

THE NEWSLETTER

Issue No.1 – September/October 2007

An Introduction

Dear Members,

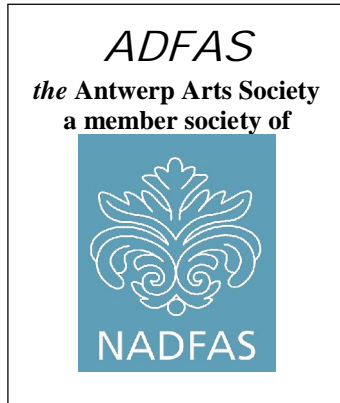
It's hard to believe, but the summer is over and a new ADFAS season is upon us. An exciting one, I hope you will agree – you will have received by now the programme of lectures which our Membership Secretary, Maureen Smith, sent to you recently.

She also sent you information about the AGM, due to be held just before October's lecture. We have volunteers for serving on the committee, and I hope you will approve their appointment; you have also read about the increase in membership fees, which is something your previous committee debated for a long time before deciding that we had no choice, due more than anything else to the increased fees being charged by lecturers. One item on the agenda concerns moving the date of the AGM from October (the start of the season) to May (at the end); this will allow us to start each season with a new committee already in place. Please read the annual report and look at the accounts, and the outgoing committee will be ready to answer any questions you may have.

There is nothing more to say except: we're looking forward to seeing you all again on Monday 8 October – and do remember, the evening now starts at 7 pm so if you want to come along early to have a drink and chat with old friends before the AGM at 8 pm and lecture at 8.15 pm, please do so.

Angela Dodds

Our meeting place:
Café/Restaurant Rubenshof (first floor), Groenplaats 9, Antwerp
(tel: 03/231 59 52)



British Vision

**Observation and Imagination in
British Art, 1750-1950**
Saturday 24 November 2007
**Visit with guide to
British Vision**
Museum of Fine Arts, Gent

British Vision is an extraordinary exhibition spanning over 200 years of British art. Held in the newly-renovated Ghent Museum of Fine Arts, the exhibition features paintings, drawings, sculptures, photographs and prints from some of the UK's most prominent artists. With works coming from over 55 public collections across the UK, Europe and the USA, this is one of the largest exhibitions of British art to be organised in Europe in recent years. Among artists represented are Hogarth, Gainsborough, Stubbs, Blake, Constable, Turner, Burne-Jones, Spencer, Sutherland, Bacon, Freud, Sickert and Hockney.

We will meet at the museum at 10.45 am, be given a guided tour in English and for those who wish to do so, then have a meal in the Museum's very pleasant restaurant. There are very cheap week-end train tickets to Ghent, or if you go by car there is ample parking in the park around the museum. Cost: €12 (entrance + guide) excluding travel and lunch.

If you want to join us for this visit add your name to the list at the first lecture, or give a call to Gilberte Du Bois, mobile phone number: 0477/530 501.

The Terracotta Army

The British Museum's major Autumn exhibition is "**The First Emperor: China's Terracotta Army.**" It will feature the largest number of terracotta warriors ever displayed outside China and is a rare opportunity to view them in Europe. ADFAS has been offered the opportunity to join a Study Day at the British Museum being organised by BRIDFAS, our sister society in Brussels, on Saturday 17 November which will include an introductory lecture on Qin Shihuangdi, the First Emperor of China, a light lunch, timed entry into the exhibition, and a private guided tour of the permanent Chinese Gallery. Cost of the study day is €65 per person, and you have to make your own way to London.

Anyone who is interested should get in touch with Angela Dodds (details on the last page of this Newsletter) for further details.

WHAT'S ON in Antwerp

Royal Museum of Fine Arts in Antwerp, from 29 June until 18 November 2007:

Under the title *Our guest: the MuHKA*, installations by among others Patrick Van Caekenbergh, Jimmie Durham, Michelangelo Pistoletto and Nedko Solakov will be shown alongside paintings from the 1950s and 1960s already in the KMSKA collection. In addition, here and there works by artists such as Donald Judd, Joseph Kosuth and Dan Flavin will be added to the existing presentation of *Ensor and the Moderns*.

Eugène Van Mieghem Museum, from 2 September until 21 October 2007:
The Antwerp Harbour and its Artists.

Museum Mayer van den Bergh, from 27 October until 27 January 2008:
Portraits of Women (in collaboration with the Van Mieghem Museum).

The October and November lectures

Monday 8 October 2007
THE WORLD OF CARPETS
Lecturer: Roderick Taylor

Carpets have been made all over the Old World and there are indications that they have been produced since before the 5th century BC. Unfortunately they deteriorate and disappear so the story of carpets that we can tell only goes back about 800 years.



Fragment of a 'Portuguese carpet', Iran or Afghanistan, Khorasan c.1600 (The Textile Museum, Washington DC)

The origins of the carpet are speculative and the initial impetus unknown. The similarity of the form and design in most areas would suggest some common source. Each producing area developed a repertory of pattern and technique that originally allowed one to identify the place of manufacture, but now that great semi-mechanised production is universal, particular patterns have been appropriated, producing Caucasian Kubas in Egypt, Bokhara rugs in Pakistan and Persian silk rugs in Belgium.

The story I tell is of an initial development, the spread of manufacture and the growth of collecting in the West. Among the many threads within this story, I will refer to the great historic rugs; the rugs known as prayer rugs; some rugs that please me, and some that tell a particular story.

A little time will be spent looking at the making process ranging from Turkey and Iran to Morocco and China, embracing treating the wool, dyeing and making, both in the home and in the great sheds.

Roderick Taylor

Monday 5 November 2007
VAN GOGH AND GAUGUIN:
A TERRIBLE LUCIDITY
Lecturer: Douglas Skeggs

In the summer of 1888, Vincent Van Gogh left Paris and walked down south to the old Roman town of Arles. He was thirty five years old with less than two years left to live. Born in Holland, he had started his career as an art dealer, given it up to enter the church, his father's profession, but in doing so had discovered his true vocation as an artist. Gruff, volatile and highly emotional, uneasy in company, with a corrosive sense of rejection from those around him, he'd developed a startling ability to communicate through his painting. In Paris he'd discovered the colours of the Impressionists and the draughtsmanship of the Japanese, and the heavy tones of his early work had evaporated in a blaze of light and energy. Now in the south of France he hoped to set up a fellowship of artists.

It didn't come to much, but later that autumn he was joined by Paul Gauguin. Gauguin was a very different character to Van Gogh, dramatic and self assured, flamboyant in his appearance and single minded in his determination to succeed; he had thrown up his highly paid job as a stockbroker to become an artist. Gauguin said he wanted a painting to express rather than just represent and, with this aim, his canvasses were filled with strange, mysterious and often magical sequences of colour in which the real world and the dream world combined with the distant and exotic memories of the Peruvian landscape that he had known as a small child.



Portrait of Van Gogh painting sunflowers, by Gauguin (1888 - Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam)

It was a disastrous combination of personalities. The two artists at once admired each other and were irritated, maddened and exasperated by each

other. Respect and loathing became one. Within two months Van Gogh broke, his mind giving way under his first attack of madness, and he was admitted to hospital, his ear mutilated in a sudden fit of remorse for the violent attack he'd made on his friend. Gauguin left for the north and the two men never met again.

This lecture reconstructs the lives and works of these two remarkable figures; it looks into the motives and ambitions that drove them and examines the few short weeks they spent together that committed Van Gogh to the isolation of a hospital cell, an isolation from which he would never fully escape and in which his final and most memorable paintings would be made.

Douglas Skeggs

Our lecturers

RODERICK TAYLOR

Roddy Taylor was born in India; his early education was in Shimla, then, following Partition, in London; at Cambridge he read Oriental Languages, Arabic and Persian, and Anthropology and Archaeology. While travelling on business his passion for textiles was reinforced and he began collecting, although the family story is that he bought his first rug at the age of 10 (he still has it). He now lectures and writes on textiles, both carpets and Middle Eastern embroideries.

DOUGLAS SKEGGS

Douglas Skeggs needs no introduction to long-time members of ADFAS, having already lectured to us on Velasquez two years ago; for newer members, here is a short biography.

After a Masters degree in Fine Arts at Cambridge, Douglas Skeggs studied under Kokoschka in Switzerland. He has held three solo exhibitions of his paintings in England and Switzerland, and has lectured on paintings since 1980. A writer and television presenter, he has published six novels and a book on Monet entitled *River of Light* which has sold over 30,000 copies. He is a director of the New Academy of Arts.

Other items of interest

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

News from the Volunteers

In February 2007, the Volunteers (a group of six ADFAS ladies) finished working with the old postcards at the “Volkskundemuseum” and began their next project, archiving pictures on glass in the same museum. We check each photograph against the inventory, comment on the state of the picture and pack it in acid free boxes. One of us is also responsible for the input of the inventory onto an excel sheet, which will then later be transferred into the ADLIB system, a worldwide digital inventory systems for museums and libraries. We continued working until mid-July 2007 when we had to stop because not all the pictures had received an inventory number. We are now anxious to resume our work so as to bring it to a proper end.

While working in the Folklore Museum we also received a guided tour of the two last exhibitions held at the museum: “Het interessante Volk, van Max Elskamp tot het Museum aan de Stroom,” (a display of one hundred years of daily life) and “Verbeeld verleden”, photographs by Karin Borghouts on Folklore Museums.

On August 18th there was a reception at the City Hall in honor of the 100th birthday of the “Volkskundemuseum”, which was also its last day. From August 20th the museum has been closed to the public and its collection will be merged into the collection in the MAS (in Flemish: “Museum Aan de Stroom”). In fact we have been kept very well informed about the MAS project. It is a new Antwerp museum, and its foundations have now been laid in the old dockland area close to the city; its opening is planned for some time in 2009-2010. In short, it will focus on the City of Antwerp, the River Scheldt, the Port and the World. The Maritime Museum (with its Maritime park and dock), the Folklore Museum, parts of the former Vleeshuis collection, the Committee for Patrimony (*Erfgoedcel*), the Red Star Line and the Ethnographic Museum will all come under the global organization of the MAS. It is an immense project and we are proud to have had a small part in it.



The winning design (see above) in the architectural contest for the new building was submitted by the Dutch group Neutelings-Riedijk.

Postscript to lecture by Ann Peerless on the Mughals of India

In June this year the 2008 list of the world's 100 most endangered monuments was published. On the list is Amber Town in Rajasthan, India, which Ann told us is one of the highlights of a visit to India. Unfortunately, as with so many of the world's most fascinating places, it is partly we, the tourists, who are responsible for its slow destruction. The Kachwaha palace of Amber Town is protected and maintained by the Archaeological Survey of India, but in the town itself the increase in tourism has raised the value of land, and old buildings are being torn down to make way for new shops and hotels. Other historic buildings are falling into decay, and only a few individual *havelis* have received funds for repairs.

The list of the world's endangered monuments can be found here: <http://wmf.org/watchhtml>.

(A *haveli* is the term used for a private residence in North India and Pakistan; a word of Persian origin, it means “an enclosed place”. Built in the Islamic style, a *haveli* usually surrounds a courtyard with a fountain, providing a home for the extended family.)

AMD

Slow Road to China: An Englishman and his Bicycle

Edward Genochio cycled solo from Exeter in south-west England to Shanghai, where he spent several months living amongst the ordinary Chinese. His outward and return routes were hugely challenging: his bicycle

stolen, battling against giant mosquitoes in Siberia, as well as harsh high-altitude terrain. His progress was closely followed and reported by the media, including *The Daily Telegraph*, *BBC News*, *Gazet van Antwerpen* and *China Daily*. His book will be launched this autumn.

Edward Genochio is the grandson of long-time ADFAS member Joan Bridges, and he has very kindly offered to donate any profits from his lecture to the St. Boniface West Window appeal.

His 90-minute illustrated lecture will be held at 8 p.m. on Friday, 12th October at the Antwerp Seafarers' Centre; Italiëlei 72; 2000 Antwerp: The admission of €2 includes refreshments: For information, contact Maureen Smith (details on page 4).

ADFAS outing on 15 September

A small group of ADFAS members had a very enjoyable day, visiting first the Constant Permeke Museum in Jabbeke. We had a private tour by a very knowledgeable guide through the house, the painting studio, the large gallery which Permeke used as sculpture studio, and the lovely garden.



We then headed for Sint-Idesbald where we enjoyed a lovely lunch in the Vlierhof garden, the restaurant next to the Delvaux Museum. In no hurry at all and completely rested, we had another guided tour through the exhibition on the life and career of Delvaux. On show were not only the well-known works with nudes, train stations and Greek temples, but also family pictures, his Brussels studio, works from private collections, his very first works and also his last ones. For those of you who have not visited the Paul Delvaux Foundation for a few years, I can tell you that it has been substantially enlarged underground and is well worth a new visit.

DATES TO REMEMBER

8 October 2007	ADFAS AGM followed by our lecture: The World of Carpets Lecturer: Roderick Taylor	Rubenshof, 1st floor as from 7 pm (AGM to start at 8 pm) Lecture at 8.15 pm
12 October 2007	Slow Road to China: an Englishman and his Bicycle	Antwerp Seafarers' Centre, Italiëlei 72 Lecture starts at 8 pm
17 October 2007	ADFAS Committee Meeting (if you have anything you would like brought up at the Committee meeting, please get in touch with Gilberte Du Bois)	
5 November 2007	Van Gogh and Gauguin Lecturer: Douglas Skeggs	Rubenshof, 1st floor as from 7 pm Lecture at 8 pm
24 November 2007	Outing to Gent: guided tour of the British Vision exhibition at the Ghent Museum of Fine Art	Details on page 1 of this Newsletter
3 December 2007	The Art of Photography: Photography as Art Lecturer: Marina Vaizey	[Venue to be announced] as from 7 pm Lecture at 8 pm
7 January 2008	20th Century Glass Lecturer: Andy McConnell	Rubenshof, 1st floor as from 7 pm Lecture at 8 pm
4 February 2008	Cities of Vesuvius: Art and Everyday Life in Ancient Pompeii Lecturer: Neil Faulkner	Preceded by annual supper Rubenshof, 1st floor as from 7 pm Lecture at 8 pm
10 March 2008	Pearls before Swine Lecturer: Jane Kelsall	Rubenshof, 1st floor as from 7 pm Lecture at 8 pm

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With thanks to this month's contributors:
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