

CAMBRIDGE ART TOURS
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List of Lectures for the Arts Society 2022/2023

Lord Fitzwilliam and his bequest to Cambridge
One off lecture

The Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge was founded on the death of Richard, 7th Viscount Fitzwilliam in 1816, five years after the Dulwich Picture Gallery and eight years before the National Gallery in London. His bequest included paintings, drawings, prints, medieval manuscripts and books and, in addition, a sum of money to build “*a good substantial museum repository for the increase of learning*”. Who was Lord Fitzwilliam? How did he acquire his extensive collection? What prompted him to leave it to the University of Cambridge and why was Napoleon partly responsible for the founding of one of the great regional museums? These, and many other questions, will be answered in a lecture that will also discuss some of the key works in Lord Fitzwilliam’s bequest.

Kettle’s Yard: A Masterpiece of Curatorship
One off lecture or part of a study day

Kettle’s Yard in Cambridge has been described as “*one of the country’s most intimate and spellbinding museums, the collection of one man and his unerring eye; restorative, homely yet life-changing*”. This man was H.S. ‘Jim’ Ede, curator, writer, collector and friend to artists. In 1957, he opened his Cambridge home to university students as “*a living place where works of art could be enjoyed... unhampered by the greater austerity of the museum or public art gallery.*” His collection included works by Ben and Winifred Nicholson, Christopher Wood, Alfred Wallis and Henri Gaudier-Brzeska which were carefully placed alongside pieces of furniture, ceramics and natural objects. His curated home remains, by and large as he left it, characterised by its unique atmosphere, fascinating juxtapositions and personal connections. This lecture will discuss the life of Jim Ede, his collecting, his vision for Kettles Yard and its enduring legacy.

“I found it a pigsty” Sir Sydney Cockerell and the Fitzwilliam Museum **One off lecture**

Described as ‘one of the greatest museum directors of all time’, Sydney Cockerell’s energy and enthusiasm transformed the Fitzwilliam Museum in the early 20th century. Between 1908-1937, Cockerell doubled the size of the museum and trebled the size of the collection - an extraordinary and unique achievement. Notable additions to the collection included paintings by Titian, Gainsborough and Rossetti, as well as medieval manuscripts, antiquities, ceramics and much more. His charm, ambition and determination is legendary, as is his famous quip: ‘*I found it a pigsty, I turned it into a palace*’. This lecture will discuss the life and career of Sydney Cockerell from his early years as an assistant to William Morris to his time as Director of the Fitzwilliam Museum. It will tell the stories behind some of his key acquisitions and reveal how he persuaded so many collectors and philanthropists to support “my museum”.

“Les Trois Grandes Dames” of Impressionism: Marie Bracquemond, Mary Cassatt and Berthe Morisot **One off lecture or a study day**

The Impressionists were an innovative and radical group of artists whose took Paris by storm in the 1870s. Using new colours and techniques, they created paintings of modern life which shocked and horrified the art establishment. From the start the group included women artists but their contribution to Impressionism has often been overshadowed by their male contemporaries. Marie Bracquemond, Berthe Morisot and Mary Cassatt all exhibited regularly at the Impressionist exhibitions alongside artists such as Monet, Renoir and Degas. In 1894 they were given the title “Les Trois Grandes Dames d’Impressionisme” by the art critic Gustave Geffroy. This lecture will discuss the lives of each of these artists and their work, revealing their skill and originality as well as their willingness to take risks, despite the additional obstacles they faced as women.

Marie Bracquemond: the Unknown Impressionist **One off lecture or part of a study day**

This lecture will explore the life and work of Marie Bracquemond (1840-1916), one of the three artists who the critic Gustave Geffroy referred to in 1894 as “Les Trois Grandes Dames d’ Impressionisme”. Together with Berthe Morisot and Mary Cassatt, Marie Bracquemond exhibited in the Impressionist exhibitions alongside artists such as Monet, Renoir and Degas. She declared that “*Impressionism has brought us a new, worthwhile way of seeing. Suddenly a window has been opened through which sunlight and air come streaming in*”. However, by assimilating this new ‘way of seeing’ into her own light filled canvases she came into conflict with her husband, the artist Felix

Bracquemond, who did not share her enthusiasm. Her output was relatively small and the few paintings she completed leave us with a tantalising taste of what she might have achieved with more support and encouragement.

Frédéric Bazille - A Painter of Modern Life
One off lecture or part of a study day

Frédéric Bazille's 'Self Portrait' of 1865 shows a tall, slim, bearded young artist, paint brush and palette in hand, turning confidently towards the viewer. He has an attitude of defiance and looks ready to challenge the Parisian art establishment of the day, as were his friends Claude Monet, Auguste Renoir and Alfred Sisley. For a few years Frédéric Bazille did just that. His paintings of modern subjects, often created outside using vivid colours and capturing the effects of light, would have secured him an important place in the history of Impressionism, had it not been for his untimely death in 1870. This lecture discusses the life and work of Frédéric Bazille, whose sunlit canvases reveal an artist of great talent and originality and beg the inevitable question - if he had lived longer, what more would he have achieved?

Cornwall Calling: the Artists of the Lamorna Valley 1900-1914
One off lecture or part of a study day

Before the outbreak of the First World War, a number of young artists settled in the picturesque Cornish village of Lamorna. This group included Laura and Harold Knight, Alfred Munnings, Frank and Jessica Gascoigne Heath and Samuel 'Lamorna' Birch. Some came to study at the Forbes School of Art while others were attracted by the existing artists' colony in Newlyn. This lecture will paint a picture of the lives of these artists: their work, their play, their loves and their losses. On the surface, it is a picture of sunny days spent painting in the coastal light of Cornwall followed by evenings of socialising and gaiety at the Lamorna Inn. But, darkness and tragedy were just below the surface and struck even before the First World War changed their lives forever.

London, New York, St Ives: the Avant Garde in Cornwall 1939-1970
One off lecture or part of a study day

The arrival of Ben Nicholson, Barbara Hepworth and Naum Gabo in St Ives at the beginning of the Second World War marked a significant moment, both for them and for the artists already living and working in the small Cornish town. These three artists were key players in British modernism and soon challenged the status quo of the existing artists' colony, established at the end of the 19th century. They inspired and, in Hepworth's case employed, a younger generation of artists before they too were challenged by new ideas. This lecture will chart the rise of St Ives as a centre

for modern art after the war and show that it was not only Nicholson, Hepworth and Gabo who achieved international success but other artists such as Peter Lanyon, Patrick Heron, Terry Frost and Wilhemena Barns Graham. This success led to the town becoming a focal point for post-war avant garde art which led the eyes of the modern art world to focus, for a brief period, on St Ives.

Winifred Nicholson - A Life in Colour

One off lecture or as part of a study day on Kettle's Yard

Winifred Nicholson's life and work has often been seen in the context of her marriage to Ben, but as this lecture reveals, she was an innovative artist in her own right, whose exploration of colour and light was unique and distinctive. Born into an aristocratic and artistic family, in the 1920s Winifred Nicholson became a key member of the Seven and Five Society, whose members challenged traditional British painting. Moving to Paris in the 1930s, she became friends with artists such as Mondrian, Brancusi and Jean Arp and experimented with abstraction. Her later prism paintings show her continuing to explore colour in new ways. Looking back on her work towards the end of her life, she wrote: *"My paintings talk in colour and any of the shapes are there to express colour but not outline. The flowers are sparks of light, built of and thrown out into the air as rainbows are thrown, in an arc"*.

"Fear not": The Annunciation in Art

One off lecture

The story of the Annunciation, the Angel Gabriel's appearance to the Virgin Mary as told in St Luke's gospel, has inspired some of the most beautiful images in Western Art. These include Simone Martini's altarpiece for Siena Cathedral, now in the Uffizi Gallery and Fra Angelico's frescoes in the monastery of San Marco in Florence. The earliest depiction of the Annunciation is thought to date back to the 2nd century AD. Since then, the narrative has been reimagined by numerous artists including Van Eyck, Botticelli, Dürer and Rossetti. This lecture will take you on a journey through a range of different depictions of the Annunciation and explore the ways in which artists have captured this pivotal moment of the Christian story. A perfect subject for the Christmas season or to mark the Feast of the Annunciation on 25th March.