

December 2009

Sofap
newsletter



THE AUTUMN EXHIBITION 2009

The Exhibition was opened by **Hazel Soan**, a renowned artist famous amongst other things for her appearances as an expert on Watercolour Challenge. We were very fortunate that for once our exhibition coincided with her visit to London from her home in South Africa. In a hectic schedule Hazel included a two day workshop at her studio in Crookham Road, as well as preparing an exhibition of her own work which is on until December 8th. We were indeed lucky and honoured that she agreed to launch the proceedings.

Hazel spoke with great passion and enthusiasm, praising the work of both potters and painters, and stressing the common bond between the two. She also stressed the fact that the growing strength of the Society reveals the real need for an outlet for all the creativity that abounds in the borough, and said that we were the only society she knew of that had a waiting list for membership! Her speech was warmly received.

So after all the hard work that went into setting up the show in the newly decorated Hall, how did we do?

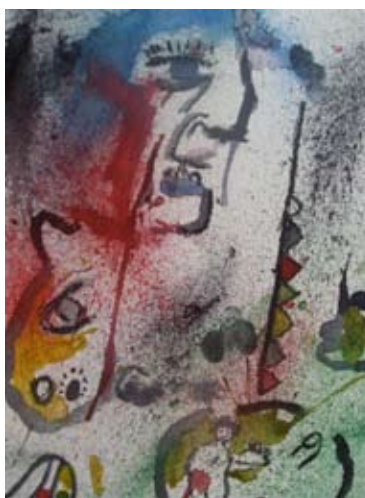
I think that considering the economic climate we did remarkably well. Sixty items were sold, realising a total of £5,966 – not a record, but very good, especially when compared to other Societies' reports this year. Paintings made £3,923 with a top price of £550 achieved for **Tony Hannaford's** pastel of a snowbound "Orange Hut" in the Bishops Park allotments. Browser sales raised a further £920, while the Potters added £823 to the total. **Catherine Bajour's** "China Bull", which showed what "a bull in a china shop" means, was top (and first) seller at £100.

So congratulations all round, and thanks again to **Angela Mackay** for organising the "hang" so brilliantly, and to her team of loyal supporters. Also to **Hazel and Team Potters** whose display attracted so much favourable comment, and to new member **Chris Owen** who sold four out of five of his elegant designs with hints of the orient.

REVIEWS FROM YOUNG BRITISH ARTISTS!

John Paul runs an art class at the All Saints School for 9-13 year-olds, and several of his pupils came to the PV on Sunday, where they could be seen to take a keen interest in picking their favourites. Maisie Woodford sent this appreciation.

“I thought that the Fulham Society Exhibition was fun and interesting. I think that if you look at art and are inspired by it, that you shouldn't wait for it to come to you - you should take the chance and do it. Lots of things inspire me like dancing and reading, but art is different. I'm inspired by art



Artwork by Alexander

in a different way. It's a way that you don't have to audition for it or do tests to do it, you just do it. I loved this exhibition because it was inspiring, interesting and professional. I loved it! “ **Maisie**

And Alexander (aged 10) said;

'I enjoyed the exhibition very much. I liked walking around and looking at all the paintings. It was just like an exhibition at an art gallery but smaller. I also enjoyed the biscuits and lemonade.'

AGM REPORT

On Thursday, November 19th., we held the first Annual General Meeting for about three years in the midst of the Autumn Exhibition. Some forty members were present including the Committee, and the proceedings were made as painless as possible with refreshments served before and after!

It started with an introduction covering the recent history of the Society to explain the reasons why we are now committed to making this an annual event, rather than an optional extra! As a Society we have an obligation to have an elected committee, audited accounts, two signatories for any payments by cheque and an annual general meeting of the members to review the conduct of the Committee.

This time it was a kind of dress-rehearsal for what will now become an annual event. There was a good turnout, and I think that holding it during the exhibition made it all the more relevant, especially considering the extraordinary work and expense involved in getting this particular exhibition hung.

The accounts for the year to the end of October showed that we have not only survived the crisis that threatened our existence last year, but that by prudent management we now have a “Sinking

Fund” to provide a temporary liferaft should the situation arise again. Full accounts for the year will be published at the end of January 2010. But with a membership of 200, and a waiting list (currently 19 hopefuls) we look to be in good shape to face the future.

During Questions and Answers a suggestion was made by Rizwan Pradhan that we should look at getting sponsors to award prizes at the Exhibition. This immediately divided the audience, though after much discussion a show of hands revealed a substantial majority against the proposal. But a variation of the idea, proposed by Clare Weatherill and others, was that there should be a “People's Choice” whereby visitors to the show would cast a vote for their favourite piece. It was agreed that the Committee would discuss this further and, if thought appropriate, it could be trialled at the Spring show next year.

It was very good to have this meeting and to have input from the membership, and I look forward to more of the same in years to come.

Martin Chaffer

with thanks to Lynda Williams for keeping the minutes of the meeting.

HAZEL WRITES



Congratulations to everyone on another successful Exhibition. The newly painted hall showed pictures and ceramics to advantage and the Committee had many compliments on our efforts. "Better than ever," was a recurrent comment. Thank you to Martin and team for putting up the new boards.

If this Newsletter reaches you in time I would like to remind everyone that the potters are having a Sale of their work at Macbeth Centre, Macbeth St, Hammersmith on Tues 1st, Wednesday 2nd, and Thursday 3rd, December from 10am to 8pm daily. Come along to buy that extra special Christmas present.

The AGM was well attended. We did get a bit bogged down with the question of whether to have Prizes offered by Sponsors or not. My thoughts are that it is a system which seems to work well at London Potters, who have 8 categories of awards sponsored by various Pottery firms and magazines. I thought that the point which Dennis Gilbert made was valid. He said that asking our visitors to nominate their favourite exhibit might make them look more carefully at everything when they were choosing.

Chris Payne has compiled a folder for potters to display their recent work, to be placed on one of the tables for visitors to browse through. Only three of us availed ourselves of this and I hope more of you will bring some photos next May. Stick your pictures on to a white sheet of A4 and it will be slotted into a transparent sheet. Please put your name, contact details and prices underneath the photos.

I hope that Martin will have room in this article to print some of the photos which I took with my new digital camera. It seems to do just about anything but cook. I really feel I have entered the twenty-first century at last. Even my 13 year old grand-daughter Ally, who is well up with all the new technology, said when she saw it

- "Nana, I'm impressed!"

I hope everyone's Advent is full of the joys of preparing for the great festival ahead and that you are not all too tired when it does arrive.

Merry Christmas!



CHRIS OWEN – “My very own pottery studio, imagine that!”



That was the thought in my mind a year or so ago. A few things came together at once – a sum of money from a stint in China with the company I work for, and a feeling that this could be the right time to take the step from evening classes to the real thing. And the trip to China had given me inspiration, a new direction for the pots.

I went for it. This is the story.

WHERE DO I START?

My second thought was “*What will I do with all the pots I make?*” Wherever I set up this studio, I need to be able to sell from it, too. Happily, a friend told me of an artists’ community in Wimbledon that holds open studios twice a year. I thought: perfect, and I won’t be alone.

I rented a studio that looked big enough until I moved in, when it suddenly shrank. I bought a book on how to design your pottery studio. That was useless. So I talked to everyone I could think of, and spent evenings with a pencil and ruler trying to make it all fit. Amazingly, it came together. Someone taught me a bit of carpentry and basic wiring. Suppliers were endlessly patient with me. Friends lent or gave me tools and equipment. Everybody shared the excitement.

And my money dwindled alarmingly. But hey, I can always sell the pots, can’t I? Four months in, and I was going to find out.

CRUNCH TIME

My first open studio – I’ve never learnt so much, so fast. I didn’t know what to expect as I opened for the first time. Actually, loads of people came. Some responded with enthusiasm, even buying pots. By the end of the first day, I had really started to enjoy myself.

By the last day, I was exhausted. But the response had been enormously encouraging. I closed up with my head buzzing full of new ideas. I felt I had passed the test.



IT GOES ON

A year later, and I’m still learning. I’m starting to get the hang of presenting the pots, and using them to tell a story. The pots themselves are better, as I learn from failures and successes. And I know what to expect at open studio, so it’s become easier and a lot more fun. I’ve made some fantastic friends along the way. Most important of all, I’m still just as excited at the prospect of making pots.

ADVICE, IF THE BUG BITES YOU

So, here are my tips for you, if you’re thinking of setting up for yourself.

First tip: do it! It may seem a big commitment, but the freedom you give yourself is worth it. And you can always share with someone.

Which leads me to my second tip: find a way to do it in company. If you’re anything like me, you’ll need other people around you. To give you courage when it goes wrong, and to share the elation when it goes right.

Talk to lots of people. Everyone I spoke to had good advice. From my sister (“Put in more shelves than you think, you’ll use every one”), to a random stranger at a party (“I know an easy way to set up your website”).

And finally, be prepared for an adventure. Having a studio has changed my life, in unexpected and wonderful ways. I hope it does the same for you.

SEPTEMBER 25TH WORKSHOP – Tony Hannaford - Pastels

Review by John Evans

Regular exhibitor, Committee Member and designer of our posters, Tony was well known to all present at this workshop as a pastellist of great talent. After a preliminary outline talk on all the types of pastel and suitable supports, Tony distributed a rough pastel board to each artist. Not familiar with the board myself, I soon



Still life by John Evans

came to see its virtues. It provides an excellent key, does not diminish pastel hues and takes any amount of fixative. It is particularly good for those large, soft pastels, about the size of a Havana cigar, of which a good variety was available for our use.

Tony had set up a still life with oranges, squashes, stonecrops and exotic leaves. Behind the teaching area were two framed Hannafords – one of brilliant sunflowers, looking definitely south Mediterranean, hot and radiant: in this the foreground petals were splashed with acrylics, a technique he sometimes employs for increased luminosity and prominence. Another less representational work showed an arched bridge in the distance and one of Tony's distinctive opalescent blue skies with Mondrian-like 'strips', or fields of colour, and brilliant reflections in water. They were a great inspiration.

Tony made a rapid start on an A4 board of the still life, building up from a sketch in feint white crayon. The bold line of this type of work is everywhere apparent in his sketchbooks which I looked through in the break, many of which in coloured ink or paint, show a pronounced, linear skeleton and a sure eye for architecture, often with the buildings in an exotic, southern, arboreal setting. By the lunch break Tony's still life was done and everyone had set to on his own interpretation of the

objets while taking in the continuous commentary and encouragements from the Maestro.

In the afternoon probably one of the last really warm sunny times of the declining year, we parked ourselves on the hard outside the rowing club. Again Tony made a rapid line drawing in white of the curving vista towards Putney Bridge. Most

followed suit but some pointed themselves towards the remote Wembley Arch. It was my first pastel landscape, or rather cityscape, with steeply shelving beach, fullish river, distant bridge and big sky. We all learned a lot. I enjoyed the workshop immensely. I'm sure everyone feels the same. Thanks to Tony for everything, not least for having stepped in to take the workshop at very short notice.



OCTOBER 23RD WORKSHOP – Soraya French

Review by Karin Cardiff



Work in progress at the end of Soraya's demo

Although a SOFAP member for some years, I had never attended a workshop, for no other reason that I am always very badly organised and hopeless at managing the time left to me in between looking after three children aged 4 – 13. In other words, although I diligently read the emails detailing the workshops, the thought, 'ohhh that looks interesting' is always about as far as I get. Anyway, something about the **Soraya French** workshop caught my eye – possibly the vibrant colours and the words 'mixed media' – and along I went to the sailing club. It was well worth it.

The sailing club is a great venue with wonderful views and a wonderful sense of space, so even though the class was well attended you did not feel crowded. I had turned up a bit harassed after the morning rush, but everyone was friendly and relaxed and I soon forgot the hubbub outside and settled down to focus.

Soraya is a wonderful and inspiring tutor. She quickly ascertained the interests of the group and went on to briskly, but informatively, go

through various techniques and materials and we were treated to the step-by-step creation of a 'mixed media' painting. She was very flexible and answered any questions as she went along.

After a break, during which we were able to purchase a range of acrylic based media and brushes, we set out to try our own version. Soraya made a tour of the room and was very constructive with her comments and very kindly lent me one of her photos to copy. I was intrigued by her techniques and attempted to reproduce a sense of them while using what was for me a new medium – acrylic inks. I personally was less than impressed with the results although Soraya was extremely generous with her comments and very encouraging!

The group then broke for lunch and unfortunately I had to leave early (school runs) but I came away really pleased I had done the course and determined to experiment further with both acrylic inks and her ideas of layering and try to incorporate it into a commission I have outstanding that I have been reluctant to approach. Soraya is a truly original artist and I would not hesitate to recommend her workshops to anyone – I for one will be looking out for her next one!



Very mixed media

HAZEL SOAN KHADI PAPER WORKSHOP

Review by Claire Weatherill



I was very much looking forward to this 2 day workshop at the Soan Studio in Fulham. I had really enjoyed the watercolour workshop that Hazel did for SOFAP in 2008 but nothing prepared me for what was in store!

The course was from 9am to 6pm on both days and Hazel worked solidly for us. There were 20 of us in the studio and the concentration was amazing. Hazel provided the khadi paper and explained why it is so special; how it is made and how very 'green' it is as well as so very versatile. We also learnt how to tear it to keep the deckle edge.

On Saturday we did 4 paintings; 2 small and 2 on full sheets of this amazing paper. For each painting Hazel demonstrated and managed to explain how we were to tackle each subject whilst she produced wonderful work. How to follow that! Anyway we tried and I think we all loved the paper. Our results were all quite different working from pictures provided by Hazel. From the relatively easy subject of peaches, to very difficult sunflowers and ostrich, we returned to small paper to finish the day painting figures in the rain.

On Sunday the complexity moved up a notch as we tackled 'light'. We started with a silhouette and moved on to paint a figure in two colours working on getting the tonal quality. How hard it was! Our final painting was a cheetah; this was a tremendous subject and just the drawing required hard work but nothing to the speed and control required once we started painting. It was a huge effort to get the painting finished by the end of the day and most of us made it! Thrilled with our results and having been on a huge learning curve we all went home elated and exhausted in equal measures!

Hazel is an inspiration. She did not stop; her energy was infectious and I was just thrilled to have been able to experience such a wonderful two days.

All pictures featured are the demonstrations done by Hazel

Key phrases:

- Always keep transparency
- Tone is the secret
- Paint once – get the right tone straight away

Key words:

- Tone
- Colour
- Shape

Build up a mosaic of watercolour

- Create light with luminous darks
- Look at patterns of light and dark
- Build form quickly, fine tune later



DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

UNTIL DEC 8 HAZEL SOAN's EXHIBITION, 'OKAVANGO'
runs until 8th December at Soan Studio, Crookham Road, SW6 4EG.
Tel: 0207 736 4880

OPEN TIMES weekdays 2pm-7pm, weekends 12noon - 5pm,
or evenings by appointment.

The show features oils and watercolours from a recent trip into Botswana and Namibia in the regions sustained by the lifegiving Okavango River. (*Definitely worth the visit. Martin*)

2010

FEB 19th TOM ROBB will kick off our season of workshops

MARCH 26th JANET WEIGHT-REED Workshop

APRIL 23RD Workshop t.b.a.

MAY 9TH – 23RD SPRING EXHIBITION

Send payment for all events to Michael Burchell,
99 Moore Park Road, London SW6 2DA enclosing an s.a.e. for reply.

Please make a cheque payable to SOFAP
and endorse the back of the cheque with the event you are paying for

ART IN THE ALGARVE

If you are thinking of a painting holiday abroad, and are spoilt for choice, I can recommend ART IN THE ALGARVE. Greta and I went last summer, and thoroughly enjoyed the experience.

The school is based in Olhau, twenty minutes' drive from Faro towards the Spanish border, so lightyears away from the trippy fun-in-the-sun tourist beaches. A charming old town and fishing port; a maze of cobbled streets and painted and whitewashed houses; a busy harbour that once was a thriving port, with exotic islands and uncrowded beaches a ferryboat ride away, Olhau offers endless opportunities for both artist and holiday maker.

In addition the all new Art School, now completed, has purpose-built studios and shady courtyards plus a couple of plunge pools to revive the spirits. Run by an Englishman - former Fulham Councillor David Clark - and with english tutors, you can be sure of a memorable painting holiday - and I haven't even mentioned the food (all included)!

For dates and availability, check out
www.artinthealgarve.com or call 07912 310 059



The Studio