The Art Workers' Guild

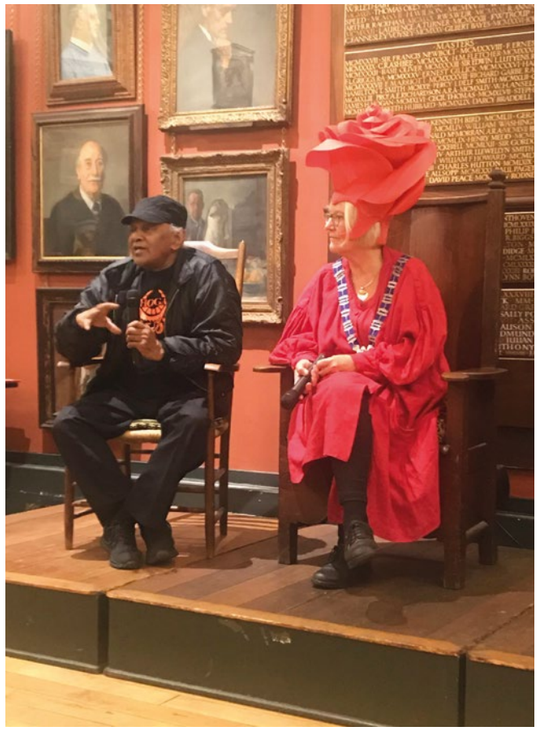
Proceedings and Notes – No. 34 – January 2020

Katharine Coleman – *City of London*. Image © Ester Segarra.

A MESSAGE FROM THE MASTER

Being Master has been enormous fun and I am grateful to everyone in the Guild for this experience. Organising the talks was daunting, but the enthusiasm and willingness of speakers to talk at the Guild are a testament to the respect in which it is held. Some of the best talks were by Art Workers themselves, and it was wonderful to hear the many ways in which the Guild's expertise, innovation and material know-how nurtures creative thinking and plays an important role in all our lives, ranging from ideas about climate change to how to make a wooden seal wiggle!

It has been an extraordinarily busy year for me at work, with the largest building project I have designed on site, as well as moving office. Leigh and Catherine have been a brilliant support team, sorting out any problems and fielding questions. With Elspeth this creates a well-staffed and competent team that has made the AWG a great place for members and for all those who rent the space. The team is supported by a solid board of Trustees focused on good employment procedures. The Trust has also been responsible for continuing the upgrading of the fabric of 6 Queen Square and meeting the needs of renters and hirers, which has transformed the Guild into a profitable organisation.



Master Anne Thorne and Speedy on stage. Image © Sarah Buist.

Indeed, there are many people to thank for helping to run such an enjoyable year:

- The Master's suppers and the lunch for Past, Present and Future Masters were all beautifully catered for, including illustrated menus by Art Worker Jane Dorner. The third dinner coincided with the speaker Clary Salandy's birthday, rounding off an extraordinary talk describing the structure, history and making, as well as the meaning behind Carnival and the making of its costumes. The talk was illustrated with the real thing: costumes that sprang out, towering up to reach the lantern roof light over the hall.
- The Hon. Secs, who did sterling work reading out the minutes and organising important things like minute-takers, wine and notices.
- The many minute-takers, who created a fine record of the talks, which, supplemented with the recordings, are a great resource, particularly for those who can't make it to the Guild.
- The Outreach Committee who brought a new dimension to the Guild – from the now well-established Table Top Museum to working with East London Textile Arts, and the Thinking with your Hands events. There were also two wonderful workshops on darning and on collage, which actively brought to a new audience the skill and craft of making exemplified by Art Workers.
- The Mentoring Committee, which is now actively supporting young artists and crafts people.
- And, finally, a big thank you is due to all the speakers who delighted us with their talks throughout the year.

Highlights have included Nina Bilbey's wonderful description of how to sculpt a full-size clay bear in a council flat and get it out to a studio ready to be carved in stone; Barbara Jones's graphic descriptions of how to build a straw- bale house; Nicholas Fox Weber's beautifully illustrated lecture on Anni Albers and the Bauhaus; and the imaginary mapping of Queen Square, in drawings, X-ray prints and stories of Queen Square, with the imprint of the life of William Morris, his wife and daughters, and their connection with epilepsy and the National Epilepsy Hospital. Special mention is due to the four new Art Workers who at very short notice stepped in and enthusiastically talked about their crafts – wallpaper and printmaking, porcelain carving, wood carving with a bandsaw, and sculpting with paperback papier-mâché.

Annette Carruthers prepared us for the Master's trip with her talk in April and then in September kindly joined us in Edinburgh, adding to the fun. Twenty of us intrepidly sought out the delights of Scotland, including the Scottish parliament, the new V&A in Dundee and weaving at the Dovecot Studios. Art Worker Angie Lewin opened her studio and generously showed us her techniques in printmaking and watercolour. In the Borders, we visited the immaculately restored 18th-century Marchmont House, with two Arts and Crafts wings designed by Sir Robert Lorimer and a wonderful collection of rush-seated chairs and Arts and Crafts furniture. Last, but by no means least, we sampled the eccentric delights of Past Master Ed Fairfax-Lucy's Scottish bolthole, where all of us, including the coach driver, were so warmly welcomed, wined and dined.

Anne Thorne

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10 January 2019 · ORDINARY MEETING

Master's Night
MASTER ANNE THORNE

The outgoing Master, Jane Cox, reflected on a very enjoyable year, highlights of which included the Summer Outing to the Isle of Wight, and the Royal Visit by Prince Charles. She then presented gifts to the Honorary Secretaries, and to PM Prue Cooper for her services to Outreach. An enormous round of applause reflected what a good Master Jane has been.

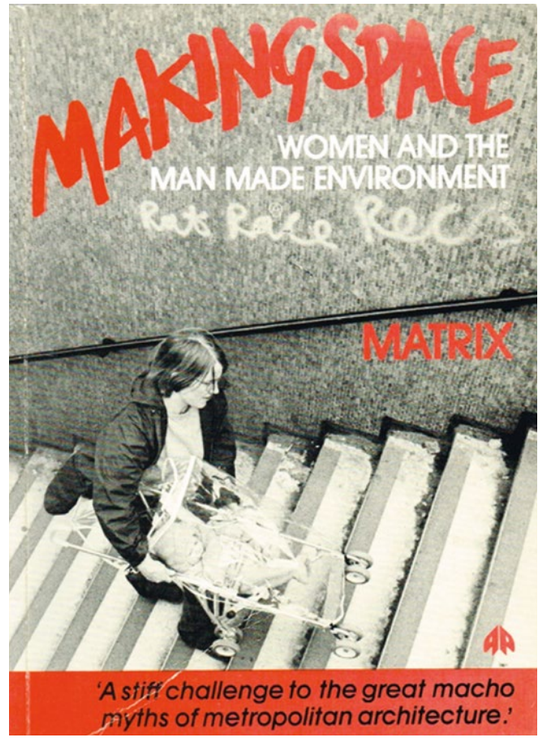
After a short interlude for the costume change, the new Master, Anne Thorne, emerged enrobed and said what a privilege it was, and how Past Master Jane Cox would be a hard act to follow.

Her talk, entitled, 'Philip Webb to Passivhaus', began with tales of an upbringing in a Philip Webb house, bought by her parents John and Helen Brandon-Jones on the day she was born. It was a hands-on upbringing, learning the proper use of tools, where the mantra was 'best to make it yourself' and she often did. Her father, an Admiralty architect and painter, was a fan of the Arts and Crafts movement, perhaps inevitably – having been christened by Past Master C.F.A. Voysey's father and then later having worked for Voysey's son Charles Cowles Voysey. Anne remembers the vast array of pets, including toads, tortoises and terrapins. These provided sources for drawing and required the making of cages. Her father eventually inherited the Voysey practice, which was installed in their front room, accommodating seven architects and a secretary. Anne would help out colour-washing drawings, when not climbing up the wisteria outside to play on the bay window roof.

Aged 16, Anne was enjoying scenery-making for school plays, and designing an enormous lobster float for the Lord Mayor's Show. School results were below expectations due to the discovery of parties and bunking off. This meant not being able to take up a place studying art history. After a few months in France as a teacher's assistant, she moved on. She secured a job as a receptionist in a hotel in Florence where they had once stayed, but after a few months she moved on again, to sell scarves in the market, and work as a tour guide before returning to England.

While working as a skivvy at Caroe and Martin, she took evening classes in maths, passed, and then applied to study architecture. At her interview in Manchester, by a panel of men, she was asked if she could make it through the seven-year course without the need to fulfill her function as a woman! Newcastle, however, was more progressive, having 15% female students when only 5% of working architects at that time were women. It was there that Anne was introduced to a fellow student, Andrew Thorne, who lived in a double decker bus, and they have been together ever since.

At Newcastle in the early 1970s, environmental scientists were looking at highly insulated buildings to minimise energy use, and this is where Anne took



Book cover for *Making Space: Women and the man made environment* by Matrix – featuring Anne and her son.

Opposite: Jagonari, an Asian Women's Centre, Tower Hamlets, Above: Cannock Mill Cohousing, Colchester © Anne Thorne Architects.

up the mantle of 'passive building'. After a year out with the Greater London Council housing department, she completed her architectural education at Central London Polytechnic, in one project exploring the use of the warm water discharge from Greenwich power station to heat water for a housing scheme.

Having qualified, Anne set up the Matrix Feminist Design Co-operative with several fellow students from Newcastle. This resulted in a book on women and the man-made environment, and many successful projects including an Asian women's centre in Tower Hamlets. In the early 1990s, Anne set up her own practice, like her father before her, in the front room.

An early project included remodeling the labyrinthine subways around Aldgate. Paradoxically, it was deemed one of the safest places in Tower Hamlets, as even criminals didn't like going down there! The solution was to fill in some underpasses and work with local artists to make the remaining subways inviting and appealing. Anne has continued to work collaboratively with artists on many public projects since then.

Another line of work has been in childcare buildings, again integrating art, and being careful in the use of materials to avoid toxic chemicals. A teacher even reported that the children were considerably calmer in her building than in the older parts!

After showing examples of many of her award-winning projects, Anne wrapped up her journey with her current and largest project to date: creating a community of 23 houses, including one for herself, at Cannock Mill in Colchester. These are set around a pond with the Grade II-listed mill building carefully restored as a community hub. The new houses are so well insulated that they only use 10% of the energy consumed by standard new houses. Anne concluded, to much applause, by telling us that she hopes to move in the coming April.

Questions included Bro. Coleman asking if it was easier now for women in the construction industry. The answer was yes, but there is still work to do. PM Abel asked if thick insulation meant it was harder to keep cool in summer, but the Master explained that in summer this kept the heat out. Finally, Bro. Bullock asked what her father thought of her work and if they worked together much. The answer was they had a mutual respect for each other's work, but she could only cope with short spells working with him as he was constantly singing '*The Mikado* ' and it drove her mad.

Bro. Simon Hurst

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24 January 2019 · ORDINARY MEETING

Straw-bale building
BARBARA JONES

When Barbara Jones got up to go to the lectern, several Brothers present on the evening of the 24th January may have felt doubtful that her lecture would succeed. After all, nursery rhymes and children's stories have a

The Straw Works team © Straw Works.

habit of hanging around in the mind. And those who felt a certain anxiety about the speaker's subject were reminded later, during question time by Past Master Peyton Skipwith, of the Big Bad Wolf – who could huff and puff till he blew the house down. At the start of the evening 'straw-bale houses' sounded intriguing, but also worrying.

The confidence of the speaker was immediately commanding. Straw bales, she told us, are versatile and friendly. They challenge our assumptions about modern building, not only in the choice of materials but also our understanding of who does the building. The increase in allergies and asthma over the course of two generations has been connected with the health hazards associated with modern building materials when used in the home. Straw-bale building, on the other hand, is not only good for our bodies and souls but also for the planet, being eco-friendly and thermally efficient. Straw buildings, we learnt, can be so well insulated that they can maintain an ambient temperature that needs hardly any heating at all.

Gradually, as Barbara Jones's talk unfolded, it became clear that what initially seemed like idealism was firmly grounded in facts and experience. Jones herself is well known for her designing with straw and has brought to completion a great variety of buildings, including the Eco-Hub in Haringey, on which she worked with the current Master of the Guild. She also runs Straw Works, a school that teaches straw-bale building to a very high standard and where 62% of the students are currently women, interested in houses that can be self-built.

We learnt that by using straw bales you can build a house without a timber frame, as the mass of the bales holds up the roof. The bales form modular units, held together by ring beams around the perimeter. There is a need to begin with a raised floor, but the walls go up much faster than a brick equivalent, Jones claiming that it is possible to build a three-bedroom straw-bale house in a week. As she talked, her slides showed buildings at various stages of construction. The finish, outside and inside, is a lime and plaster render which apparently attaches itself easily and well to the straw bales. Once completed, there is no obvious difference in appearance to standard construction. Among the first straw-bale buildings we were shown was a neat row of holiday homes for the disabled.

In passing, Jones mentioned how her interest in this method of building began. In 1994, while in America, she happened to attend a two-day course on straw-bale building on the West Coast. It transformed her thinking about architecture. At the end of those two days, she knew that she wanted to dedicate her life to the making of healthy houses, by affordable methods in which ordinary people could get involved.

Much information followed on how building with straw meets Passive House requirements, as well as Living Building standards, which include a list of materials you must not use. As a building material, straw does not pollute the landscape, and it stores carbon dioxide instead of creating it. Except for the necessary waste pipes, a straw-bale building uses natural materials, not processed ones. The attempt is always to try to use materials that uphold ethical values. This involves a holistic look at the building: not just at how it is built, but also thinking about with what, with whom and how the knowledge around it is shared with others. There were many intriguing details, not least the fact that used car tyres filled with pea shingle provide the most cost-effective method of foundation-building.

Questions afterwards came thick and fast, with almost an entire row of arms at one point requesting attention. It was clearly a subject that had stirred the mind and stimulated the imagination. The speaker's replies were to the point, packed with information and drew on 20 years' experience. There was an urgent question about mice and straw. Jones, who admitted that the Haringey Eco- Hub has mice, nevertheless dismissed the idea that straw bales had encouraged entry, arguing that any building with doors is at risk of getting mice. But anyone who has had a 'mouse problem' knows that they despise doors and prefer to get in by means of a hole no bigger than the width of a pencil. But aside from this quibble, this was a radical, forward-looking lecture, effectively delivered. Behind its factual content lay a vision for the future and a clear understanding of its needs. Anyone who missed this lecture and wants to avoid living with concrete should buy Barbara Jones's book, *Building with Straw Bales: A Practical Manual for Self-Builders and Architects*.

Bro. Frances Spalding

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7 February 2019 · ORDINARY MEETING

Triumph of the immaterial
PHOEBE CUMMINGS

The Master introduced the evening's speaker, Phoebe Cummings, a ceramicist and installation artist, the title of whose talk was 'Triumph of the immaterial'. Appropriate to her subject, she stayed silent for the first five minutes while brethren and guests enjoyed silent images of water dripping over a delicate ceramic-like confection of flowers and foliage, which gradually turned from white to various rusty hues, a prelude to decay and disintegration.

The speaker's talent was evident from the beginning of her talk. She had obtained a BA in ceramics from Brighton University before going to the Royal College of Art. She had always been interested in botany and

Above: Phoebe Cummings - *Nocturne (clay, wire, steel)*, AirSpace, 2016, Below: Phoebe Cummings - *After the Death of the Bear* (clay, polythene, steel, wire, wood), British Ceramics Biennial, Stoke-on-Trent, 2013 Photo © Sylvain Deleu.

fossils as well as in the erosive passage of time. She had no studio but worked on site over periods of months recording and creating ephemeral installations inspired by their location. These varied from a stream at Bolwick Hall, Norfolk, in which balls of unfired clay gradually disintegrated, to a sanitary ware manufactory in Wisconsin. The manufactory's aim was precision and its guiding dictum, 'variation is the enemy of quality,' was the very antithesis of Phoebe's philosophy. In 2010 she

had a six-month residency in the ceramic galleries at the Victoria & Albert Museum and she was particularly inspired by fragments of a Meissen porcelain table fountain, as well as being struck by the contrast between the ephemerality of her own work and the displays in the great Cast Courts, with their emphasis on preserving history. Another project, *After the Death of the Bear,* was created in a deserted factory at Stoke-on-Trent, inspired by the image on a blue and white Spode plate. The two-dimensional image was transformed by her into a three-dimensional eerie landscape 'The Fallen Giant,' symbolic not only of the bear but also of the once busy and now deserted factory.

An obsession with transience and the ephemeral was very clearly an important part of Phoebe's philosophy and she talked about an idea, not yet realised, to create a fountain that would dissolve itself. After a work had served its purpose, if it did not self-destruct, she would break it down and often recycle parts into whatever her next project happened to be. Her approach and practice has undoubtedly struck a chord in the contemporary art world, not only through her very obvious talent but through her ability to work with and inspire others. She has worked on projects in environments ranging from the nineteenth-century Women's Common Room at Liverpool University to ice-bound Greenland and the University of Hawaii, where with a group of students she created an extraordinary airborne work like a great red dragon.

The ephemeral quality of her work is, of necessity, reflected in these minutes: her leitmotif might be summed up in the hauntingly wistful lines of *Abide with Me* – 'Change and decay in all around I see'. One of her final images was of delicate tracery she had made of ferns and other lace-like foliage displayed in an eighteenth-century temple type structure in the grounds of Roche Court. Although the unfired clay was not directly exposed to the elements, over time it appeared to wilt and decay, becoming a sort of memento mori of the vegetable world and underlining the sense of transience that appeared to permeate much of her work.

In response to a question from the present writer as to whether any of her work would survive for her grandchildren to see, she replied that little would – apart from the photographic record and a few fragments. Tom Raymont of Arboreal Architecture asked how she achieved such delicate and life-like plant and flower forms, to which she responded by describing the process of making moulds from leaves and then pressing them out. Responding to Bro. Carrie Bullock, it was no surprise to learn that she was a fan of Grinling Gibbons. Bro. Gareth Mason, himself an outstanding experimental ceramicist, commented on the sensuality of many of her works, which was not only provocative but conveyed something pre-civilised, primeval and threatening, and asked how she achieved this. Phoebe said she was more comfortable creating these works than explaining them, but felt that this probably had something to do with the fact that she worked on site; she was interested in the fingermarks and footprints of history, and tried to respond to the environment. Bro. Karen Bunting asked whether when she broke up works she felt a sense of loss, but the speaker said her response was more one of relief than loss.

PM Peyton Skipwith

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21 February 2019 · ORDINARY MEETING

Assemble
GILES SMITH

The Master introduced Giles Smith, who began his talk on the work of Assemble, by describing it as 'a multi-disciplinary collective working across architecture design and art.'

Giles Smith recounted its history and some of its achievements since its founding in 2010, and the development of its ethos and its working methods. Throughout its existence its focus has been on low-budget, collaborative projects, working with and for local communities. Among its first was the conversion of a petrol station on the Clerkenwell Road into a species of pop-up cinema, involving over a hundred people in its making and using a high proportion of reclaimed materials. Another early project was *Folly for a Flyover*, built into a motorway undercroft in Hackney Wick to provide a centre for community activities. This too was designed to be built in part at least by unskilled volunteers and, both in its construction and in its use, was intended to evoke local, small-scale alternatives to large-scale enterprise. At the end of the year the structure was dismantled and materials were re-cycled for re-use.

At Sugarhouse Studios in Stratford and subsequently in a former school in Bermondsey, the same philosophy was applied on a larger scale. Here former industrial premises were converted to provide both space for community activities – cinema, out-of-school activities for children, exhibitions and a pizzeria – and flexible workspaces for artists, craftspeople and similar businesses, with the intention that while tenants pursued their own enterprises, complementary skills

Above: Giles Smith, Living Room on Cairns Street, Granby © Assemble, Below: Giles Smith Constructing Laguna Viva © Assemble.

Above: Assemble building Yardhouse © Assemble.
Below: Constructing the Cineroleum © Assemble.

provided opportunities to share in a common pool of facilities and knowledge. Assemble's approach to community, to re-use and to locality was again realised in the conversion of former Victorian public baths at New Cross, creating gallery, studio, curatorial and event spaces for Goldsmiths College of London University. Where necessary, materials were used – and, in some cases, newly created – that echoed the historic, functional aesthetic of the original structures.

At Granby, a decayed inner-city development area in Liverpool, the collective was involved with the rehabilitation of a street of houses, helping to provide design and technical expertise and to set up workshops where ceramic, timber and other components could be made. As elsewhere, local participation was central to the project, and in Liverpool Assemble assisted an enterprise that had already been launched by residents. And in the Laguna Viva project in Venice, Assemble was able to use tiles developed in the Granby workshop in the creation of a public open space which also includes facilities for research into the regeneration of the lagoon ecosystem.

Giles Smith's stimulating talk prompted a number of questions, most of them concerned with how the organisation worked. The Master asked 'does everyone get their hands dirty?' No, not everyone; tasks are shared out according to skills, but the collective is as egalitarian and democratic as possible. William Hardie, David Edgarley and Emma Barker received similar answers to their questions: the organisation is 'more or less' non-hierarchical, but while it is important for as many people as possible to know how things are done, it is neither necessary nor practical for everyone to be able to do everything. To Richard Adams, the Granby Four Streets initiative recalled the mutual assistance of the residents of Frestonia, a self-declared republic in Notting Hill in the 1970s. It was clear from the audience's attention and concluding applause that Assemble's ideals of co-operation, collaboration, sustainability and social involvement were strongly supported on the floor of the Hall.

Bro. Nicholas Cooper

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7 March 2019 · ORDINARY MEETING

Anni Albers (1899-1994) and the Bauhaus

NICHOLAS FOX WEBER

Nicholas Fox Weber met Anni Albers nearly 50 years ago and became a friend of the artist and her husband, Josef. Since 1976, when Josef died, he has run the Josef and Anni Albers Foundation, which is devoted to preserving and promoting their achievements and the principles that underlay their lives and work. His talk mixed personal reminiscence with biographical information, jumping back and forward between pre-Second-World-War Germany and Connecticut, where the couple lived towards the end of their lives.

When Weber met them, he was struck by how different they were from the materialistic, comfort-loving people he was used to. Anni and Josef lived austerely and simply, working every day. 'They were

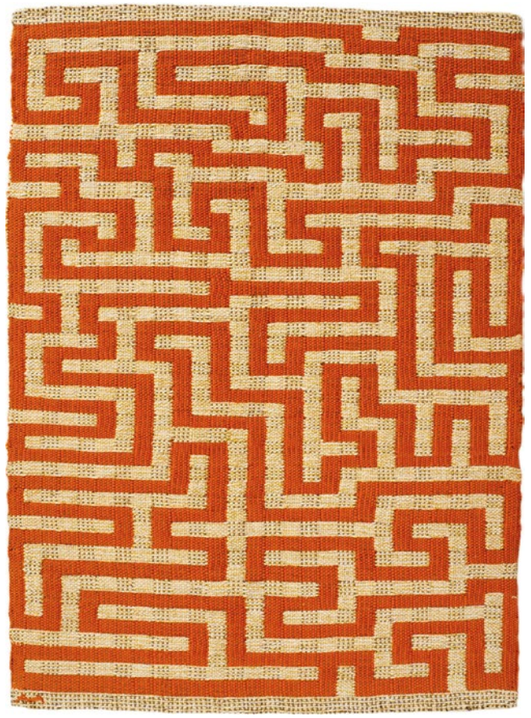
Anni Albers *Six Prayers,* 1966–67 Cotton, linen, bast, and silver thread 73 1/4 x 19 1/4 in. (186.1 x 48.9 cm) each The Jewish Museum, New York, Gift of the Albert A. List Family, JM 14972.1 © 2019 The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/DACS, London.

the happiest old people I've ever met.' In viewing Anni's work, it is important to realise that she was someone who loved the machine-made, the synthetic, and she couldn't see the point of natural fibres; she was given to extolling the merits of what she called 'dhripp-dhrrry'. Just as her teacher at the Bauhaus, Paul Klee, suggested taking a line for a walk, Anni said that she took thread and did everything she could with it. The results were highly engaging, often surprising, with a strong element of spontaneity.

She came from a background where nothing could have been less anticipated than that she would become a visual artist. Born Anneliese Fleischmann, the daughter of a prosperous businessman who manufactured furniture of a very traditional kind, she was expected to become a housewife like her mother, who came from an extremely wealthy publishing dynasty. She was given various opportunities to study art, but in 1922 she heard about the Bauhaus and persuaded her parents to let her study there. She moved to Weimar, where, even before gaining admission to the Bauhaus, she met Josef Albers, 11 years her senior, who, by contrast, came from a very poor family.

Anni entered the weaving workshop like many female students at the Bauhaus, but she insisted that she was not forced into the medium as a result of prejudice against women. Although she would have preferred to study painting, the Bauhaus only offered a training in wall painting, which was impossible for her as she could not stand on ladders, because she suffered from Marie-Charcot-Tooth syndrome. Since weaving was the option open to her, she made the most of it, turning almost immediately to abstraction. Her earliest work, in 1923, employed a very simple grid pattern, though she soon introduced greater complexity. Although Anni's work may seem very similar to Josef's, given their shared use of geometry, her designs relied on an underlying number system, which was very important to her, while Josef was more concerned with colour. Both could take the simple unit of a square and make something extremely exciting and rhythmic out of it.

In 1933, the Nazis closed the Bauhaus, but Josef was invited to teach at Black Mountain College in North Carolina. There, Anni's work loosened up, becoming freer, more textured and warmer. She continued to weave extremely inventive wall coverings and other textiles, for example making use of open weave techniques inspired by ancient Peruvian models. In 1949, she had an exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, the first solo textile show to take place there, demonstrating that she was not as overshadowed by her more famous husband as is often claimed. She and Josef began travelling to Mexico, where, they said, art was everywhere; it was a great source of inspiration for both of them. When asked to do a memorial for the victims of the Holocaust, Anni made a piece called



Anni Albers *Red Meander*, 1954 Linen and cotton 20 1/2 x 14 3/4 in. (52 x 37.5 cm) Private collection © 2019 The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/DACS, London.

Six Prayers, which demonstrates what she could do with something as simple as thread, using minimal components to create an infinite experience.

She was always interested in new directions. She started printmaking, experimenting with silkscreen and photo offset techniques, seeking effects that could not be achieved by hand but only by mechanical means. She always sought variations, avoided repetition, so as to keep the viewer engaged. She continued to work after Josef died in 1976. When she developed a tremor, she decided to go with it, exploiting the effects it produced in her prints. All her work demonstrates the extraordinary potential she found in whatever medium she used.

The Master opened the discussion by asking how much of her work Anni wove herself. The answer was that she made most of it entirely by herself. Questions were also asked about the Josef and Anni Albers Foundation; the couple's travels in South and Central America and Anni's collection of textiles from Chile, Peru and Mexico; the impact of their work on each other; her work for the textile industry; and the recent exhibition at Tate Modern.

Bro. Emma Barker

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21 March 2019 · ORDINARY MEETING

Embroidered Minds
JULIA DWYER, SUE RIDGE and ANDREW THOMAS

The Embroidered Minds collaboration was instigated about six years ago by Andrew Thomas's late wife, Leslie Forbes, a writer and broadcaster. In 2005 Leslie began having epileptic seizures caused by a benign brain tumour. This was successfully removed in 2007, but she continued to suffer from epilepsy after the operation. The illness and treatment for it led her into new areas of interest and research.

Leslie was treated at the National Hospital for Neurology and Neurosurgery at 24 Queen Square. The hospital's roots lie in the mid-1800s when it was the virtual birthplace of neurology. She discovered that William Morris, his wife, Jane, and his two young daughters, Jenny and May, had moved next door, to 26 Queen Square, which was also the workshop and showroom of Morris & Co. Jenny and May played in the square with friends. In 1876, following a boating accident, Jenny began having seizures. Epilepsy carried enormous social stigma and sufferers were often hidden away, heavily sedated and even, on occasion, admitted to asylums. Jenny's condition was therefore concealed.

Further research revealed that William Morris himself may have suffered from epilepsy. The letters to Jenny from her father and mother are extant but none survive from Jenny to her parents and these may have been destroyed as part of the concealment. The intriguing gaps in the story led to *Embroidered Minds of the Morris Women*, a work of fiction written by Leslie in collaboration with artists, doctors and historians about the impact of epilepsy on the Morris family and how it affects families today.

The book was to have been the first part in a series, but after Leslie's unexpected death following a seizure in July 2016, it became an unsolved mystery and the theme of a continued collaboration with an exceptionally wide range of artistic and scientific practitioners. Events have included a performance talk at the William Morris Society and a conference on neurology and art at the National Hospital for Neurology and Neurosurgery.

The artist Julia Dwyer illustrated and explained the Embroidered Minds project to map Queen Square – overlaying maps from different periods, showing how it might have been in the 1870s and how it is now, and the changes and almost complete destruction of the Queen Anne/early Georgian square over time. Imaginary walks are mapped: Jenny as a nine-year-old out with her family; her mother hurrying off, possibly to meet Rossetti. The lives of the Morris family and their surroundings in 1870 were vividly brought to life.

Sue Ridge has made artistic interpretations of Leslie's writing and research, and her notion of the existence of a secret William Morris sketchbook, researching possible herbal treatments for his daughter. Powerful images were shown of Sue's patterns: some feature 'digital glitch', representing electrical storms in the brain.

Brother Caroline Isgar made intaglio prints; the changing states on the etching plate relating to Leslie's changing state of mind. She also depicted archetypal portraits of figures hidden away, living under the shadow of epilepsy.

In spring 2016, Leslie and Kati Crome, a renowned garden designer, decided that the story would make an ideal theme for the Chelsea Flower Show. The process halted when Leslie died, but a year later it was decided to renew plans and, together with sponsorship from the Epilepsy Society, it was hoped that the garden would raise awareness of epilepsy and be a tribute to Leslie. The small garden, realised at the 2018 show, has three sections: showing the calm pre-seizure mind, the chaotic state of the brain during seizure and finally the cumulative effects of connections associated with living with the illness. The planting included valerian and other plants and herbs associated with epilepsy, together with plants and fruits used by William Morris in his designs. The garden bench, designed by Toby Winteringham, is a calm resting place in the pre-seizure section – but towards its end the bench turns chaotic, reflecting the spikes and chaos seen in an electro-encephalogram readout.

There were over 60 people involved in planning, planting and manning the award-winning *Embroidered Minds Epilepsy Garden*, which was regarded as a huge success in raising both awareness and funds. Future Embroidered Minds projects include a new garden at Chelsea and an exhibition at the William Morris Gallery.

Past Master Prue Cooper spoke about connections between epilepsy and creativity, and Past Master Peyton Skipwith asked whether parallels could be drawn with other artists who had the illness. Andrew Thomas considered that the huge differences between conditions of epilepsy meant that general conclusions could not be drawn.

This had been a complex, multi-layered yet intimate talk, notably well illustrated and given huge power by the reading of Leslie's own writing.

Bro. Neil Jennings

Absence & Return etching by Caroline Isgar.

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11 April 2019 · ORDINARY MEETING

The Arts and Crafts Movement in Scotland
ANNETTE CARRUTHERS

The Master introduced Annette Carruthers, saying her talk might be a useful preamble to this year's late summer outing to Scotland and that her mother, the late Helen Brandon-Jones, had delighted in discussing the subject of Scottish Arts and Crafts with Annette.

So, with this illuminating and richly illustrated lecture by the author of the comprehensive book of the same title, the Guild was treated to both familiar and less familiar images from its 432 pages. Such a broad subject required condensing, so Annette Carruthers separated the subject, speaking of the Scottish countryside and cities before 1900, followed by a taste of what was happening in Scotland thereafter. Indicating 1888 as a point of departure, she cited the importance of the first exhibition of the Arts and Crafts Society in London. The influence of the Art Workers' Guild in the Scottish movement was clearly apparent. William Morris himself often lectured in Scotland, sometimes

Phoebe Traquair, mural decoration in the Song School of St Mary's Cathedral, Edinburgh, 1889–90. Photograph © Mike Brooks.

to an audience of 3,000! With their Scottish blood, Thomas Carlyle, Walter Scott and John Ruskin could be seen as precursors of the movement in Scotland.

In the countryside, English as well as Scottish architects were employed, mainly by English landowners. Examples were given – Robert Lorimer's restoration at Earlshall, James MacLaren's workers cottages and buildings by Philip Webb were considered as proto-Arts and Crafts. Lethaby's Melsetter House in Orkney – 'a masterpiece' – involved a variety of craftsmen. This house was to become a centre of cultural life. In order to help keep workers from moving to the city, landowners created organisations such as the Scottish Home Industries Association, where crafts like tweed weaving, basketry and chairmaking were carried out. Products were sold in London.

Edinburgh, Glasgow, Aberdeen and Dundee warmed to the possibilities of the movement, although Dundee lacked patronage. In Edinburgh, Lorimer was the star. He showed respect for local, traditional knowledge and forms. Phoebe Traquair, the muralist and embroiderer, helped raise the status of the crafts. Fra and Jessie Newbery were important educators via the Glasgow School of Art. In Aberdeen there was the glasswork of Douglas Strachan, the metalwork of James Cromar Watt and mosaics by George Walton.

After 1900, enamelling, silversmithing, metalworking and textile designs were frequently commissioned. Patronage from wealthy Scottish industrialists was abundant and more Scottish architects were being employed – they often respected and used local materials and traditions. Douglas Strachan won the seal of approval with his stained glass for the Peace Palace in The Hague. Lorimer's Scottish National War Memorial was praised for the quality and collaboration of artists and architects. This was also a good period for public housing.

In summary the speaker said that the Scottish Arts and Crafts allowed for the transformation of style, the revival of the crafts and the legacy of the art school, and that it provided opportunities for women and the unemployed. On the question of the relevance of Charles Rennie Mackintosh to the movement, she believes that he was not so interested in tradition and not as eclectic as other architects of this period, mainly because he wished to control the whole aesthetic process.

In the questions that followed the talk, Peyton Skipwith asked why the speaker did not mention the subversive, nationalistic element within the movement. She surmised that most patrons were Unionist and that Liberal Unionism was common. Oliver Caroe pointed out the importance of Edinburgh's National Portrait Gallery in the story. Peter Burman spoke of Ruskin's passion for the disadvantaged. Diane Haigh asked why the people portrayed within the talk seemed so 'sensible' and wondered about the place of myth and legend. Caroline Swash noted and praised the work of Louis Davis in Dunblane.

PM Sally Pollitzer

Charles Francis Annesley Voysey, sample strip of a wool and silk woven double cloth made by Alexander Morton & Company, c. 1895–1900. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

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2 May 2019 · ORDINARY MEETING

Stone Carving: The art of collaboration
BRO. NINA BILBEY

The Master introduced Brother Nina Bilbey, a stone carver. Bro. Bilbey said that she would be discussing two commissions, focusing not only on the two commissions but also on the collaborative aspects of her work. She planned to spotlight specific people she had worked with or employed over the years and their contribution. Historically, carvers had relied on other craftsmen – the builders and the blacksmiths and so on – and they in turn had relied on the carvers. She first described her friendship with David West, the photographer who had supplied most of the excellent images for her talk.

She sketched in her background, coming from a family of makers in Norfolk. She had resisted an apprenticeship with her father, a carpenter and boatbuilder. Ceramics seemed to be the career of choice, but she had switched her St Martin's application to sculpture. After graduating, she worked in a prison, a school, and a cathedral repair shop. After six years teaching at the Building Crafts College, honing her skills, she was commissioned by the owner of an estate in Cheshire to carve a five-ton muzzled bear.

She worked up her design from the family crest. She built the half-size model in her flat on the 11th floor of a tower block. She cast it in rubber in a garage with the help of her friend and collaborator, Bobbie Fennick. David West recorded the process in his unique way and Bro. Bilbey was happy to allow him to do so. The resulting images of the process and completion were revealing and spectacular, as was the finished bear. Bro. Bilbey said that the images were also poignant, as they recorded the details of the process and there was a sense of loss for the time passed in the making and the letting go of the final work. *The Brereton Bear* was settled into the landscape and was a triumph. She was glad that the making process, often backbreaking, dusty and difficult, had been recorded.

The second project she said was 'the most terrifying of her career'. Two sculptures for Canterbury Cathedral of HRH Queen Elizabeth and the Duke of Edinburgh. Making the likenesses was 'the Grand National of challenges'. Because of timing, a royal sitting was impossible. She had to rely on paintings and photographs. The committee had decided that the image of the Queen was to show her in her prime, mid-reign so to speak. The pose was part based on a cast in the V&A of the sculpture of Uta at Naumburg Cathedral. She said that both subjects were among the most recognisable people on earth. She had sought advice from a friend part way through the process and actually had the Queen's head in a box.

Later she bravely scrapped her original approach and free carved the heads and also details of the costume and accoutrements. Much of the work was shared with colleagues and alumni without whose collaboration she could not have finished the work in time. The result was a triumph, 'the crowning glory', she said, being postcards of the work on sale in the cathedral gift shop.

Her talk was also a triumph, which this minute cannot do proper justice to in the space allowed. As the Master said after the thunderous applause, 'One of the very best talks we have had.' In discussion, PM Prue Cooper also praised the talk as one of the best. Bro. Rory Young brought up the nature of collaboration and

Above: Sculptor Bobbie Fennick looking at her efforts after using the nine-inch grinder to rough out part of the heraldic bear. Vision is always compromised in these activities, but never health and safety. Hence the mask, goggles and the overalls. © David West, Below: Nina and Bear - a rare quiet moment. © David West.

suppressing the ego, and carvers' pointing machines were discussed and the nature of carving as an intellectual activity.

PM Ian Archie Beck

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16 May 2019

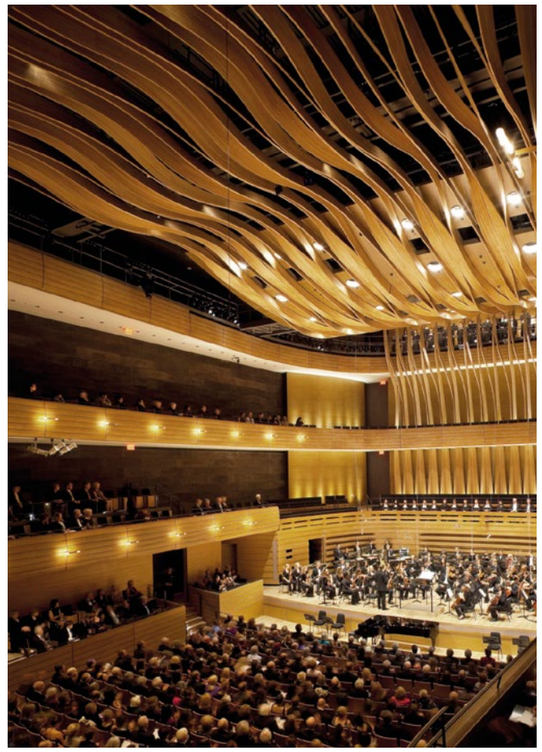
User-driven collaborative design
BOB ESSERT and ANNE MINORS

Bob Essert and Anne Minors spoke on Sound Space Vision, alternating between speakers. Their speciality is as consultants on theatre design and other spaces for the performing arts, which included making people feel comfortable, creating unity in the space and making the back of house an effective support for the performers. Anne had worked for 10 years with the well-known theatre historian and theatre consultant Iain Mackintosh, and with PM Roderick Ham, before setting up independently in 1989. Bob Essert came from an architecture background in the USA and worked for Arup Acoustics for five years before joining Anne.

In their work, Bob and Anne said they began with helping clients to define their brief, from the number of seats, through the desired acoustic character to stage machinery. Digital simulations had become a valuable tool in this area. Their work on an unbuilt project for a new opera house in Toronto by the architect Moshe Safdie in the late 1980s and early 1990s was formative, leading to another in Dallas with Foster + Partners. The rebuilding of Covent Garden with Dixon Jones and the Building Design Partnership (BDP) followed this, and they explained the staggering complexity of running a repertory theatre for opera and ballet with sets arriving from Wales and entering the building, which in this respect resembled a big motorway for scenery moving from the loading dock to the backstage, a journey from corner to corner of the site. Anne's job was to reconfigure the sightlines in the auditorium, devising different types of seat, digitally modelled.

In the late 1980s, they worked with Hopkins Architects on the remodelling of Glyndebourne. Other country house opera projects followed at Longborough, Garsington, (old and new), Holland Park and The Grange. Most recently, in 2018, Bob and Anne had worked with the architects Witherford Watson Mann making a 400-seat opera house in a seventeenth-century stable block at Neville Holt for David Ross.

Bob went on to describe the design of concert spaces. There was a new genre of a 'room within a room', seen



Royal Conservatory of Music, Toronto – Koerner Hall.

at Dallas, Birmingham and Lucerne. The big shutters between the inner and outer spaces can be positioned to tune the sound. In Singapore, the architect Michael Wilford had created a curvaceous lyre-shaped footprint containing three main spaces that made reference to a traditional rice barn, with a knobbly exterior like a durian fruit.

Anne continued with a discussion of discreet technology – important because architects object to the intrusion of lighting equipment. The new lecture hall at the Royal Academy designed by David Chipperfield was a case in point, where the lights can be remotely manipulated for strength and direction. At Friends House in Euston Road, the main meeting space had been remodelled to seat 1,000, with seating on 'waggons' which could easily be moved around. Other forms of seating were demonstrated, such as the individual seats in the children's Egg theatre in Bath (Hawarth Tompkins Architects). At the opposite end of the scale was the Palace of Peace and Reconciliation in Nur-Sultan, the new capital city of Kazakstan, built in the form of a pyramid and, designed by Foster + Partners. The president wanted an opera house in the basement a project complicated by the fact that construction time was limited to the months when the ground was not

frozen solid. The building workforce included the army, which closed off the tower crane hole in 27 hours, the all-women plasterers and the Chinese cleaners from the local hospital who worked to clean the marble floors in time for the opening.

This range of projects, and others too numerous to mention, was a record of a staggering career helping famous professionals (mostly architects) avoid costly disasters, while also subtly helping to bring older buildings into more effective use. It is not all about the invisible aspects either. Eye movement tends to slow down when listening to music, and in order to hear, our brains seek something on which to fix the eye, which makes older concert halls with architectural decoration, such as the Musikverein in Vienna, especially effective.

Members drew out further fascinating information in response to questions, including PM Prue Cooper's enquiry about the bats that would regularly appear on the wing in old Glyndebourne. These apparently went away initially, but then returned.

Bro. Alan Powers

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6 June 2019 · ORDINARY MEETING

William Morris and his Palace of Art

TESSA WILD

The screen was lowered over the bust of William Morris, the subject of our talk and in particular his creation of Red House.

Morris had expressed his dream to build a house in a letter in 1856, referring to it as his 'Palace of Art', in reference to Tennyson's poem. Two years later, Morris was touring cathedrals with Philip Webb and asked him to design it. They found the one-acre orchard plot just off the historic Watling Street in Bexleyheath, on the pilgrim route to Canterbury. Morris and Webb planned it in a flexible L-shape so that it might easily be extended to accommodate both the Morris and Burne-Jones families.

Red House was intended to be Morris's ultimate family home and studio, and indeed all started well. Both his daughters were born there, and it regularly hosted Charlie Faulkner, Edward Burne-Jones and Dante Gabriel Rossetti, all collaborating on decorative schemes throughout the house. The company of Morris, Marshall and Faulkner developed from their shared love of decoration as they worked together on the house.

Red House became the iconic precursor to the Arts and Crafts Movement: furniture was designed by Morris and Webb and then decorated by Burne-Jones and others. The motto 'si je puis' (if I can) appears throughout in tiles and stained glass. Burne-Jones later joked it was more a case of 'as I can't'.

Tessa Wild, a former curator of Red House and the author of *William Morris and his Palace of Art*, focused her talk on the decorative scheme of two interiors, both benefitting from the work carried out since the National Trust acquired Red House in 2003 under her curatorship. At that time most of the interiors were painted white and only in recent years has the full extent of the rich layering of decoration begun to emerge.

The first room we were shown was the Drawing Room on the first floor, where the large built-in settle forms the main focus. This came from Morris's previous house and was adapted with the addition of a ladder stair up one side leading to a minstrels' gallery and loft space, where they stored apples. Morris's playful side was highlighted from an incident where he was up on the gallery throwing apples down but got one straight back, giving him a black eye.

All the walls and ceilings and furniture in the Drawing Room were once richly decorated, and the audience was aghast at a photomontage of how the room must have once appeared. There had been exquisite figurative works by Rossetti on the doors of the settle, but these were sold during Morris's time. When the National Trust removed 1890s timber panelling unfaded Arthurian scenes were revealed on the walls, painted by Morris and inspired by Giotto's frescoes in Padua. The walls had been overpainted, covering the repeated floral patterns suggesting the origins of what would develop into the Trellis wallpaper design. The ceiling too had been battened with faux rafters and distempered in the 1890s. When some of these battens were removed by the Trust, stripes of the original painted geometric patterns were revealed underneath, still showing the pricking out through paper templates used to set out the motifs ready for painting.

The second room we looked at was a bedroom, where multiple layers of wallpaper were stripped in 2013 to reveal five Old Testament figures painted on the wall behind, depicting Adam and Eve, Noah with the Ark, Rachel, and Jacob complete with ladder. The figures seemed to bear the hallmarks of different artists – Ford Madox Brown, Rossetti and Burne-Jones amongst possible others. The shared creative endeavour was clear, but also a sense of some rivalry.

This on-and-off joy of shared labour lasted a mere five years. Morris and his family occupied Red House

West front, Red House, designed by Philip Webb 1860 ©National Trust Images/Andrew Butle.

from 1860 to 1865, but the success of his business required him to spend more and more of his time in London so Red House was never finished. The death of Burne-Jones's son from rheumatic fever in 1864 meant Burne-Jones did not to take up the idea of extending the house to live in as well, and the next year the Morrises left Red House for good. Despite being unfinished, and with much covered over, it has already revealed much about William Morris as a colourist and collaborator. We were left with an image of a graffito of a smiley face tucked up in the rafters of the stair hall ceiling, reminding us of the joviality and humour that permeated this house.

PM David Birch reminded us that Rossetti had been a teacher to Morris and Burne-Jones, and our speaker confirmed that they both idolised him. Brother Oliver Caroe asked what many of us were probably thinking: why cannot all the overpainting be removed to reveal the full splendour? Tessa replied that the National Trust was edging towards revealing more, but that there were ongoing debates about the value of the later layers and the stories they have to tell. Brother Jeremy Musson asked about the garden and its relationship to the house, and Tessa said there was an awful lot yet to research on the iconography of the planting and layout, which was as meaningfully thought through as the house itself.

Bro. Simon Hurst

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20 June 2019 · ORDINARY MEETING

On falling into a goldmine

BRO. KATHARINE COLEMAN

Like many brethren, Katharine Coleman came to her craft via a circuitous route: from geography at Cambridge, via Peru to glass engraving. She also had a great-grandfather who could draw, inheritance and experience combining in an imaginative approach to creating her unique optical illusions.

Her coup de foudre came when she was visiting the Museum of Mankind with two small children and passed a Cork Street gallery with work by Alison Kinnaird in the window. She knew in a flash that this was something she wanted to do. Cautioned by PM David Peace (behind the desk) of the difficulties of the craft, she nevertheless enrolled at Morley College, where she was taught by Peter Dreiser, who in turn had learned from Sudeten masters.

A dedicated pupil, Katharine took what she had learned and experimented. It was when coping with an ash mark on a clear crystal bowl blown for a commission (from the wad of damp newspaper used for shaping the glass on the blowing iron) that she noticed that you could capitalise on the refraction and reflexion of a highly polished surface, so that the pattern on the outside duplicated multiple times on the inside. For those who were not there, imagine a transparent

hard-boiled egg cut in half, with the yolk removed and designs on the outside. We saw proliferations of oranges, mushrooms, fish, frogs, buildings, flowers and inventiveness abounding.

Katharine's lucky break came as a finalist for the Jerwood glass prize in 2003, bringing her a wider audience. She now exhibits at the European Fine Art Fair (TEFAF), at Collect, and around the world, represented by Adrian Sassoon. She modestly omitted to mention that she had received an MBE for services to glass engraving in 2009.

The audience was interested to know how she got her glass blanks blown – first with Neil Wilkin and then with Andy and Becky Potter – and was entertained by the happy accidents as well as the major disasters, such as a year's worth of work melting in the annealing kiln. The economics amazed some – a piece of glass might cost £650 before putting wheel to glass, the design and engraving taking several weeks.

At various points Katharine paused to marvel that a skill going back to Babylonian times and once flowering in the Stourbridge area has so few followers in this country and abroad. She noted that as art schools are now part of universities here, those who do not have a facility with words are locked out of a craft that traditionally attracted those who are better with their hands.

There was much discussion afterwards on the iniquities of this system, with PMs Jane Cox and Prue Cooper lobbying on behalf of Outreach, informing the room of their involvement with a parliamentary group on the crafts. Sadly, five out of six of today's craftsmen were trained in places that no longer exist. Katharine felt that some 30 to 40 people with a robust skill set was the minimum needed to keep copper-wheel engraved glass alive in Europe and she could barely count on one hand the number in the UK. Apprenticeships? cried out the room. Not viable, said our speaker; a young apprentice would need £6,000-£7,000 for their own equipment, and the technicalities of dressing the wheels and sharpening tools made her unwilling to let anyone loose on her own tools, recommending instead an affordable training in the Czech Republic.

There was much laughter throughout the hour, as Katharine was an entertaining speaker while also passionate about a serious subject. At least her remarkable work will endure, even if there is no one coming after her.

Bro. Jane Dorner

Addendum: Katharine regrets that she did not mention that Madeleine Dinkel gave her a lot of help. Peyton Skipwith added that he had commissioned Madeleine to create an engraved glass window, which was added to the Lutyens-designed house at Bois des Moutiers in Varengeville-sur-Mer, Normandy.

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4 July 2019 · ORDINARY MEETING

The British Mosque: An architectural and social history

SHAHED SALEEM

Shahporan Mosque and Islamic Centre, Hackney © Shahed Saleem.

The speaker, author Shahed Saleem, focused on the architectural history of British mosques, which he linked in to his own work as an architect.

The first British mosque was built in Woking in 1889, a small square room and beautiful domed roof with crescent on top, which became the centre for Islam in Britain until the 1950s. Another mosque was built in the same year in Liverpool by an English convert to Islam, William Quilliam, who gathered a community of English converts and was influenced by North African mosques. In 1925, a third mosque was built in south London, for a small Muslim Indian community. It showed the influence of contemporary British architecture, in its pared-down decoration and hint of Art Deco, while its dome displayed the influence of current mosque architecture in India.

The earliest Muslim communities were mostly Yemeni and Somali sailors in ports, and their mosques were the first community-based buildings. Their first was built in Cardiff around 1947, a house conversion retaining a terrace facade, with added inflections of Muslim architecture. It was the first time Muslim architecture was expressed at a community level,

Katharine Coleman *Broken China Bowls II*.
Image ©Ester Segarra.

capturing the character of the people who built it.

The second Cardiff mosque was also built for a Yemeni community and lasted from 1969 to 1979. It combined post-war Modernism with an Islamic architectural approach.

It was however not until large-scale migration from former British colonies in the 1960s that mosque-building grew, and South Asian mosque architecture became dominant. The psychological effects of colonisation and migration impacted on architecture. The mosque had a part to play in reconstructing the whole world, violently disturbed by colonisation, that communities had left behind. These mosques were mostly built in working-class areas.

There were three kinds: the house mosque, the conversion, and the purpose-built. Most were conversions, built incrementally with Islamic elements incorporated, often simplistically. In Brent a dome was added to a congregational church which became a mosque. Like many other conversions of religious buildings the structure was mostly retained, as it served the new religion well. Another example shown was a conversion from a workingmen's club, where a prayer hall and minaret were added. Again, the changes were incremental.

Changes came in the 1980s after the fatwa against Salman Rushdie. Immigrant communities could now be defined by faith; an Islamic identity emerged – driven both internally, from within more established immigrant communities, but also externally from a wider media coverage about Islam. Improvised buildings gave way to the mosque as a distinct object, communicating a certain type of identity. From 2000 onwards, historicist, Orientalist Islamic building emerged, oscillating with modernist Muslim architecture. The architecture of the mosque became conflated with notions about the way in which Muslim communities fitted within wider British society.

Shahed then talked about his own work. Writing about the history of British Muslim architecture had transformed his sense of mosque design. He had explored traditional Islamic geometry, but without using rulers or compasses and making use of inaccuracies to develop a new kind of pattern that might translate into architecture. He showed a mosque he had designed where the facade was based on the design of a 13th-century Anatolian tile, the design not replicated but referenced.

In Aberdeen, he designed a mosque in which he again adapted and re-interpreted pattern. He wanted to discover in what new ways architecture could symbolise the building as religious. Could it be done without the arabesque? He looked at connecting Scottish Celtic designs with Islamic ones.

Shahed spoke of his attempt to find a language for building mosques in Britain. He showed a model of a mosque designed for the architectural gallery in the V&A which reflected the way in which British mosques have been built, drawing from and adapting the architectural language around them.

The second of Shahed's projects was an idea for a pavilion in the Sackler Courtyard of the V&A, representing the history of the British mosque, both as it was imagined by Europeans and through its built history in Britain by diasporic communities. His final image was a conceptualisation of what the building might look like, influenced by the large V&A collection of British art, depicting 'the East' in often Orientalist ways. Shahed argues that these influences are carried on in the building of mosques built by immigrant communities in the 20th and 21st centuries. In this Shahed explores what is happening in the imagination as mosques are built in Britain.

Questions were asked by Katharine Coleman and Alan Powers and visitors to the Guild, after a fascinating talk, enjoyed by all, about a branch of architecture central to living in multicultural cities now.

Bro. Celia Ward

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26 September 2019 · ORDINARY MEETING

Making Carnival and theatrical costume

CLARY SALANDY

The Hall felt different tonight; sparkly headdresses sat on podiums and a dragon hissed at the back. The meeting started with Jeremy Musson introducing new member Francis Terry, an architect, painter and furniture designer. Neil Jennings invited us to a show of PM Glynn Boyd Hart's works in the Master's Room. The Master then introduced Clary Salandy, the director of Mahogany, a studio producing costumes for Carnival since 1989.

Clary, Speedy the costume engineer, Chris the technician and Roger the dancer began by bringing a three-winged bronze costume to life. Roger moved to music and the three wings rose from his waist, soaring above the portraits of Past Masters, to become three dancers, three crosses, or Christ and the two thieves, representing the 'Spirit of Emancipation'.

As Roger was helped out of the harness, Clary explained that Carnivals grew out of the Catholic church in Africa, moving to Trinidad with the slaves and then

Roger dancing in the Spirit of Emancipation. Image © Leigh Milsom Fowler.

back to Europe. Slides started with 'Out of the Blue,' a costume with wings as wide as a street. The body was the engine of the costume, and as the wings opened and closed, a complex honeycomb of multi-coloured geometry was exposed, the fabric never touching the floor. 'Shadow of Tiananmen Square' from 1989 was a giant puppet balanced on wheels, angrily towering over all the Chinese students and their ideas. In contrast, 'Symphony of Light' made with 90m of colourful hand painted silk, had wings each 4m long, and a huge face above the dancer, radiating white light. These first four ideas primarily brought freedom of expression to the streets and the next slides revealed how Carnival unifies people.

'Mosaic' was a project engaging with the Muslim community, based around Islamic architecture. A hundred people participated in seven sections. 'Harmony' brought the colours of dawn and the circular oneness of the Earth, which belongs to everyone. Ten people wore it to kaleidoscopic effect. The 'Triangulation' and 'Hexagon' costumes enabled the dancers to shape molecules fundamental to life on Earth. The 'Golden Minaret' collection was a tribute to the golden domes of mosques and the Diwali Light celebrated by Hindus. Beautiful though the dancing shapes were, they also symbolised the Golden Rage of Injustice.

'Unity' is a value at the heart of all cultures, and the designer loves the way dancing shapes can come together to create new forms. Patterns can be separated and then brought together during the performance. We saw Islamic geometry merging with the Union Jack's red, white and blue, with patterns often generating from the centre of a star reminding us of our spiritual core. Performers were half masked, so that Muslims can perform without being photographed and feel totally immersed in the experience.

Carnival should be a contemporary visual language. The 2012 Olympics encouraged everyone to take part and make their contribution, so Clary merged images of diamonds and Olympic rings to create the Bling show. Big rock hats and ringed wings enabled each child to claim the Olympics as an opportunity to be precious. Dressed in their bling, the children found aspirational words, such as precious, shine, achieve and believe, which they worked up into big graffiti on boards, held up high as they danced. Dancing Olympic flames led a procession of twirling gold, silver, bronze, and an expanding green wing of emerald, which ended the parade. The flames danced for the Olympic handover at Buckingham Palace, which was great as they only get seen for two minutes in a carnival parade.

The way the creative team works is as precious as the show they give. Studio photos showed families and friends united in the joy of sculpting, stitching, glueing,

lending a hand with technology or making the tea. Atmospheres were often described as crazy, but when you consider how much work is done in short timeframes, Mahogany is a meticulous operation. Contributors' thoughtfulness in engaging with communities leads them to tackle deep subjects, such as the treatment of the Windrush generation.

Can you imagine a series of costumes depicting the Blitz, with bombs dropping on a glowing St Paul's surrounded by dancing flames and wreckage? This opening scene of the 'Built in Greatness' parade was followed by brave ships on dancing waves. A school in E17 celebrated first arrivals from Jamaica by wearing coconut trees with Bob Marley-themed embellishments. Transport workers were remembered with bus and train logo costumes, and NHS ladies wore Hearts of Gold. Enoch Powell's 'Rivers of Blood' speech was a key part in the Windrush story, and somehow, they managed to make it dance through the streets. Race riots were represented by riots of colour, designed to be worth their weight in gold. Clary's talk ended with a Crafts Council film about the work, and then Clary and her technical director, Speedy, answered questions.

The Master and Prue Cooper asked about production logistics and times. Costumes were made throughout the year, but production peaked in the summer holidays and often involved sleepless nights. All the costumes can be packed flat to save storage space. Clary once visited an early London Carnival designer, Lawrence Noel, and learned that costumes carry vital heritage for the children. The Mahogany archive is a valuable documentation of how their skills develop.

Bro. Jane Smith was interested in the bounce of the fishing rods, which are used in the structure of the costumes. Clary passed the carbon fibre rod she had been using as a pointer, and Jane exclaimed, 'It weighs nothing!' Speedy explained how he was introduced to the rods as a child catching 40lb fish in the Caribbean. 'What they can do is amazing,' he said. When he came to London, he found a fishing tackle shop that was closing down and bought the entire stock of rods, which they are still using to this day. The UK has since stopped making these rods, so he is protective of his stash!

Speedy then showed us the backpack for the 'Spirit of Emancipation' costume, which is the design he now uses for all the costumes, a technique perfected over many years. As Clary showed us her hand-drawn designs, the audience tried on headdresses. A giant red tulip was placed on the Master's head as Clary explained that costumes are designed to be aspirational and larger than life, not just feathers and bikinis. The master asked Speedy what his most difficult job had been, and he said making wings for a horse that was playing dead and then came to life.

Hon. Sec. Mark Winstanley.
Image © Leigh Milsom Fowler.

There were technical questions about Arts Council funding and the liberation of moving from papier-mâché to foam. Katharine Coleman concluded the evening by asking if the Master's tulip hat could become a permanent fixture as it matched the robe so well. There was support for this idea and a positive response to the Hon. Secs' flame hats too, but from the back row where I was sitting there was a bigger wish that Mahogany were a permanent fixture at the Guild

Bro. Rachael Matthews

10 October 2019 · ORDINARY MEETING

Experiences and aesthetics of Asian femininity
CHILA BURMAN

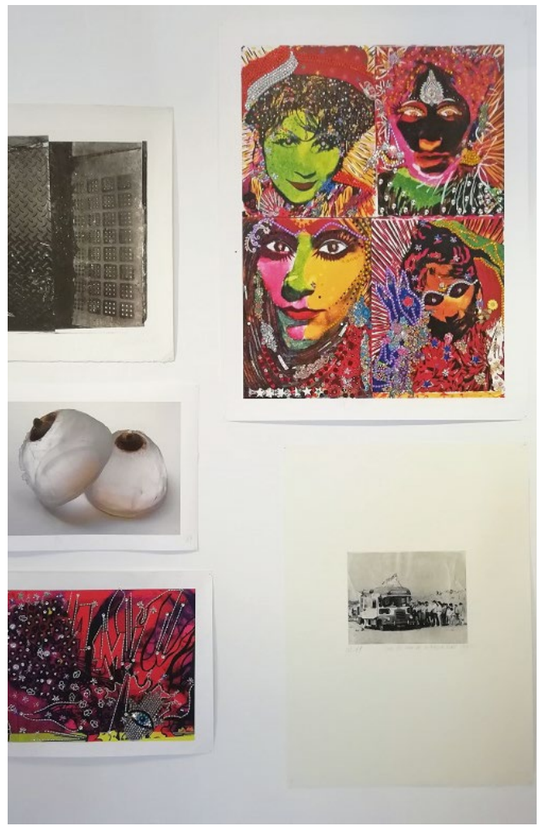
On the 10th October Chila Kumari Burman delivered a lecture on experiences and aesthetics of Asian femininity. She brought with her some of her own paintings and prints, which formed a small side display to her well-illustrated talk. She cleverly disarmed her listeners at the start by suggesting that the easiest way to introduce herself would be to show a short clip from a film about her, made by the Tate. The next minute we were inside her Hackney studio. 'I've got a lot of stuff,' she remarked as the camera panned the clutter, photographs, knick-knacks and found objects that filled the room. 'It's a bit like a bedroom,' she offered, 'in that it's your own private space.' Artists are hoarders, she explained, as she pointed to things in the studio that gave her ideas. Her love of making came through her talk about the need to make some semblance of order out of chaos. And her relaxed manner on screen continued when she began speaking in person.

Having been born in Liverpool to a Punjabi Hindu family who came to England in the early 1950s, she is driven, as an artist, by a need to re-appropriate Indian culture for her own aesthetic and political purposes. She often works with collage, building up images out of superimposed layers. She also gives herself challenges and loves the clash of meeting between high art and popular culture. Her ability to work with various media – paint, print, installations, photography, video and film – as well as her directness and self-confidence – have brought her many commissions. In 2017, the Science Museum invited her to respond to 5,000 years of Indian inventions, which resulted in the exhibition India Illustrated. And at her 2018 retrospective at MIMA (the Middlesbrough Institute of Modern Art), she was praised for showing how stereotypical representations of South Asian identity have gone unchallenged in post-colonial Britain. This same year she received an honorary doctorate from the University of the Arts London.

Much of her art has explored her family history and her father's work as an ice cream seller in Bootle. As both her parents were then illiterate in English, it was Chila's job to add up the money that her father poured out onto the sitting-room carpet at the end of every day. It was also her job to pay the bills and clean out his van. The family expanded during the 1960s, owing to her father's habit of bringing home stray Asians, all of whom became honorary uncles and aunts. Her mother did not oppose her desire to work, but Indian girls were not expected to leave home for anything other than marriage. Independence was gained when it was discovered that former aunties from the South Asian diaspora lived in all three of the places where Chila went to art school, and they put her up.

The intense nature of her family life has resurfaced in her art. In the 1990s an Arts Council commission enabled her to buy an ice cream van like her father's, which she converted into a travelling gallery, allowing children to climb in and out when she took it around youth clubs in Hackney. Yet at one point, as a student at Leeds Polytechnic, she had been actively discouraged from investigating her cultural heritage. On reaching the Slade School of Art, she was given the opposite advice. 'I felt,' she said, 'like a bird let out of its cage.' And certainly the song she spun for the Art Workers, in the course of the evening, was a mixture of art and activism, mingled with humour and great generosity of spirit.

Bro. Frances Spalding



Chila Kumari Singh Burman Installation. Courtesy of the Lavit Gallery.

Soviet women agricultural workers, 1936 © Helen Muspratt.

24 October 2019 · ORDINARY MEETING

Helen Muspratt
JESSICA SUTCLIFFE

The Master introduced Jessica Sutcliffe, who was to speak about her mother, the photographer Helen Muspratt. She began with a striking self-portrait of her mother. It was a triple exposure taken around 1930 and it demonstrated Helen's experimental photographic techniques including solarisation.

Helen Muspratt was born in India in 1907, where her father, Vivian, was an army officer. Photographs played an important part in her life as the family were separated for so much of the time. After Vivian retired, the family moved to Swanage in Dorset. Encouraged by a local professional photographer, Helen determined to study photography and spent two years at the Regent Street Polytechnic. It was in Swanage in 1928 that she opened her first shop and studio. She posed her subjects after the old master paintings she had seen reproduced on postcards. She favoured their oblique angles and approaches. She photographed children and adults, but also went out and photographed local working life, including fishermen in the harbour.

In 1930, she was praised for her versatility by a professional photography magazine. It was not hard to see why. Throughout Jessica's talk her mother's photographs were shown in all their beauty and originality to great advantage on the large Guild screen. Helen got to know Frances Newbery, head of Glasgow School of Art, who had retired to Corfe Castle. He encouraged her and introduced her to the world of modern art. He helped to design her new studio and provided a characteristic letter heading.

In 1932, she was introduced to the photographer Lettice Ramsey, who was to have a profound effect on her life and career. Lettice had been recently widowed. Her husband, the philosopher Frank Ramsey, had died at the tragically early age of 27. Lettice was a free spirit. Hers had been an open marriage and she moved with the 'fast' set in Cambridge and among the Bloomsbury group. She had visited Charleston in Sussex with her boyfriend Julian Bell. There she had photographed Vanessa Bell and others. Within a few weeks of their meeting, Lettice and Helen agreed to set up in business together.

Their new studio was in Cambridge. Helen noted, 'Lettice had the contacts and I had the know-how.' They introduced Modernist techniques influenced by the work of Man Ray, Lee Miller and the Surrealists. Their approaches varied, with Helen favouring the high contrast drama of solarisation and Lettice preferring the layering and montage effects of multiple exposures. Examples of both were shown in a series of striking images. Helen worked in Swanage during the busy summer months. Her work now included directing mimes, dance and tableaux based on classical sources in strict Modernist style. She photographed the painters Paul Nash and Eileen Agar. This period was the high point of Helen's career.

A young man, Jack Dunman, passing the studio window was struck by a photograph of Durdle Door. He asked who had taken it and so Helen met her future husband. Jack was a Marxist and had founded the Communist Party Rural Journal. Helen became more and more interested in left-wing politics. She visited Russia and documented, among much else, women working on the collective farms in a series of fine images. This was, of course, long before the truth about Stalin and the realities of Soviet life were revealed. Her last venture into photo-journalism saw her documenting the lives of the people of the Rhonda Valley. These ventures demonstrated her abilities and sympathies and she wrote that if, 'I had my time over again I might have chosen to leave the money and do what I really felt drawn to.'

Helen, however, was by now the breadwinner for the family and so this path was not followed. Helen and Lettice opened a second studio, in Oxford. After the Second World War, they soon became an Oxford institution, recording student graduations for a generation as well as photographing weddings in imaginative ways. They continued working until the late 1970s.

When their experimental work from the 1930s was rediscovered by a young generation of journalists, they were hailed as pioneer women artists and feminists. The BBC featured Helen in a series on 'women in our century'. Lettice died in 1985 so sadly missed the great revival of interest. Helen eventually left Oxford and retired back to Swanage, noting later that she felt she had been very fortunate in her life and that her greatest fortune was to have had children and grandchildren.

In answer to the Master's opening question, Jessica Sutcliffe said that the Bodleian now had her mother's archive and that there would soon be an exhibition of Helen's work. Other questions centred around various female photographers and whether Helen knew them, and also the state of the studio in Oxford, where the floor was so uneven that rubber stops had to be fitted to the equipment to stop it sliding. The speaker was warmly applauded after what had been an excellent, finely illustrated and very well structured talk.

P M Ian Archie Beck

Nick Hughes - Bespoke handmade wallpaper for Battersea Arts Centre.

7 November 2019 · ORDINARY MEETING

Introduction to new Brothers' work

A new member, Agalis Manessi, a ceramicist, proposed by Karen Bunting and seconded by Sophie MacCarthy, was introduced to the Guild and warmly welcomed by the Master and all present.

The meeting constituted four short talks by four relatively new members of the Guild.

The first to speak was Julie Arkell, a textile and papier-mâché artist who often works standing at an ironing board. She showed us images of her 'creatures' – solid, three-dimensional figures made from papier-mâché and old paperback books. The type, titles and inscriptions of the source material – old copies of the Guardian newspaper and old books – set off the ideas for designs to decorate the creatures. Julie loves postcards and adds her own work and decorations to them. She was taught to knit as a child by her mother and knits crows, their shapes dictated by the shadows and silhouettes of her three-dimensional creatures. Julie makes what she terms hybrid dolls and doll brooches and even a model of a hotel in Roscoff where the dolls can stay. The themes of collecting (and of new

Work by Julie Arkell. Image © Julie Arkell.

work being sparked off by her collections) as well as an overall sense of play and playfulness came out strongly in the talk and the images shown.

Penny Fowler is a ceramicist working in porcelain and bone china. She is keen on design working in pairs, and the idea of form and decoration working together. She makes moulds which are then cast. This can result in fine forms with layers of colours. It can also create carved layers of lesser and greater translucency. Penny showed us a slide of her Bluebell carved pot, which shows this translucency. These translucent forms can be adapted to work especially well as lamps. The thinning of the layers results in fragility and a high number of losses through the making process, although the huge decorated egg she created for the Big Egg Hunt in Trafalgar Square in 2012 seemed robust!

Nicholas Hughes is a wallpaper designer, printmaker and illustrator. He told us that, for him, everything relates to drawing, showing us how a group of drawings translated into a mould for slip casting and resulting in a decorated porcelain vase. He cuts linocut designs, which are then made into wallpaper, showing us a linocut design of a cricket turned into a repeat pattern on a large scale. There is an emphasis on stories and storytelling: for the large-scale commission for the refurbishment of Battersea Arts Centre, Nicholas wanted to inhabit the building with stories of people and animals past and present in the area – which then, through the wallpaper, return to live in the building.

Jeff Soan is a wood carver and sculptor. He showed us an image and then a short video of his best seller – an ingenious articulated seal – which we all immediately fell in love with. He talked us through the technical aspects of manufacture, and admitted that the technique is best suited to marine creatures and creature without any legs. The octopus and the squid are therefore not ideal! He uses a great deal of reclaimed wood, has a hatred of waste and goes out of his way to use material others may consider waste.

Nicholas Cooper asked about the history of articulated wooden animals and Jeff thought it was started by craftsmen in Chile in the 1980s. Jeff , in answer to a question, described his technique as drawing with a band saw. Nicholas Hughes sang the joys of linocutting: 'a friendly medium,' as he put it.

Bro. Neil Jennings

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21 November 2019 · ORDINARY MEETING

Women in Arts and Crafts church art

LYNNE WALKER

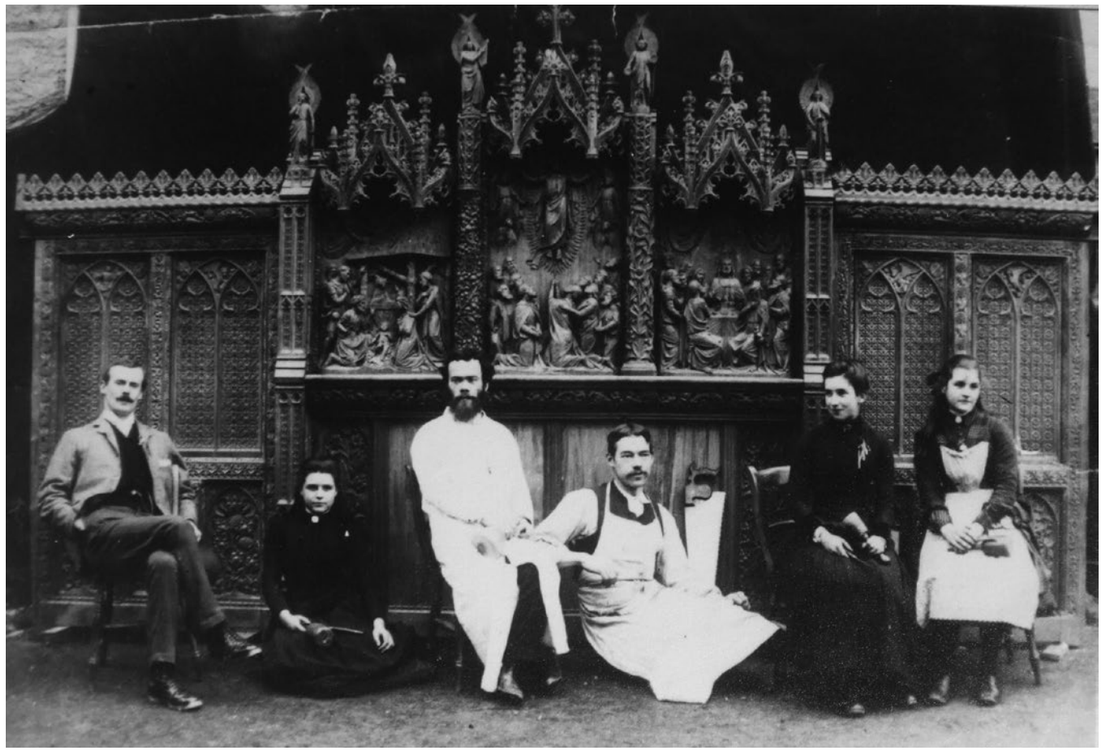
The Master introduced a new Brother, Will Wootton, who was warmly welcomed.

Architectural historian Lynne Walker cracked off her lecture with the arresting claim that half the money spent on late-19th century churches went on decoration and ornament. Why, she asked, was so much good Arts and Crafts church art designed and made by women, when the Church was itself a fundamental source of women's subordination?

It seems the Gothic Revival, though male dominated, created the chance for women to participate. Vicar's wife Mildred Holland worked alone – and unpaid – lying on her back painting the hammerbeam roof of the chancel and nave at St Mary's in Huntingfield, Suffolk. Her wealthy husband was the main donor.

Under the influence of Ruskin and Morris, many art schools started offering training to both men and women. Skills in stained glass, sculpture, painting mosaics, bookbinding and embroidery were thought appropriate, as women were considered 'decorative and 'ornamental'.

The Art Workers' Guild and the Women's Guild of Arts – with May Morris as Hon. Sec. – had a close relationship, sharing the Clifford's Inn premises. Mary Lowndes, a stained glass designer, made banners in



The Pinwill sisters, Esther, Mary Raslheigh and Violet with the architect Edmund Sedding and his craftsmen, H. Flashman, carpenter, and Giles, the carver, in front of a reredos, 1890. Image © Richard and Magdalena Hendey, Plantation House Hotel.

support of the Suffragettes. May Morris made the frontal for an altar table designed by Philip Webb, and Ruskin's funeral pall was designed and made by Edith Rawnsley and Marian Twelves, worked by hand, showing the importance of simplicity and honesty. As a contrast, the richness of the decorations in St Mary's Church in Madresfield, in Worcestershire, is remarkable, as are the silver gilt alms dishes at St Paul's, designed by Princess Louise, Queen Victoria's fourth daughter.

The School of Art Wood Carving in London was opened to men and women, and wood carving became very popular. One of the most brilliant wood carvers was Violet Pinwill, who produced work in 300 churches, and especially fine carving in St Peter's Church, Lew Trenchard, in Devon.

The Watts Chapel designed by Mary Watts, the wife of George Frederic Watts, in Compton, Surrey, is well known. The rich surface decoration is all encompassing. At St Alban's the Martyr in Bordesley, Birmingham, the Bunce sisters worked extensively on the reredos, the metal work and the paintings. In Edinburgh's Catholic Apostolic Church, Phoebe Traquair's mural paintings reached new heights of scale and intensity. Ellen Mary Rope's concrete sculptures in Bolton-on-Swale, in North Yorkshire, reveal an idealised vision of the countryside. Her niece Margaret executed fine windows in Shrewsbury's Roman Catholic Cathedral. The Glass House stained glass studios in Fulham were established by Mary Lowndes, and in 1912 Mabel Esplin was selected to glaze the windows of All Saint's Cathedral, Khartoum, a most prestigious commission.

The Art and Crafts Movement did give women opportunities to create meaningful work even though many of the hierarchies of gender and class still remained.

After the talk, questions were asked by PM Sally Pollitzer, who wondered whether it is possible to send the painted glass by train prior to being fired, and by Master Elect Alan Powers, about the technical nature of plaster and zinc.

The Brethren responded with generous applause for a lecture that will no doubt prompt many excursions to churches far and wide in search of our no-longer neglected women designers and makers.

Hon. Sec. Mark Winstanley

Watts Chapel, Compton, Surrey, gesso decoration designed and made by Mary Watts and the Compton Guild of the Home Arts and Industries Association, c.1896.
Image © David Cockroft, Watts Gallery.

Chairman of Trustees

Last year I said that there is a Chinese curse, 'May you live in interesting times'. They have become even more interesting.

When Past Master Julian Bicknell encouraged me to take over from him as Chairman, his advice was to delegate everything. He could say that, having completed the heavy lifting before I took over and for that I am very grateful.

The Trustees' primary task is to be the guardians of our assets: our building, our finances and, of course, our members.

My thanks go to our Honorary Architect and the DAB Committee who have worked tirelessly to bring our building up to a very high standard.

With our Honorary Treasurer's careful eye on our finances, we are now in the happy position where we can ask the Committee to submit proposals for appropriate projects for funding. While continuing to be cautious in our uncertain times, the Trustees are glad to be able to provide the Committee with up to £20,000 for each of the coming two years.

It has been another excellent year for the work of the Committee, the Outreach project and the Master's talks, so our culture is in fine shape, too.

I was just getting the hang of being Chairman as my three-year tenure was coming to an end and it is now time for me to step down. I depart the post leaving the Guild in the best shape it has ever been in. However, the credit is entirely due to our excellent Trustees, our Honorary Treasurer, Alec, our Honorary Architect, Simon, and our Guild Secretary, Catherine – with much help from Leigh and Elspeth. My thanks to them for their support. We are all in their debt.

With your blessing, I leave the role of Chairman in the capable hands of Past Master Phil Abel

Bro. Tony Wills

Hon. Treasurer

Year ended 30 September 2019

The year, despite all the turmoil and uncertainty, has been a successful one for the Art Workers' Guild and I am pleased to submit once again the annual accounts as your Hon. Treasurer. My report below compares the figures achieved during the year against last year.

I would also acknowledge the support and generosity of the individual donations, bequests and trusts that assist the Guild and support our work.

Income

Income for the year was £322,988 against £337,702 last year, a decrease of £14,714
(-4.3%). This however was an excellent result and ahead of budget by £16,374 (5.3%)

I would here acknowledge the hard work undertaken by the Guild Secretary, Catherine O'Keeffe; our Administrator, Leigh Milson Fowler; and especially the Guild Steward, Elspeth Dennison, for this excellent result.

The income was made up as below (last year's figures in brackets):

a. Rental income and investments £99,354 (£93,683). +£5,671 (6.05%)
b. Subscriptions £38,737 (£37,874). +£863 (2%)
c. Donations, bequests & fundraising £4,995 (£25,071). -£20,076 (-80%)
d. Hiring of rooms and catering £164,289 (£167,726). -£3,437 (-2.0%)
e. Other income: Guild guests, outings, postcards, outreach and sundry £15,603 (£13,349). +£2,254 (16.9%)
f. Cleaning and insurance reimbursed: £7,131.00

Expenditure

Expenditure was: £254,548 (£266,204), a decrease of £11,656 (-4.4%). Expenditure was lower than expected in several areas, this despite spending £41,199 on building maintenance and £13,374 on building repairs.

Surplus

The accounts show a surplus for the 12-month period of £68,440 for the year (£71,498), a minor decrease of £3,058 (-4.3%) over last year. However, the surplus was over budget by £22,362 (48%).

Balance sheet

The balance sheet stands at £426,053 as compared with £357,613 last year, an increase of £68,440 (19.1%).

In addition to the above, the items detailed below should be noted:

- The building is now in very good condition and only a few areas remain to be refurbished.

- Despite difficult trading conditions and losing some customers, we have maintained our income. I am pleased to advise that over the year we have actually increased our customer base.
- The new systems and processes implemented within the administrative and financial disciplines of the office are working well.
- The membership has increased to 400.
- A full review of our external advisers has been completed during the year.
- Our monthly profit and loss (P&L) management accounts are accurate and timely.

Four-year figures

I thought it might be helpful to look at some statistics over the last four years as detailed below:
Income total over the last four years is £1,425,750.
The balance sheet value has increased from £162,931 to £426,053.
Expenditure completing the Courtyard works was £145,530.
Building maintenance and improvements spent: £219,600.
Total overall spend on the building during the four-year period: £365,130.

Despite these costs, an increased surplus has been achieved over the four-year period of £267,580.

I am pleased to report that the Art Workers' Guild is in very good shape, as reflected in our year-end accounts.

I would conclude by thanking everyone for their support and encouragement in the year, in particular our retiring Chairman, Tony Wills, our Master, Anne Thorne, and our Guild Secretary, Catherine O'Keeffe. I would also thank the Trustees and Committee for their constant support and help.

Alec McQuin
Honorary Treasurer

Hon. Architect

This year has been more modest than some in improvements to the building. The most noticeable change has been the now nearly completed redecoration of the Master's Room, which includes a new plaster leaf frieze, and a marbled dado carried out by Brother Llewellyn Thomas.

This is closely followed by the new quarter sawn oak floor that now graces the Gradidge Room and Library.

Central heating has been extended to the Office and Gradidge Room with new cast iron column radiators. Electric versions have also been fitted to the Master's Room.

Elsewhere, we have begun the upgrade of Elspeth's kitchen with a cooker hood extractor, and have nearly completed the fit-out of a separate utility room. We shall be providing a new larger oven, worktops and hob next year.

New handrails for the front steps have been made and are due to be fitted early in the New Year. This will complete the front entrance improvements that were started last year.

We have now systematically renovated nearly every part of the building. The last remaining room to be tackled is the Library. It has this year been fitted with a new plaster cornice that emulates the long-lost timber cornice it once would have had. And next year we will be fitting new bookcases and redecorating the room, also taking the opportunity to improve the lighting and tea station.

Bro. Simon Hurst

Hon. Secretaries
Sturdy foundations

Anne Thorne has led the Guild to pastures new, treating the Brethren to a range of captivating lectures, from ice creams on Southport beach, where Chila Burman had her first inspirations, to uncovering lost wall paintings in Red House. Perhaps the most inspiring and captivating evening was the tour de force that Clary Salandy produced, when she showed her Carnival costumes 20 feet tall, flowing with yards of brightly coloured fabric. A visual feast.

Once again, the Master's Dinners proved to be great evenings of entertainment, with delicious meals cooked by Jane Dorner and Iona Ramsay.

The Master's trip to Edinburgh was a triumph of timing and organisation. Our many engagements fitted seamlessly together, whether we were on a train to Dundee or heading across the rolling hills of the Borders. At Marchmont House we were guided through the re-gilded halls of this stunning house, including a superb collection of Gimson and Webb furniture. And for our dinner, PM Ed Fairfax-Lucy and Erica laid on a sumptuous feast. Quite how they found 21 chairs is still a mystery. On a crisp Sunday morning we congregated at the Scottish National War Memorial. The church, designed by Sir Robert Lorimer, left the 19 Brothers greatly moved by the beauty of all the decorative work by so many different artists.

We must thank Anne for an exciting year full of variety and fascination.

Bro. Mark Winstanley and
Bro. Charlotte Hubbard

Hon. Curator

This year the quality of the exhibitions has been very high, and so they should be. With such a heavy footfall and such great hanging and display systems in place now, we really should be using our beautiful building, in central London – with so many art lovers coming through our doors.

In the spring, we had the fantastic glass exhibition. I owe thanks to PM Sally Pollitzer, new Brother Helen Whittaker and Bro. Caroline Swash for spending the money to make those fantastic banners in the courtyard. It made a huge impact. Over the summer we extended the furniture exhibition which looked so well in the building, although we did not figure out a safe way of hanging the chairs on the wall – next time. We then had a short exhibition of works by Edward Stone, a son of Reynolds Stone. The Stone family has been quite involved with the Guild recently with two book launches as well as the exhibition, which was a great success and many people told me how well the paintings suited the building.

Now we have a wonderful exhibition put up by East London Textile Arts (ELTA), which will continue until 15 February. The rest of 2020 is looking very busy and exciting, with virtually no slots left. There is still a one-week slot left for members in the Master's Room. Please get in touch if you would like to book it.

With regards to the permanent collection of Masters' portraits, we have now had eight restored, remounted or reframed, with eight in the works and seven left to do. The budget has been eaten up by dealing with damage only discovered when the works are taken out of their frames, but the Trustees have agreed to extend the budget so that all the portraits in need can be dealt with.

Lastly, I shall be stepping down at the end of 2020, so if anyone is interested in taking up this very enjoyable honorary post, please get in touch.

Bro. Monica Grose-Hodge

Walton on Thames Carpet Bag by Bro. Sonia Tuttiett.
Hand embroidery appliqued onto needlepoint 'carpet'.
Image ©Ester Segarra.

Hon. Librarian

The main thing to report is that we can now invite you to watch this space!

Over the summer many of the books were removed so that the new floor could be laid in the Library and new shelves built.

2020 will be the year of re-indexing, with fool-proof library software and help from an intern with a lust for Arts and Crafts categorisation. The aim is for members to be able to access the library index from their home computers, to see what we have. On moving the books, we realised that there are some gaps in the collection, and some repeats. Once indexing begins, we will be putting a shout out for your ideas on what needs to be added or taken away.

The new layout of the Library should be more accessible, helping the Outreach project research, and hopefully inspiring some Library-based events.

At this early stage, ideas on what the Library could mean to you are most welcome.

Bro. Rachael Matthews

Outreach Committee

In planning the year's programme, the Guild's Outreach Committee chooses partners and projects that reflect a range of approaches – academic, practical, cross-disciplinary and exploratory – sometimes all at once. We

have organised eight Guild events this year, and made significant contributions to the V&A Research Institute's three-day symposium on 'The Knowledge of the Maker', and to the All-Party Parliamentary Group for Craft. We have also produced a leaflet to describe what we are doing.

The most practical event was 'Useful Parallels', a day of demonstrations held for ceramics students from four colleges. Just as foreign travel expands the understanding of home, so providing insights into other disciplines can enhance makers' understanding of their own practice. Demonstrations were also offered to young academics from the Courtauld and four other universities keen to acquire a physical understanding of the material culture they are studying. We are planning a 'Useful Parallels' day next year for architecture students.

For the past three years, the V&A's Encounters group, with the essential partnership of the Guild, has been 'exploring the significance of the knowledge of the maker and challenging the divide between intellectual and manual knowledge'. There have been many strands to this project, most recently a day masterminded by Bro. Fleur Oakes at the Guild. Entitled What's Wrong? it explored and analysed the point at which the expert says, 'This I just know'; the importance of context in understanding what one observes; and the minuscule differences between the right way and the wrong way. How those differences can be identified, and how each task involves carefully picking just the right selection of skills from one's 'knowledge library' were just a few of the questions examined.

The Guild's three-cornered partnership with Bro. Celia Ward's East London Textile Arts (ELTA) group and the Watts Gallery culminated in an exhibition first at the Watts and then at the Guild. Using the Watts's exhibition on J.F. Lewis and Orientalism as a starting point, textile groups in Newham worked with various Guild members on textile projects that are 'by their nature collaborative, bringing together different personalities, faiths and ethnicities and thus becoming a way for multicultural societies to counter the homogeneity of Orientalist portrayals of the other'. The results are glorious.

The fourth Table Top Museum attracted a wide audience, interested to see how the workings of makers' minds are revealed in their collections; members, families and friends flocked to Bro. Hannah Coulson's collage workshop, and to Bro. Rachael Matthews's second darning and patching workshop.

All this seeks to promote craftsmanship and the understanding of it, and to nurture dialogue and collaboration across disciplines, generations, organisations and communities – as often as possible, with fun.

PM Prue Cooper – Member of the Outreach Committee

Mentoring Committee

The mentoring programme at the Guild is now on a firm footing with an increase in both willing mentors and numbers of enthusiastic mentees.

The Mentoring Committee has established the main principles for mentoring at the Guild; it is there for 'support and advice', and engagement must be led by the mentees not the mentors. Aspects of training or teaching are now clearly understood to be outside its purlieu. Lastly, it is accepted that the mentor and mentee need not have a shared subject specialism.

Two events were held this year. The first was a mentors' evening, which discussed the principles of the mentor/mentee engagement and introduced the formal paperwork for the process. The second event was the annual mentoring evening itself, where the initial meeting between mentors and their mentees took place to discuss the viability for the relationship and to formalise the agreement.

Feedback from mentors and mentees in respect of activities this year has been very positive. Recruitment of both mentors and mentees through the website has been efficient and informative. It is hoped that greater awareness of our offer will attract interest from Queen Elizabeth Scholarship Trust (QEST) scholars and the like. Our aim is to encourage the understanding that the Guild is now a first point of reference for those seeking support at the outset of a creative career.

Reports on the progress of the partnerships will be collated and summarised as part of this report next year.

The chair wishes to thank the Guild administration for the huge help, advice and sheer workload taken on to make the mentoring programme work this year.

Bro. Llewellyn Thomas

Guild Chest

The Guild Chest is a fund for the benefit of Guildsmen and their dependants in financial need. It is administered in strict confidence by its Trustees, who will consider any reasonable request on terms to be agreed.

In the past, the Chest has assisted with financial help that it now finds is beyond its remit and it is currently rewriting its constitution. Meanwhile, we can offer interest-free loans to help with ill health or bereavement, or to cover a temporary or more serious cash-flow situation.

If you would like to know more, please contact one of the Trustees. No one else will ever know the details of Chest transactions. Feel free to approach us at a meeting or using the contact details below. Trustees will listen and see what can be done.

Bro. Angela Barrett (Chairman):
abarrett316@btinternet.com | 020 7833 3262

Bro. Jane Dorner:
jane@editor.net | 020 8883 2602

Bro. Simon Smith:
info@simonsmithstonecarving.com | 020 7277 7488

Guild Secretary

Leigh and I have been kept very busy this year with a packed schedule of events, trips and exhibitions – all of which have been mentioned above. Membership of the Guild continues its slow but steady increase, up 3% over the past year. We have now reached the magic 400-mark. In addition, the Guild held a very successful one-day event during London Craft Week in May to showcase the enormous variety of our members' craft disciplines. Ten Brothers demonstrated the specialist skills involved in the making process, featuring stone carving, wood carving, beadwork, ceramics, leatherwork and calligraphy. Having dipped our toe in the water, we will be holding a similar, but longer, event in 2020, which will also include a series of talks.

Behind the scenes, we continue to improve our systems, procedures and recordkeeping. The photographs of the Masters' portraits have now been lodged with Bridgeman Images. A list of the portraits, including the artists who painted them and a small thumbnail print of each, is now available on request. An almost complete set of Committee papers dating from 1990 to the present day has been bound (by Bro. Mark Winstanley) and stored in the archives. We have also listed all the Guild's various policies and operating guidelines on our website, and ensured that they are easily retrievable. We have moved our banking provider to HSBC, where we hope to receive a more responsive and reliable service. The fire alarm system has been upgraded. And in a bid to be a bit greener, we have changed the company dealing with our waste disposal to First Mile, so none of our rubbish now goes to landfill. It is either recycled or used in energy production.

We have restructured our website – our window on the world – to provide a better showcase for our activities and events. We have also upgraded our database to make it more useful, both as a record of Guild membership and as a means of reaching out to a wider audience as our activities increase. And most importantly, thanks to Leigh's efforts, we continue to increase our presence on social media with very positive results.

Last but not least, the Guild held a wonderful Halloween party to celebrate Elspeth's 40 years at the Guild. We dressed up and played spooky games, and good fun was had by all. It is the least we could do, given her unstinting service and good humour in the face of even the most difficult customer.

Thanks as always to Alec McQuin, our Hon. Treasurer, to our Chairman, Tony Wills, to the Master, Anne Thorne, and to our Hon. Secs of course, who have all been supportive and encouraging throughout this year.

Catherine O'Keeffe

Bro. Rachael Matthews demonstrating knitting at Useful Parallels.
Image ©Bro.Nick Carter.

NEW GUILDSMEN IN 2019

New Brothers

Felicity Aylieff – *Ceramics*
Ptolemy Dean – *Architect*
Penny Fowler – *Potter*
Agalis Manessi – *Ceramicist*
Ruth Martin – *Illustrator*
Eric Parry – *Architect*
Stephen Richards – *Landscape Architect*
Sue Ridge – *Artist*
Francis Terry – *Architect*
Carolyn Trant – *Artists' Books*
Joe Whitlock Blundell – *Book Designer/Photographer*

Associate Brothers

Ruth Guilding – *Art and Design Historian*
Will Wootton – *Academic*

Affiliate Brothers

Nicholas Hughes – *Drawing and all its applications*

VALETE

Colin Amery, Anthony Ballantine, Enid Irving, Şherban Cantacuzino, Bernard Middleton

OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE 2019

Master – Anne Thorne
Immediate Past Master – Jane Cox
Master Elect – Alan Powers
Master Elect Elect – Tracey Sheppard
Past Masters – David Birch, Prue Cooper and Phil Abel
Chairman of Trustees – Tony Wills

HON. OFFICERS

Hon. Secretaries – Charlotte Hubbard, Mark Winstanley
Hon. Treasurer – Alec McQuin
Hon. Architect – Simon Hurst
Hon. Librarian – Rachael Matthews
Hon. Archivist – Nicholas Cooper
Hon. Curator – Monica Grose-Hodge
Hon. Editor – Tom Ponsonby
Chair of Outreach Cttee – PM Jane Cox
Chair of Mentoring Cttee – Llewellyn Thomas

ORDINARY MEMBERS

Emma Barker, Paul Jakeman, Rosemary Ransome Wallis, Flora Roberts, Frances Spalding

Guild Secretary – Catherine O'Keeffe
Guild Administrator – Leigh Milsom Fowler
Guild Steward – Elspeth Dennison

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