



Exterior of Arti et Amicitiae Building.

Initial Exchange Exhibition with Arti et Amicitiae, Amsterdam

Organised by Peter Clossick

Review notice in the Amsterdam Weekly, November 2006

“De Salon An annual tradition whereby resident artists get to show off their latest works from various disciplines within the visual arts. New this year is an invitation to the British artist association The London Group, so eight talented Brits are found leading the way.”

Arti et Amicitiae until 10 December.

Through the initial introduction of Marcelle Hanselaar who is a member of the Dutch group Arti et Amicitiae, I travelled to Amsterdam to meet and discuss with their committee the possibility of exchange exhibitions.

Arti, a group established in the mid-nineteenth century comprises 300 members including artists, writers and musicians. Their own large building includes offices, bar/restaurant/club room, and beautiful large gallery spaces - with roof light, is located in the centre of Amsterdam.

My visit resulted in Arti offering an initial exchange of eight members, each at our Annual shows, to include possible further exchanges. At present I am negotiating the idea of a full LG exhibition in the Arti galleries for the future. The initial exhibition exchange was put to the LG committee who agreed on the proposal, as all the artists involved would cover their costs. Julie Held, Mark Dickens, Ken Oliver, James Faure Walker, David Redfern, Neil Weerdmeester, Ian Parker and I were agreed by Arti as initial representatives.

I put together an application to the British Council under the ‘Grants to Artists’ scheme, which was not successful, and through Julie Held I engaged carriers to transport the work. Arti had offered two square meters to each LG artist for their annual Salon in November 2006 and also accommodation if required.

We were extremely generously treated, with our work hung in a dedicated gallery space and the private view well attended. There was a post private view party in the member’s bar which went on until the early hours. The following day Mark Dickens and Neil Weerdmeester gave a talk on behalf of the London Group to Arti members.

It was a very positive experience and I believe international co-operation is one way forward for groups such as ours. I hope we are able to have a full LG member exhibition in Amsterdam in the future and will welcome the Arti et Amicitiae artists who will show at our next annual. Also many thanks to Marcelle for making the introduction and the full co-operation of all the artists involved.

Newsletter 7 February 2007

THE
LONDON
GROUP
visual arts from 1913



Mark Dickens, Neil Weerdmeester, David Redfern, Jan (Arti member), Peter Clossick and Ian Parker



One of the Arti galleries

Arrivals and departures

We welcome three new members this year. Daniel Preece, Simon Read and Tommy Seaward were elected at the 2006 Membership Committee meeting from a strong field of fifteen candidates, reflecting the fact that membership continues to be sought after but hard to achieve. We have also had three retirements, of Michelle Avison, Bert Irwin and Laetitia Yhap. Since Bert was Head of Painting at Goldsmiths when I was there and Laetitia's work has revolved around the fishing fleet of Hastings, a town with which I have strong family connections, I feel their loss strongly. Both have been long time members and represent the diversity of interests the Group has been able to contain. In correspondence both gave different personal reasons for their decision, but were united in alluding to making space for younger members. Since we often agonise about the appropriate size for the Group I suppose we might take some satisfaction from the thought that at present we seem to be organically self-regulating.



Philip Crozier and Joyce Clossick at Bankside

Among other issues discussed at the Membership meeting was that of Honorary Members. It has been pointed out that we have the anomaly of both artist and non-artist HM's. Courtesy of David Redfern's researches into the Group's history I know that in the 1920's Augustus John was a HM: I suppose the equivalent of inviting Damien Hirst today. During the Spanish Civil War it was proposed that all right-thinking (i.e. Left-thinking) writers, artists etc should automatically be members, but this was defeated. Imagine a London Group containing George Orwell but blacklisting Wyndham Lewis. Constitutionally, responsibility for the election of HM's rests with the Membership Committee, but I suggest it is a subject suitable for discussion at the next AGM and that the Membership Committee would welcome guidance.

Finally, along with some other members, I have received communications from the Designers and Artists Copyright Society (DACS) inviting me to join their scheme to collect any money due from resale rights, as covered by recent legislation. If you are interested you may contact them at: DACS, 33 Great Sutton Street, EC1V ODX or go to www.dacs.org.uk. They claim to be non-profit making but charge a percentage to cover costs. I must emphasise that this is not an endorsement or recommendation: others offer the same service.

Philip Crozier, December 2006

David Gluck

We have recently received the sad news of the death of David Gluck. He was elected to the Group in 1978 and as well as being an active member throughout, served as vice-President for a few years. Some of you will be aware that his wife Sally died last year. I cannot claim to have known David and Sally well but when in their company I was always aware of their deeply complementary relationship, Saturn and Mercury, or Yin and Yang if you prefer. I cannot help feeling that David willed it this way. *Philip Crozier, 25 February 2007*

David Whitaker

We are sorry to receive news of the death of David Whitaker on March 15 2007 after a long illness. He was elected to the Group in 1990 and for such a fit man to die at the early age of 68 is tragic. We send our condolences to his wife Frances.

From the London Group Archive...

The Treasurer's Record Book for the London Group between 1950-1992 was passed on to me recently by Trevor Frankland who was the Honorary Treasurer from 1997 to 2005. Before Trevor, Vic Kuell held that high office, taking over in 1984. In this handsome, red leathered 'bible' are the records, mostly of annual subscriptions, of all London Group members during that period. In 1992 the annual subscription was £30.00, increased in 1990 when the subscription stood at £10.00. 1983 saw the increase to the £10.00 subscription, prior to this date it had been £5.25.

Some initial analysis makes for some interesting statistics. From a sample of 110 former members the records show that 36 (33%) of them resigned (unfortunately, it is not recorded for what reason), 21 (19%) died whilst still a member and 7 (6%) lapsed. No explanation for the other 46 ceasing to pay an annual subscription is recorded. There may be a combination of many different reasons. Notable resignations came from Eileen Agar, Edward Ardizzone, Frank Auerbach, William Coldstream, Andrew Forge (ex President), Gertrude Hermes, David Hockney, Kenneth Martin, Rodrigo Moynihan, Wendy Pasmore and William Townsend. After Claude Rogers stepped down as President in 1966 and Andrew Forge was elected, there seems to be a large number of resignations. I would be grateful if any member could shed some light on this. Perhaps the most surprising lapse in membership was John Bellamy who had been Vice President in the 1980s under Stan Smith's Presidency. According to records, John was elected to the group in 1973 and paid 9 years in arrears in 1982, only to "fade away" in 1983. John Piper can top that one though. He resigned from the London Group in 1971, but kept a bank payment going of £3.15 a year until 1990! A pencilled note at the foot of Roy de Maistre's record reads, "Ask Bank if he is dead", whilst Richard Oginz is signed off with "Deported to the USA in 1976".

This invaluable book and other records passed on by Trevor Frankland will be lodged in the London Group archive at Tate Britain when all of its fascinating history has been given up.

David Redfern
London Group Archivist

The London Group Open 2007

Looking positively towards the future The London Group needs to raise its public profile and get back on the map. The first obvious step is to revive the Annual Open Exhibition. The exorbitant cost of hiring a sufficiently large gallery space that is central enough has deterred the Group for 12 years, the last Open being at the Barbican in 1995.

The Menier Gallery where we held our Annual in 2004, now run by Paintings in Hospitals, offers us an affordable option (far more so than Bankside) to produce a big enough exhibition space by having the show in two parts and it is an important consideration that the gallery lends itself well to sculpture and video. Submissions will be invited on CD and a selection committee will be set up. A sub-committee has already been formed who are currently seeking to engage someone in PR and sponsorship. Initially this will be to launch the 2007 Open but also for future exhibitions; sponsorship will be very necessary if we really do intend to hold an annual Open. Advertising and press coverage will be extremely important for the success of this show and the committee and the Group face a demanding but exciting and stimulating challenge between now and November.

A tentative response to Tony Carter's *What is the purpose of The London Group?* in the November 2005 newsletter...

In his exploration of what we want and expect of our membership of The London Group Tony pointed to a range of critical issues about both its (our) current and possible future activities. Reviewing targets and priorities he highlighted specifically the need for us to try to clarify our relations with art-world institutions, the role of smaller sub-group exhibitions, and the kind of PR activities appropriate to our changing aspirations in the wider context of art-making.

As a small self-governing artists' co-operative independent of external ties or support, TLG is dependent entirely on members' freely given part-time efforts. However strong our commitments to it, the scale of TLG operations is restricted by its size. Whatever the virtues of smallness and the exclusivity which is its inevitable concomitant, we may have to recognise that this severely limits what we can do. TLG has always been small but in the context of the ever-mutating and expanding London, let alone global, art-world, it is now minute, barely visible in spite of heroic efforts by willing members.



Autumnal Self-portrait, 2006, Mike Phillipson

It seems to me that we have two basic alternatives. Either we maintain this scale of operations and try to find a role appropriate to it (with precisely focussed but necessarily very limited goals/horizons) or we undertake a dramatic expansion and begin to reassess the terms on which such an independent group might intervene, participate, practically in shaping and presenting the ways visual art is experienced. London would be the necessary focus but not the geographical boundary of its activities. As a co-operative actively promoting 'differences' of artistic vision TLG is unique in the visual arts in the scale of its operations and aspirations (London and beyond...). It survives precariously through trying to enact the good of sharing the struggle of displaying and maintaining these differences. This is what is shown every time TLG mounts an exhibition/event. In the face of all the other ways of representing art (all of them bound to powerful interests having little to do with the needs of practitioners) TLG reveals another possibility. It is performing an offer of art as essentially a 'multiple' in its actions and 'content' that can survive and regenerate itself only through the mutual support (Tony calls this 'professional respect' and 'a generosity of spirit') of its makers. Is this not also integral to the thrust of British post-war art education: to establish the utterly personal terms of making through a mutual exploration of the self-mutating tradition's possibilities?

We might thus consider TLG itself as a 'performance artist', and each TLG event as a singular performance 'doing' what the group 'is'. The annual all-member show exemplifies this. There is, I think, an important sense in which each contributing member, whatever the 'value' they place on their own contribution, subordinates this to the group's self-presentational performative requirements. Through the exhibited diversity it is TLG itself which is the primary demonstration. This showing is a kind of performance: it enacts its version of where and how its commitment to art places itself. And as TLG is homeless, nomadic, it 'works' always as a context-specific singular installation. Exactly the same 'performance rule' applies to the smaller sub-group events set up and in the group's name.

Just as all events in non-artist owned spaces now display first of all a curatorial-managerial vision that frames what and how we see the specific things exhibited, so too does every TLG event perform its curatorial vision of the good of displaying mutually supporting differences. It displays and gives primacy to a sharing that is quite aside from any institutional interest.

If we are to remain minutely exclusive then we may have to find ways of finely honing and re-positioning these performances, of bringing them into sharper definition and of showing their disjunction from the cultural conventions of art's representation. Perhaps ways of exaggerating, dramatising, TLG's difference need to be found. Could real smallness be combined with virtual expansion?

But perhaps it is now becoming increasingly urgent to consider the possibilities (and problems...) of a longer term expansion and proliferation. This would at least be a constructive response to the extraordinary growth in art-making/exhibiting which is the reality of contemporary practice. We might have to consider what TLG's fate will be in an art-world where the explosive expansion of practice ensured by mass art education is dominated by an institutionally managed 'competitive' struggle. I fear that publicly effective ways of showing, performing, the virtues of TLG's co-operative independent alternative will steadily dwindle and disappear.

Do we at least now need to think through the possibilities and difficulties of a self-transforming vision for TLG that might enable it to maintain the significance of its alternative for making's edgy cultural life? Might it be possible to 'infiltrate' London culture differently through shifting forms of cellular expansion and sub-division (the small events as emergent exemplars of this), and affiliation (e.g. networking with groups across the arts)? Or am I just an incurable fantasist...?

Mike Phillipson, July 2006

Tony Carter's article; *What is the purpose of The London Group* is very welcome. There have been suggestions for introducing small discussion groups which I greatly favour not only to communicate with other members but to touch on some of the important questions to which Tony refers - so that all members would have the opportunity to make comments and listen to the ideas of others. At the A.G.M. April/06 Tony Collinge referred to the fact that only 1 or 2 members take the opportunity to attend the Working Party meetings. Open discussion groups could be convened in various parts of London, during exhibition periods or in members' homes.

Anne Cloudsley

Bankside Show 2006

The 2006 London Group Annual Exhibition, which was dedicated to the memory of Kevin Slingsby, was held at the Bankside Gallery from 13 April until 1 May. The private view took place on Wednesday 12 April and was as busy and convivial as usual.

60 members exhibited, slightly down on last year, and Vic Kuell orchestrated the range of styles, media and subject matter so that every piece was accorded its autonomy whilst ensuring that the impact was one of rich variety and dynamism. There were some 1574 visitors to the show (including the PV) and three works were sold for a grand total of £2000.

The staff at Bankside declared themselves well pleased with the exhibition whose freshness 'transformed the Gallery'; however, it was noted that visitor numbers were quite low. Several possible factors were cited including the fact that the show coincided with the Easter holiday and overlapped with two other London Group exhibitions at the Sassoon Gallery.

Wendy Smith



The Bankside 2006 Hanging Team

Collective Response: a selected London Group exhibition, at the Guildhall Art Gallery, London, October 2007.

Curated by Annie Johns and Wendy Anderson

The exhibition is a unique opportunity for selected London Group members to intervene within a museum's existing collection, located in London's financial district and partially built over a Roman amphitheatre. The focus of the exhibition, of drawing and installation, are the key methodologies that will be utilised by artists, and will be an exciting chance for each artist to develop site-specific work. It is anticipated, there will be diversity in process, with new works being made specifically for the gallery's site.

Another aspect of the exhibition will be a display of artefacts from the London Group's archive, which is located at the Tate Britain, adding yet another layer

between artist and site.

The exhibition takes place during the annual *Big Draw* (a national event) and there will be a collaborative process with the local community education centre, delivering workshops involving local people, to coincide with the exhibition. Other educational events will include public talks and artists discussions.

Lieu d'accueil franco-britannique pour artistes

The Chateau de Sacy is an 18th century manor house surrounded by a large garden. It has an adjoining courtyard whose large barn houses the studios or "ateliers". Enclosed by stone walls and situated at the entrance of a village that dates from the Roman invasion, it is away from main roads yet only 10 km from the Paris-Lille motorway. It is 229 km from Calais, 65 km from Paris and 31 minutes by train from the Gare du Nord, where Eurostar terminates.

Hugo Williams the poet and TLS columnist lives near us in Islington and introduced me to his French wife, Hermine, who runs the Chateau de Sacy for French and British Artists. I had already sent her our London Group blue book which she displays in her gallery. She would welcome an exhibition from members of the London Group.

Exhibition space for 10 days (2 week-ends) £300. There are two ateliers (studios) and the furnished, self-contained flat for artists is in the main building. Both studios and flats are available for lets either separately or together, by the week or month. Atelier 1 per month £165; Atelier 2 £120; flat per week £100 or £300 per month. Flat and atelier (either) combined, £175 per week.

The Picardy region is rich in historical and cultural landmarks: the Abbaye du Moncel and particularly Chantilly Museum which Hugo compares favourably with the Louvre. Chateau de Sacy might be an ideal place for a working holiday.

1 Rue Verte, 60190 Sacy-le-Petit

Telephone 0033344290914, Fax 003344290946

Info@chateaudesacy.com,
www.chateaudesacy.com

Anne Cloudsley



The very busy Bankside 2006 opening night

The London Group at Deutsche Bank

The invitation for the two Deutsche Bank shows this year and next year came about through Mark Dickens' connections with Deutsche Bank and his enthusiasm to create showing opportunities for the London Group. Alistair Hicks and Mary Findlay, curators of the Deutsche Bank Art Collection, hung the exhibition which is taking place in the Staff Restaurant where the 8,000 employees can view and buy the work; there is a reserve on Jeff Dellow's painting. The staff have been very positive about the overall impact of the show and Alistair is very pleased indeed with it and believes that it is very strong; certainly the 26 LG artists have created a hugely effective exhibition remarkably suited to the labyrinthine space with its curving corridors and separate alcoves; always with a single work on a wall. It is exciting turning corners and continually being surprised by a work of a completely different nature in each of the various spaces – offering stimulating experiences for the three months that they will hang there. The private view, attended by about 90 people, was the biggest they have had so far.

Please tell Tamara if you would like to be in the 2008 show. A number of people are already on the list.



Evening Causeway by Janet Nathan, at Deutsche Bank



The Queen of Sodor by Neil Weerdmeester and Wing II by Ken Oliver, at Deutsche Bank

Sassoon Gallery

Philippa Beale, Jane Humphrey and Clive Burton co-curated the two London Group shows which were amongst the first to be held in the space. Thanks are due to Clive who worked very hard organising the exhibitions.

The gallery, in a railway arch, has a dynamically designed glass frontage but made for rather chilly private views and there were difficulties in getting visitors to the shows, not the least because of problems with access.



Exterior view of the Sassoon Gallery by Matthew Kolakowski

Even though interest in future LG exhibitions at Sassoon was not sufficient (only a couple of members came forward), those who did show excelled at what the Group does best – bringing together works whose diverse characteristics interact in thought-provoking and intriguing ways, while producing a visually appealing whole.



Internal view of the Sassoon Gallery's exhibition space, by Matthew Kolakowski

Recent London Group Exhibitions

Bankside Gallery, 13 April – 1 May 2006, *Annual Exhibition*

Sassoon Gallery, Peckham, PArt 1, 10 – 22 April 2006: Wendy Anderson, Oona Grimes, Susan Haire, Richard Kemp, Matthew Kolakowski, Prudence Kurrle, Ken Oliver, Eugene Palmer, Philippa Tunstall, Bill Watson

Sassoon Gallery, PArt 2, 25 April – 6 May 2006: Mark Ainsworth, Slavomir Blatton, Tony Carter, John Crossley, James Faure Walker, Bill Henderson, Ian Parker, Mike Phillipson, Wendy Smith, Neil Weerdmeester

Art et Amicitiae, Amsterdam, De salon 2006, 16 November – 10 December, London Group members invited to show alongside Arti members: Peter Clossick, Mark Dickens, Julie Held, Ken Oliver, Ian Parker, David Redfern, James Faure Walker, Neil Weerdmeester

The London Group at Deutsche Bank, Part 1, 18 January – 18 April 2007: Martin Abrahams, Wendy Anderson, Victoria Bartlett, Slavomir Blatton, Bryan Bengé, Robert Clark, Philip Crozier, John Crossley, Gus Cummins, Jeffrey Dellow, Mark Dickens, Susan Haire, Marcelle Hanselaar, Alfred Harris, Prue Kurrle, Graham Mileson, Eric Moody, Janet Nathan, Ken Oliver, Daniel Preece, Tom Scase, Tommy Seaward, Suzan Swale, Neil Weerdmeester, Arthur Wilson, Susan Wilson

Forthcoming London Group Exhibitions

Guildhall Art Gallery, City of London, October 2007, (PV on 23 Oct), *Collective Response*, a selected London Group exhibition curated by Annie Johns and Wendy Anderson: Wendy Anderson, Brian Bengé, Clive Burton, Tony Carter, Tony Collinge, Mark Dickens, Annie Johns, Eugene Palmer, Ian Parker, David Redfern, Susan Skingle, Wendy Smith, Wendy Taylor, Bill Watson, Arthur Wilson,

Menier Gallery Parts 1 and 2, Southwark Street SE1, November 2007, *The London Group Open Exhibition*

The London Group at Deutsche Bank, Part 2, Spring 2008

Highgate Gallery, 2008

BayArt Gallery, Cardiff, 2008, TBC

The Cello Factory, Cornwall Road, Waterloo, London Group Sculptors, 2008, TBC

London Group Forum, details TBA

Listing of LG members' shows

Only three members sent in their info so we decided not to print a listing in this issue.

Thanks and apologies to those who took the trouble.

Members are invited to send Tamara (by email or post) their exhibition details if they wish them to be circulated to the Group via email. If we receive enough we will list them in the next newsletter.

Editor:

Susan Haire (Honorary Secretary)
mail@susanhaire.com 020 7401 9119
16 Theed Street, Waterloo, London, SE1 8ST

Layout and formatting:

Tamara Thomas (Secretary/PA to the President)
enquiries@thelondongroup.com
11 The Plantation, Blackheath, London, SE3 0AB