Dodds, Gilberte Du Bois and John Lawrence