



The big news for The London Group is our exhibition From David Bomberg to Paula Rego: The London Group in Southampton at Southampton City Art Gallery from 28 June to 1 November. It is a special privilege for the Group to be showing at Southampton as it has one of the largest collections of London Group members' work in the country. I do hope that anyone who reads this will consider visiting the exhibition:

www.southampton.gov.uk/s-leisure/artsheritage/sotonartgallery.

What better opportunity could there be to see The London Group with a record number of 74 members showing in recent times alongside 37 historic members?

It is hardly believable that the tremendous momentum of last year's centenary celebrations is still with us, with both our Tate reception and The London Group on London exhibition celebrating the opening of the first London Group exhibition a hundred years ago to the day. I know that it means a great deal to Tim Craven, Head Curator of Art at Southampton, and his team to be a part of our centenary celebrations. Tim is passionate about the Group and immensely knowledgeable as he demonstrated when he gave some of us an unforgettable tour of the Southampton vaults showing us all the LG members' works in their collection.

Victoria Rance and David Redfern have worked with great inspiration in curating the historic part of the show and Sam Jarman and Bryan Benge have curated the contemporary part and they all deserve enthusiastic thanks. And as ever many thanks go to Jane Humphrey who has been a tower of strength in producing the stunning catalogue. I am delighted to welcome Annie Johns and Susan Sluglett as the new newsletter editors. I have a personal reason to be particularly grateful to them having edited the newsletters myself for the last nine years. I congratulate them on the vision and expertise that is so evident in these pages and I do hope all our readers have a thoroughly enjoyable time finding so much to discover about The London Group in this newsletter.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

2014

28 June - 1 November From David Bomberg to Paula Rego: The London Group in Southampton, Southampton City Art Gallery

17 July Reception at Southampton City Art Gallery

26 - 28 September London Art Book Fair The London Group is taking a table at this annual fair at Whitechapel Gallery

2015

The London Group Draw II
London Group Open Exhibition

A TALENT FOR SURVIVAL



A Talent for Survival: The London Group Reception at Tate Britain

On 5 March 1914, The London Group held its inaugural exhibition at the Goupil Gallery, 5 Regent Street, London. You probably haven't heard of the Goupil, which shifted between several central London locations before it was flattened by a German bomb in 1941. Despite a nomadic existence, The London Group has proved much more durable: it survived the Second World War, decades of changing tastes in the art world and a verbal carpet bombing by art critic Brian Sewell. Dr Richard Cork, Sewell's predecessor at the London Evening Standard, was much more complimentary when he spoke at a reception at Tate Britain on the 100th anniversary of that first exhibition.

Current members, their partners and invited guests heard Richard Cork reflect on The London Group's early years. It was an era in which the art world was dominated by 'isms' (Fauvism, Cubism, Vorticism) and the challenge of conveying wholesale slaughter on the battlefields was taken up by many painters and sculptors. As Cork touched on some of the controversies and described the brutal evolution of Jacob Epstein's Rock Drill sculpture, I thought about a more recent attempt at emasculation. Brian Sewell's withering assessment of the exhibition, *Uproar! The First 50 Years of The London Group 1913-1963*, included the assertion that the Group has been in 'irreversible decline' since the end of the Second World War and 'ought long ago to have been put down'. But Brian Sewell's comment that The London Group in its later years 'has meant very little to working artists and nothing at all to the wider public' is breathtakingly arrogant and ill-informed. Did he bother to interview any current members before reaching this conclusion? Speaking to them at the reception on 5 March and at previous exhibitions, I know that what Sewell dismisses as a 'pathetic' collective is an integral part of their professional lives.

Longevity is not always a reliable guide to the value of work, organisations or individuals. But enduring links to a pivotal era in 20th-century British art are worth celebrating. Tate Britain holds a fascinating collection of London Group documents, catalogues and photographs within its huge archives. In the words of its current President, Susan Haire, 'The London Group is thriving and we expect to be around for the next 100 years.'

SUSANNAH STRAUGHAN

PHOTOGRAPHIC DAY IN THE LIFE OF GENETIC MOO



Genetic Moo Preparing for Radio Arts Showcase and Microworld THE STUDIO FLAT

One day in April with Genetic Moo preparing for Radio Arts Showcase and Microworld. Photos taken on Wed 16 April in their Flat in Margate.

- Photo 1 - Preparing a projector plinth
- Photo 2 - Programming aeroplankton
- Photo 3 - Experimenting with mobile construction
- Photo 4 - Selecting and organising artworks for Microworld
- Photo 5 - Testing the Aeroplankton

Work shown at Radio Arts Showcase at Beane House of Art and Knowledge, Canterbury Sat 19 April - Sun 27 April

Microworld at Arcadecardiff, Cardiff Mon 26 May - Sun 1 June.

THE LONDON GROUP ON LONDON



Celebrating the centenary of the first London Group Exhibition

27 FEBRUARY - 12 MARCH 2014

Taking the capital as its theme, over sixty London Group artists showed their visual interpretations of London, its architecture, infrastructure and communities, in a sensational series of paintings, sculpture, photography and video works. Curated by Richard Kemp, the exhibition coincided with the first London Group Exhibition, held on 5 March 1914 at the Goupil Gallery in Regent Street.

This show seemed much easier to place and hang than earlier exhibitions, probably due to the original small size restriction for the works, good curation and a well coordinated hanging team.

Like London itself the works were eclectic, but together they presented a portrait of one city in one moment of time, as well as showing a snapshot reflection of the London Group. The preview was lively and well attended. The show attracted a lot of favourable comments from visitors and London Group members alike. The works on show spanned generic landscapes and portraits of the city, to personal, darker and more abstract interpretations. From skyscrapers to sewers, from the river to the night sky, from dust to monuments, from weeds to manmade structures, the London Group covered them all. We did well and made this exhibition into something to treasure.

SUZAN SWALE

TALKING WALLS



TALKING WALLS

With my father having worked for 4 years at Bletchley Park I have particular feelings for Maya Ramsay's exhibition 'Wall Talk' at The Cello Factory London SE1 (from 26 April) in which, by a remarkable technique she has evolved, she can lift the surface 'skin' off walls, in this case a number of them (but not all) from the walls of the huts at Station X, as the wartime code-breaking centre was once known. These are powerful and resonant pieces, Ramsay working here with three other artists to produce not just the wall surface images but also recordings of sounds produced by and within the derelict buildings plus photographed and filmed documentation of them.

Visual and aural histories seem unmistakably imbued in these surfaces, important human records too, now lost to recent renovation of the Station X site. This is not simply about Bletchley though, Ramsay's technique proving effective for exploring wider issues of secrecy, oppression and horror too.

NICHOLAS USHERWOOD
from 'Galleries' magazine April 2014

VIC KUELL



Susan Sluglett in Conversation with Vic Kuell

What are your earliest memories of painting?

Around about the age of twelve I was an avid cinephile particularly drawn to Walt Disney. Snow White and the seven dwarfs were major characters I could draw from memory. During the same period, estate agents had certain employees who painted watercolours to illustrate numerous mock Tudor suburban houses to advertise their wares. I too enjoyed this pursuit but had no thoughts of being an artist, indeed, as I had been awarded a full scholarship to Simon Langton grammar school in Canterbury, where I lived, my path was to be a more conventional one.

What was it that made you want to be an artist?

It was not until I was 14 when my father resigned from the army and we moved to Bromley, Kent, that I had to go to work as an errand boy for the Home and Colonial Grocer in Orpington, to supplement the family income by 15 shillings a week. Quite by accident my sister showed some of my small drawings and paintings to her art master who casually suggested I should go to art school. My mother was delighted, my father; a true soldier - was horrified.

What sort of art education did you have and which artists did you find yourself drawn to?

I was interviewed at Maidstone Centre for Education by a large number of people who questioned me as to reasons why I wanted to be an artist - I had no idea! However, they seemed impressed and gave me a full scholarship. This provided me with materials, food, travel, a large box of architect's instruments and a large volume on the History of Architecture by Bannister Fletcher. The course, composed of life drawing, antique drawing and anatomy perspective, much like that of Picasso and Matisse in whom I became more interested, though the only true source of their work was available in the Lefevre Gallery, New Bond Street.

You mention Miles Davis in your artist statement - does listening to jazz have a part to play in your work? Is there a connection between music and colour for you?

Miles Davis like most artists who interest me are innovators, offering new routes in their approaches. The unexpected outcome from On the Road discoveries intrigue me and give me a bigger buzz than well worn accomplished conventions. Though colour, whilst not visible in music, it is undoubtedly integrated and evoked by sound, not specifically but as an awkward intrigue.

Am I right in thinking you were in the RAF during the war? Did you find time to make art or think about painting during that period, or was it a case of having

to put that part of your life to one side until after the war was over?
At 17 and half I was awarded a Royal Scholarship to the RCA which had moved to Ambleside in the Lake District. Due to be conscripted into the services, I tried to get into the Fleet Air Arm but was 'sniffily' dismissed for lack of a formal education. I volunteered for the RAF and was placed on a pilot/navigator/bomb aimer course. I did 12 hours instructed flying in a Tiger Moth and 20 minutes trying to make a perfect landing in my first solo flight, for which I was congratulated by my instructor.

As you have probably noticed my life has been one of good fortune, I managed to scrounge a second kitbag from the stores when I joined, in which I carried my paints, materials and books on art through the whole of my RAF career. I was inclined to keep others awake through the night and was punished benevolently, as most CO's found me a spare hut for a studio. By the time I left the RAF I had works in many places including America, where I did advanced flying training. In 1947 I returned to the RCA completing my studies in 1950. I was then offered a FT teaching post at Ravensbourne College, my original school.

Do the titles of your paintings have an important part to play in your work? Do you ever start with a title and work around the idea that way, or is it more a case of the title coming at the end, punctuated with a full stop?
Titles for me have to have a poetic feel, inasmuch as the words are not definitive but have a distant resonance often related to the journey one has taken with painting, which hopefully doesn't stop.

Albert Irvin said recently in the BBC London News interview that The London Group provided a much needed platform for emerging artists coming out of college - when did you join the group and what effect do you think being part of The London Group has had on you as an artist?

To be part of an eclectic group and show with so many able makers of unusual works is highly stimulating. In 1975/77/79 I was selected to show in the London Group Open Biennales and in 1981 I was elected a member.

What if anything would you like to see happen within The London Group in the near future? Do you think there is something that we can all do as members that would improve things?

Select young energetic artists who have work that is possibly uncomfortable or will 'rock the boat'. Otherwise the settled effect can become boring.

Here's the desert island question - if you could own any artwork what would it be and why?

I don't know if it is still there, but earlier in my life I visited the National Gallery frequently to see a very small painting by Duccio - magic!

SUSAN SLUGLETT

BOOK LAUNCH



**The London Group:
a history
1913-2013**

David Redfern

THE LONDON GROUP: A HISTORY 1913 - 2013

BOOK LAUNCH AT WATERSTONES PICCADILLY - A TALK BY DAVID REDFERN

On a cold, wet and windy evening post-rush hour, the Charing Cross section of the Northern Line was down; crowds thronged through Piccadilly Station. Our destination was Waterstones Bookshop, our hosts, providing a welcome retreat from the bad weather. Inside they had done the London Group proud. Cosy armchairs for the audience, mugs of hot coffee and generous large glasses of good quality wine. Susan, our president, was there with a sprinkling of London Group members, joined by a welcome audience from outside, who were eager to learn about the Group.

The choice of venue was perfect, because most of the early meeting places, or galleries where the members exhibited their work, were on the doorstep of the Royal Academy or near to Mayfair and the Cafe Royal. The atmosphere was warm, informal and friendly, largely created by our wonderful author of the book, David Redfern, who led us through the Group's history, with pictures projected onto a large screen. He did this in his usual relaxed, humorous and engaging way.

Each time I hear David's talk or read sections of his book, I discover new bits of information about the Group's early days and the colourful characters that were part of it. I never tire of it, a bit like saying "Tell me this story again, and again." Each time I realise that we are all so lucky to be part of this Group and that the Group still survives after all these years.

We left feeling that it was an event we could not have missed, as we walked back through the damp, wet air of a neon-lit Piccadilly.

SUZAN SWALE

BBC LONDON TONIGHT INTERVIEW



The London Group on London

TRANSCRIPT OF BBC LONDON NEWS ITEM - 4 MARCH 2014

Riz Lateef: Studio presenter

The capital as seen through the eyes of sixty different artists. It's a new exhibition put together by a co-operative of artists which is celebrating its centenary. The London Group was founded by young creatives who struggled to get exposure for their work and has been nurturing new talent ever since. Our arts correspondent Brenda Emmanus has more.

Brenda Emmanus: Reporter

Albert Irvin is a renowned artist. Last year the 91-year-old received an OBE for his services to the visual arts. Damien Hirst bought three paintings from his recent exhibition. Albert is also the oldest member of The London Group.

Formed in 1913 the Group were a collective of radical young artists who struggled to get their work exhibited in traditional institutions like the Royal Academy, so organised their own shows. Their first exhibition took place in 1914.

Bert Irvin

It had an illustrious membership and an inspirational ambience which we all thought we would like to be part of, and as far as I was concerned it was the only platform that I had after I left art school.

Brenda Emmanus

Since 1913 the ever-evolving Group have been meeting, debating values in visual arts, mentoring fellow students and running self-financed exhibition programmes. In fact, The London Group have held exhibitions virtually every year, even during the war period. To celebrate their 100th anniversary the Group have organised a new exhibition called "The London Group on London", reflecting on the city where they live and make their art.

David Redfern

The London Group has always been good at doing that actually, bringing together these seemingly incompatible movements or whatever, that exist piecemeal between each another as it were, and saying to the public look, you have this and you have this; we present it to you, make up your own mind about that.

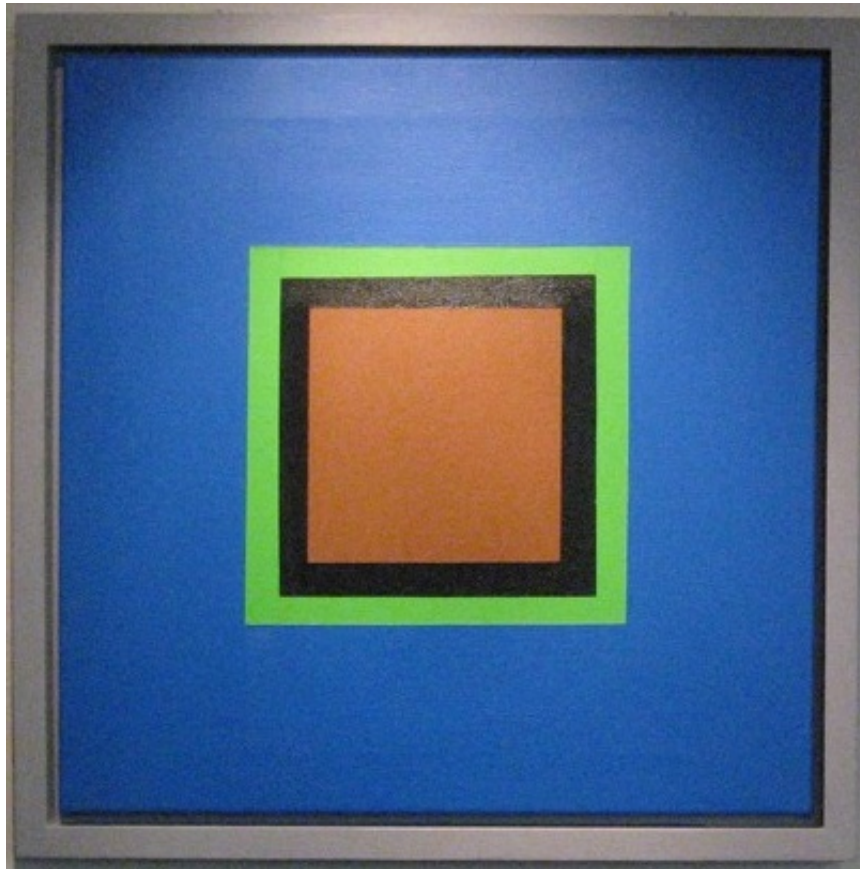
Brenda Emmanus

Susan Sluglett is featured in the show and is one of The London Group's newer members.

Susan Sluglett

It's a place where people are encouraging one another. You know, you can join groups and you can just show work and be completely absent, and it's not like that here. You get involved and it makes it richer.

THE CHELSEA ARTS CLUB



THE LONDON GROUP AT THE CHELSEA ARTS CLUB

4 MARCH - 31 MARCH 2014

A small exhibition by some members of The London Group went on show in the Billiard Room at the Chelsea Arts Club from 4 - 31 March. This was not a London Group exhibition but came about because of The London Group centenary and past connections between The London Group and Chelsea Arts Club. Most of the 18 artists who showed are members of the Chelsea Arts Club and three are close associates or interested in joining.

As is expected of The London Group, the artworks showed were varied in medium and content from the striking painting 'Battersea Power Station' (Daniel Preece) to Janet Nathan's beautifully co-ordinated collaged sculpture 'Hope Sound' and Eric Moody's humorous structure 'Congestion Charges'. The artworks though diverse related well together and were positioned economically in the large space; they ranged from the comical 'I brought this in case' (Vaughan Grylls) to the coolly abstract work of John Holden and Colette Morey de Morand among others. The exhibition consisted of drawings, paintings, prints, reliefs and wall hung sculpture and included two interesting line etchings by the late John Bellany (past member of the London Group) of Stan Smith and Albert Irvin, the latter being one of the most long standing of present London Group Members. The work of two past Presidents of the London Group - Stan Smith (also past Chairman of the Chelsea Arts Club) and Adrian Bartlett were also represented here.

What was apparent in this stimulating show was the variety and experimental nature of the work and, as is common with all London Group Members, the work continues to defy being pigeon-holed but carries on the tradition of being excitingly unpredictable.

JANET PATTERSON

NEW TWITTER FEED



The London Group now have a Twitter feed:
[@TheLondonGroup1](#)

PRESS TEAM



Artsinform are handling the press for The London Group.
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