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# The LONDON GROUP visual arts since 1913

## The London Group August Newsletter 2015

The London Group is delighted to announce the call for entries for its 82nd open exhibition. The London Group Open 2015 offers a wonderful opportunity for emerging and established artists to raise their profile, win cash and material prizes worth over £5,000 and exhibit their work to the public alongside the Group's esteemed members. Amongst an impressive array of prizes is a purchase prize from The Ingram Collection of Modern British Art over half of which comprises works by historic London Group members and we are delighted to be forging a relationship with Chris Ingram. This year entries can be made online for the first time, simplifying the application process. Works can be in any medium including painting, sculpture, drawing, print, photography, audio, digital, mixed media, installation, video and performance. Successful entrants will see their work hung in one of two exhibitions, staged during October and November 2015 at The Cello Factory.

ENTER ONLINE: [www.thelondongroup.com](http://www.thelondongroup.com)

## Dates for the Diary

**The London Group Open 2015** will be held at the Cello Factory

Deadline for entries 24 August 2015

Exhibition dates and times

### Part 1

Exhibition 13 - 23 October, 2pm - 6pm daily

Artists' talks Monday 19 October, 6pm

### Part 2

Exhibition 27 October - 6 November, 2pm - 6pm daily

Artists' talks Monday 2 November, 6pm

**"An Englishman in Arcadia"** harpsichord recital by Penelope Cave on 15 October 2015 at The Cello Factory at 7pm

In this entertaining harpsichord recital with readings and slides, Penelope Cave will trace a grand tour made by John Blathwayte of Dyrham Park, which included meeting and performing with the most celebrated musicians in Venice and Rome during 1707.

Tickets £10 - available online

[www.ticketsource.co.uk/cellofactory](http://www.ticketsource.co.uk/cellofactory)

and also at the door.

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## From the President

Our hugely popular Open is eagerly anticipated and once again we look forward to a very exciting and enriching exhibition. We are very proud to have introduced online submissions and I do encourage any readers to apply and to pass on this information.

Hot on the heels of our 'two year Centenary' we had already had two tremendous exhibitions by May this year both at The Cello Factory. The London Group Draw II was once again an outstanding event. The charged atmosphere at the PV was palpable and it was of particular note that people spent far more time than usual looking at the work during the show. The immense pleasure the Draw itself gave all present was remarkable and one of the many perfect ingredients in the mix was the breadth of everyone's taste, so that even by the end people were still absolutely delighted with the work they acquired. The Draw made a magnificent profit of £11,000. Thanks and congratulations to Gill Ingham and her team!

Bridge then followed; a Small Group Exhibition of eleven women members curated with panache by Peter Clossick. This was an excellent exhibition, a major outcome of which was the discussion that took place between the exhibitors to find links and bridges

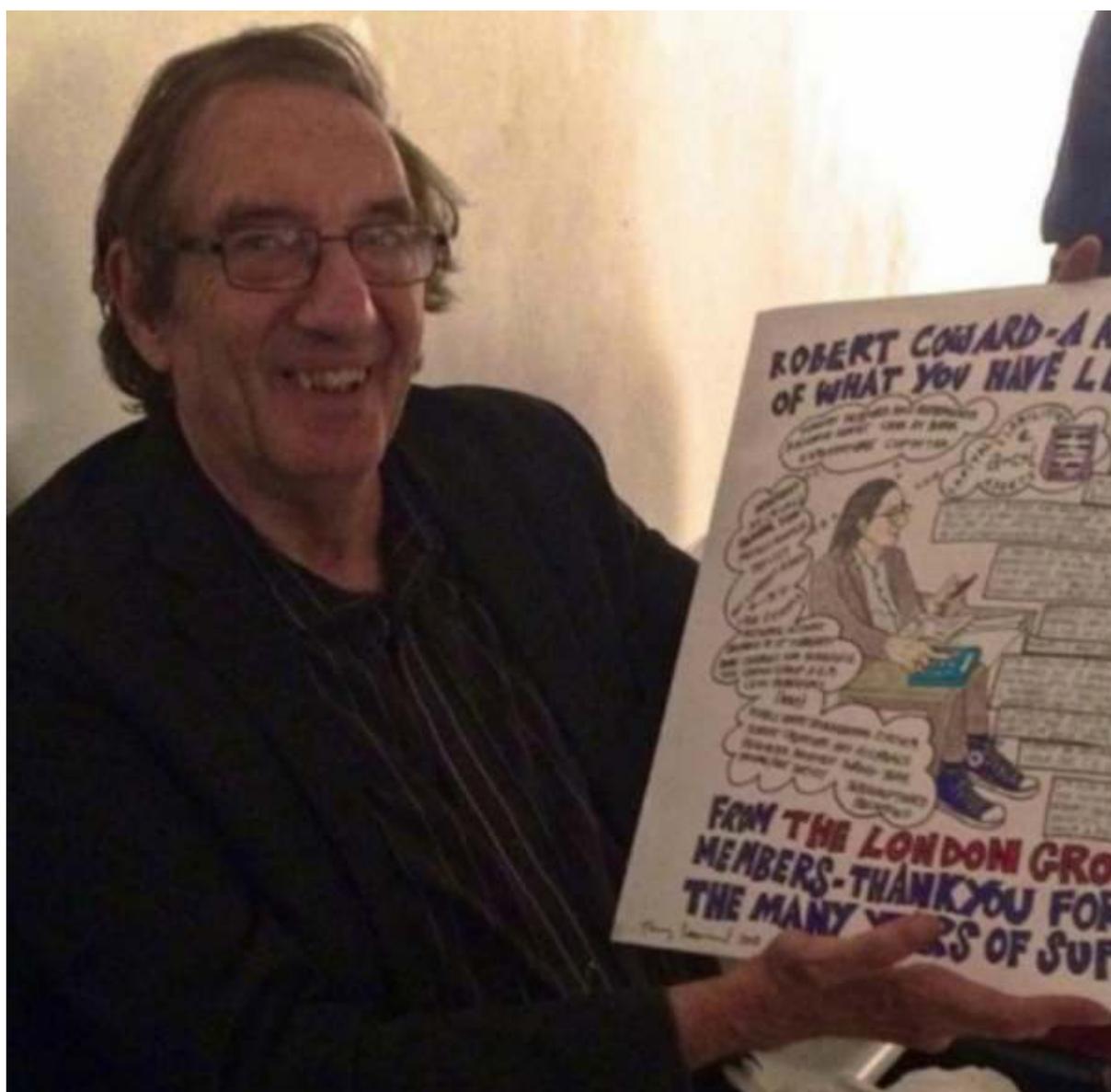
between their work and philosophies. All participants were enriched by these interactions and it strongly emphasised this extremely valuable and fruitful aspect of SGEs.

We would be delighted if you could forward this newsletter to anyone you think might be interested in receiving news about The London Group.

Susan Haire

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### **Robert Coward, Treasurer of The London Group, on the occasion of his retirement on 9 April**



Robert Coward has done no less than forty years of unpaid voluntary work for The London Group. He began his long association with the Group in 1975 with the illness of Valentine Ellis, who was then Treasurer. Robert stepped in temporarily as Treasurer whilst the Group was at an all-time low and could easily have collapsed had not a small

core of believers continued against the odds. Twenty years of continuous voluntary support later, the Group saw fit to elect him an Honorary Member.

As Treasurer Robert managed the financial affairs of the Group, compiled annual accounts, attended meetings, was always on hand to give financial advice and, recently, even provided his own home for Committee Meetings. The list of other things Robert has done in the service of art is impressive and includes voluntary work for Matt's Gallery with Robin Klassnik, for Artlaw with Henry Lydiate, for the International Artist Association and he was a committee member of Acme for 15 years (1985-2000). Robert once said that Valentine Ellis, the firm of accountants he was a partner of for many years, was like a charity. What he meant was that they would often reduce fees when they saw how impoverished their artist clients were.

From my point of view what more perfect Treasurer could there be who when asked if we can pay for something always said, we're not trying to make money, our money is for spending and so if we have it we can spend it – whereas at the same time we have always felt in the safest hands possible.



Robert also had a career as a performance artist. As a member of a group called The Hanging Committee he performed at the Nottingham Midland Gallery in 1982. This involved Robert crawling on the floor but he skinned his elbows so badly that he had to withdraw. One of his clients, a sculptor, was most taken aback to see his accountant crawling around a gallery floor. Robert has happier memories of his part in a performance at the Brixton Art Gallery in 1983 which involved his partner Suzan Swale being buried under newspapers with the other performers removing the newspapers

from her. They took so long to do this that the audience helped to remove the newspapers to speed up the process.

Although it is very sad that we are losing Robert he has been talking about retiring for quite a while and it is tremendous that he has stayed on as long as he has. And we are not saying farewell - as an Honorary Member of the Group, we look forward to seeing almost as much of him in the future at all of our shows and events. So we all give Robert our warmest thanks for everything he has done for the Group over so many years and our thanks come from the bottom of our hearts.

Susan Haire (with thanks to David Redfern for his research)

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### **Welcome to our new Treasurer**

It is a great pleasure to welcome Christine Styrnau as our new Treasurer. She is already a friend to many members and some are her clients and she has been coming to London Group shows for over 15 years. Robert and Christine worked together at Valentine Ellis for about 30 years and Christine's artist clients include Turner Prize nominees and RAs. She is involved in the art world in all kinds of ways even going to the Venice Biennale every year for her holiday. We are privileged and absolutely delighted that Christine is joining us and hope she thoroughly enjoys working with the Group.

Susan Haire (excerpt from AGM Report)

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**The London Group Draw II Thursday 23 April 2015**



The London Group enjoyed a fantastic evening with Draw II. 134 works were donated from London Group members, invited artists and past exhibitors of the London Group Open Exhibition. They included Robyn Deny, Eileen Cooper, William Feaver, Peter Freeth RA, Gerard Hemsworth, Mali Morris RA, Fabian Peake, Deanne Petherbridge, Judy Stapelton and from the deceased John Edwards, Harvey Daniels, Stan Smith. The profit of £11,000 is earmarked to support a future London Group Open Exhibition at a larger venue.



A number of things that made it very special included the generosity of the artists who donated artworks. It was exciting to see the intensity of the ticket purchasers' looking at the art and this included many visiting the exhibition several times prior to the event. They picked what they wanted to live with and everyone seemed very happy with their choice. The atmosphere on the evening was electric. With tickets at £100 the buyers got bargains! The price attracted buyers who would not normally buy art, and had a very positive "widening access" to the art market.

Thanks go to all those who donated work; to Susan Haire for The Cello Factory; to the working party - Suzan Swale, Charlotte Mortensson, Robert Coward and Mike Liggins; and to those who were involved on the day: the hangers, the wrappers, and the runners Mark Dickens, Amanda Loomes, Graham Mileson, David Redfern, Tom Scase, Tommy Seaward, Tisna Westerhof, Erika Winstone, David Wiseman. It was a great team effort and we should all feel proud. There is every prospect of DRAW III but not until 2019.

Gill Ingham

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### **Sam Jarman reflects on the Bridge exhibition, 28 April - 9 May 2015**

In May 2014, 11 London Group members were invited by Peter Clossick to participate in an all women show. It was clear from the first meetings at the Royal Festival Hall that

the show was going to evolve through earnest discussion and collective action. It became apparent that we wanted to be defined by our overlapping interests and not just by gender, hence the name 'Bridge' evolved.

Our process of pulling the show together collectively allowed us to get to know each other; each others' work and to advance our own creative practices through critical discussion, self-reflection and camaraderie. Peter was the lynch pin in managing our band of merry women. Thank you Peter.



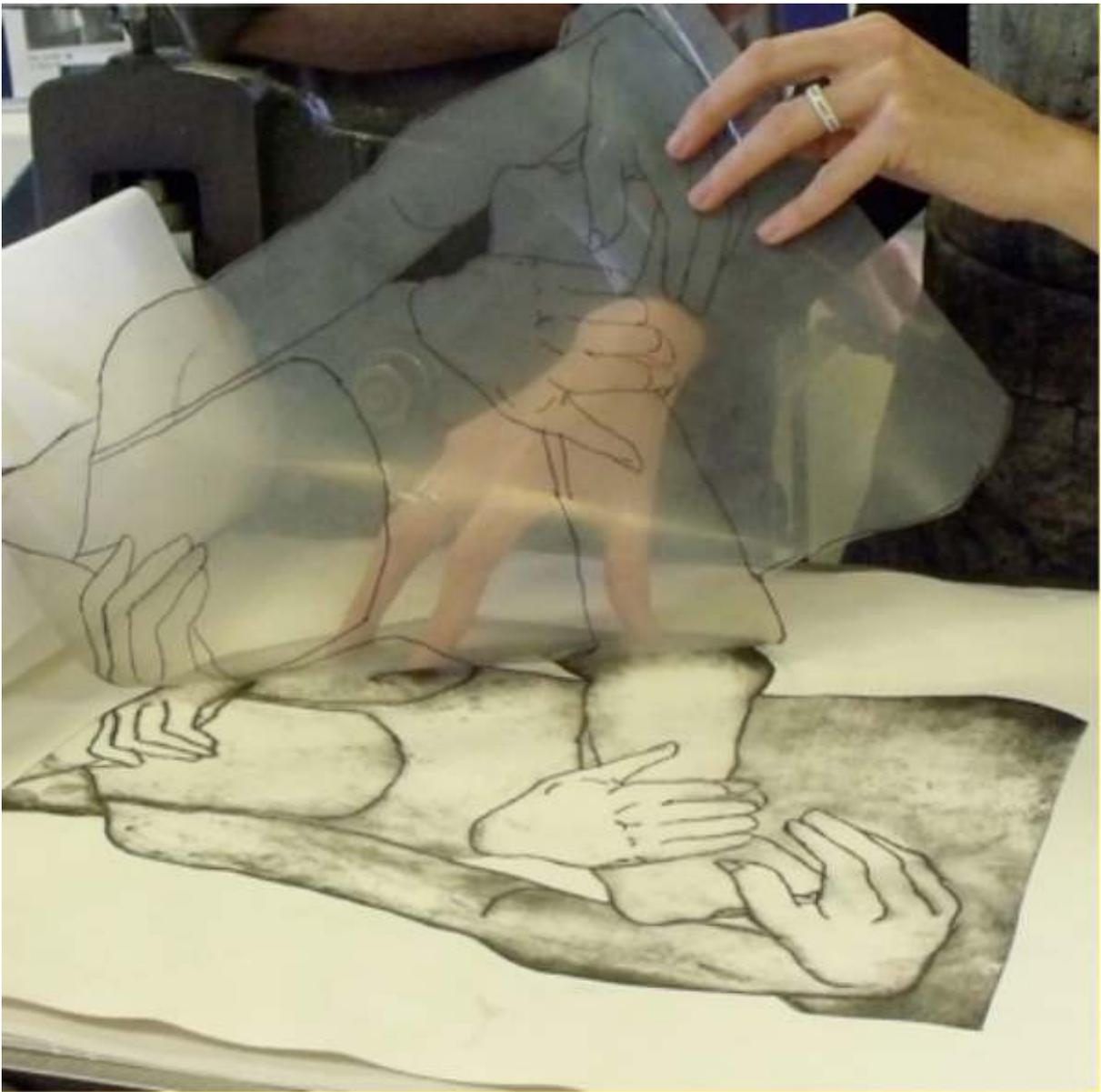
The success of the Bridge exhibition came from the intuitive way all the work linked and the range of practices shown in the choices of medium and content, reflecting the Group's diversity and strengths.

I personally enjoyed getting to know London Group members better, through the detailed process of collaborative decision-making, and the support I felt with the development of my own work from the shows inception to realisation, which lasted for almost a year.

This would be a great format for future Small Group Exhibitions and I think there is talk of extending our experience to create Bridge II, in whatever form that might take!

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**A day in the life of Tisna Westerhof - in the studio**



While my practice is grounded in printmaking, I revel in breaking down the limitations of materials and reinventing traditional handicrafts.



I'm working on an ongoing series of patchworks, sewing together newspaper reports of the London riots with fabrics from clothes I wore as a child. I try to open up a dialogue about inheritance and creativity in response to media representations of violence.



I divide all my time between my studio and hARTslane, an experimental art project space/gallery in New Cross Gate, South London, that I co-founded in 2012. It's based in a derelict garage, an unusual raw setting to develop creative ideas, network and experiment beyond boundaries. I'm proud to say that many London Group members have exhibited in hARTslane and I'm committed to create ongoing collaborations and opportunities in the future.



At the moment I'm working towards a solo show that will open mid 2016 at the Dutch Centre in London. In my series of Delft Blue decorated paper plates, with images of newspaper reports, I'm responding to the daily diet of violent and sometimes banal imagery served up in the Western media, where catastrophic events are thrown up in a moral panic, and just as quickly forgotten. The accumulation of functional paper plates, rendered useless by painting, embodies the disposable nature of news media. What are we being fed and, as we take it in, what do we become?

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**Erika Winstone talking about her practice with Annie Johns and Susan Sluglett**



Image: home studio installation view 2015

**Briefly describe the work you do.**

My work creates a dialogue between painting and video. I use gesture. However, my marks are attempts to transitively capture the music, actions and communications of others. Energy emerges from countless repeated attempts to capture both spontaneous and performed communication between individuals from different eras. I often work collaboratively with my daughter, or the artist collective [NAME], to see and hear through the experience of other generations. I mix personal everyday observation and feature films, including relationships between who we are, and who we would like to be. Out of disparate encounters, correspondences occur. I sometimes revisit sites used previously as a source for the work. These are returned to after an interval, to film what happens when the paintings are placed in current situations related to performances from which they were originally drawn. Often the unforeseen occurs and

the works are subsequently developed, integrating the unexpected and others' responses or obliviousness as part of their fabric. The making of my paintings in turn informs the resolution of my video works. These are shown ideally as installations involving an orchestration of several components, which may be reconfigured to best activate the space. The partial glazing emphasises the vulnerability of the exposed watercolours, similar to the fragility of human relationships. I aim to create a space in which to contemplate a meeting between that which is fluid in motion and that which is formed, however transitory.

**Tell us about your background and how that influences you as an artist.**

I grew up between two cities, London and Belfast. We travelled between them, returning to Belfast every school holiday to my mother's family home, where we lived when I was aged two to five, after her marriage disintegrated and she became a single parent. My experience of the importance of friendship, family relationships and the memory of the particular light in Northern Ireland profoundly affects my work. I still regularly return there, as well as visiting areas in England such as Devon and the New Forest to film. I live, work and teach in London. Finally, I am also a parent. This was something I feared might prevent my vocation continuing as an artist since I knew hardly any positive role models who had managed to combine being both artist and mother. However my eighteen-year-old daughter's creative insight, energy, relationship and presence has proved to be a constant source and inspiration for my work. She is an artist herself and is currently studying joint honours in English and Drama. She often performs in my videos. I never imagined I would collaborate or work with others, as I am by nature a very shy person. However, in the past eighteen years my practice has evolved to include working collaboratively. Video allows me to record performances and then work privately from it. It allows me to view spontaneous movement or gesture repeatedly, sometimes hundreds of times. Digital editing gives me great freedom to work with time, change and combining my recordings with those of others.



Image: Pride in progress with Pride video, installation view 2015

**Describe your studio practice and how it differs from traditional notions of 'being in the studio'.**

I work in three studios, each of which is distinct. The first one is more usual, being in a block with other artists, called Kingsgate Workshops Trust; here I make my drawn paintings while watching videos on my television monitor screen. I can walk there from home in twenty minutes. The second is in my bedroom, on my computer, where I edit my video work and sometimes make small trailer drawn paintings with silverpoint. My third studio is out on location in the world, in places that interest me, sometimes returning to sites where original performances happened. Sometimes collaborating as part of [NAME], performing, filming and making work in changing locations such as the Platform 1 Gallery (on a railway station platform), where we had a residency last year. I find working with others is fundamental to my practice, although I do usually make my drawn paintings alone.

**When do you find is the best time of day to make art? Do you have time set aside every day, every week or do you just work whenever you can?**

It is a case of needs must, and working with what is possible, as I juggle my various commitments. However I feel I have found a positive pattern. I make my paintings in the hours of daylight. I especially like working in the mornings and up to about 4pm. However I usually then come home to edit my videos in the dark. This has helped me be more productive, especially when I had a young child and working hours were short and precious. As well as this being a convenient way of working, on reflection, I have come to realise that a harmony with the natural cycle of day and night is at the heart of

my process. My work channels light. I draw from film with silverpoint that tarnishes on exposure to air and light. I am working with natural processes of change.

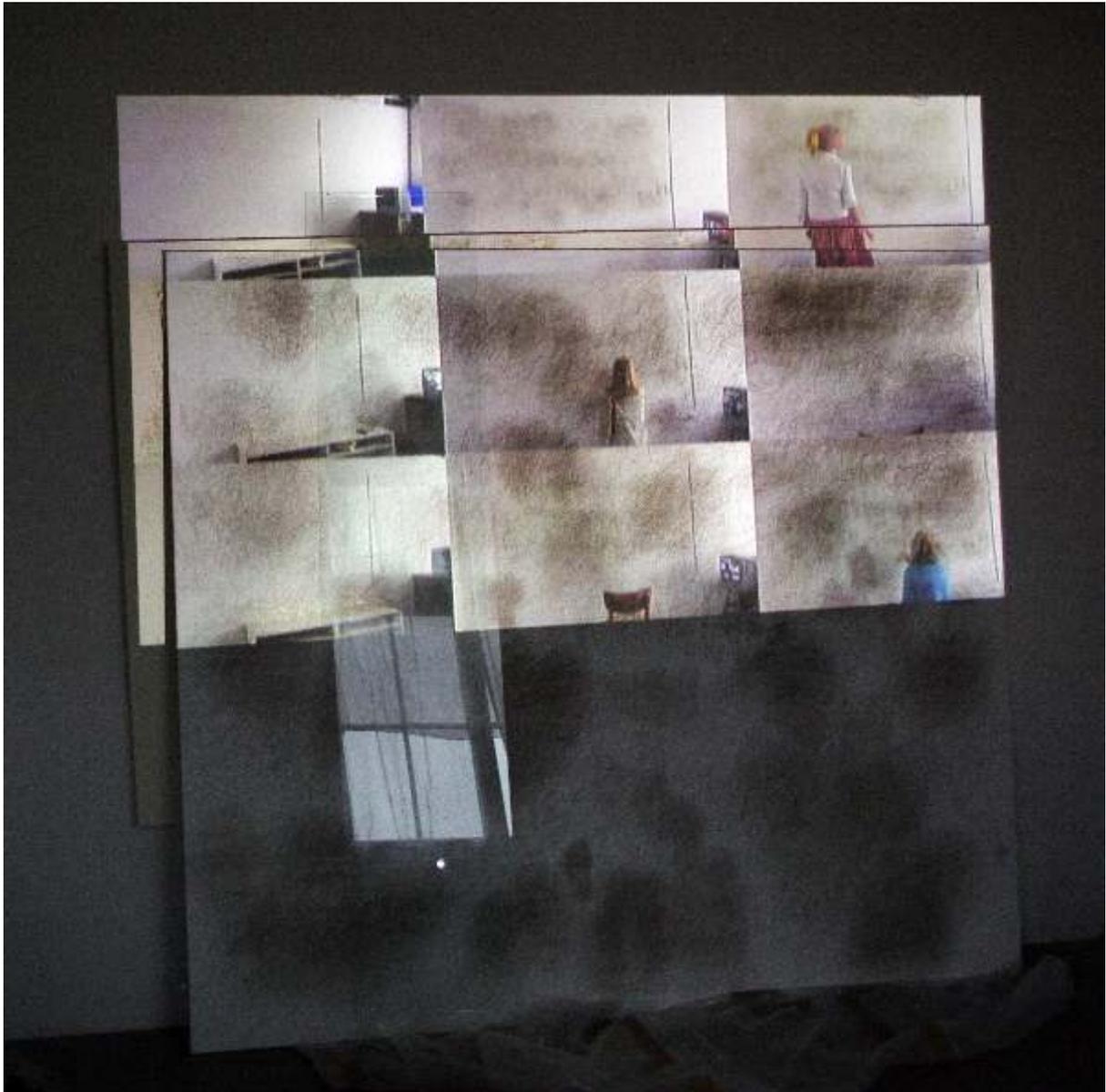


Image: 'Talent Show Meets The Rink' installation view 2015

### **How has your work changed in the last five years? How is it the same?**

The medium I work with has remained the same for the last six years. I have worked with silverpoint for eighteen years and I will be featured in the catalogue for the forthcoming exhibition, 'Drawing with Silver and Gold' at The National Gallery of Art in Washington and at The British Museum, as well as exhibiting in contemporary exhibitions of silverpoint in London and the USA. I have also worked for 15 years excavating paintings with a drill while viewing and combining performances captured on film. Through making these drawn paintings I become able to edit and resolve my video work. Recently my installations have evolved to include glass panels that I lean across my paintings, partially glazing them to reflect my video projection and the viewer.

For the past two years I have been collaborating with three other women artists: Sue

Glasgow, Lucy Lauener and Charlie Betts in [NAME], our performance and film collective. I mix and combine drawing from films of [NAME] with my own individual work. This has opened up an extended range of surprising moments, gestures and interactions, which I believe have enriched my work in unexpected ways.

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The London Group thanks Annie Johns and Susan Sluglett for compiling and editing the August 2015 newsletter.

Warm summer wishes to all members and friends of The London Group.



Dorothy Mead - Reclining Nude. In 1971 Mead was elected the first woman president of The London Group.

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