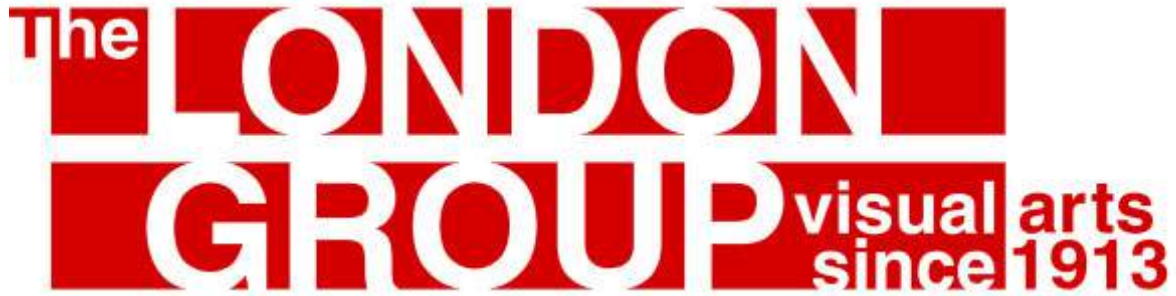


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## December 2014 Newsletter

### Introduction from the President

With the closing of our Southampton exhibition and our Group photograph on the steps of Tate Britain we have come to the grand finale of our Centenary, having ingeniously managed to keep the celebrations going for two years.



Thank you to the 59 members who came along to Tate Britain on the sunny afternoon of 19 October. It was very moving to see so many members and how much the Group means to everyone. What a memorable occasion. Thank you to Mark Dickens for

planning and organising it and to the photographer, Jayne Taylor.

Our triumphant four month exhibition *From David Bomberg to Paula Rego: The London Group in Southampton* at Southampton City Art Gallery ended on 1 November. We are very proud to have shown in one of the country's major regional art galleries and Southampton has the largest collection of The London Group members' work apart from the Tate. We were given a warm welcome by Tim Craven, Curator of Art, and his staff at the Private View on 17 July and we had fun travelling by coach, meticulously organised by Tommy Seaward. The exhibition included a record number of current members' works, curated by Samantha Jarman and Bryan Benge, shown in an adjacent gallery to historic works from Southampton's collection, selected and curated by Victoria Rance and David Redfern. Southampton were very enthusiastic about our show and felt it was a big success. There were over 9,500 visitors to the whole gallery over the period of the show and 160 of the magnificent catalogues designed by Jane Humphrey were sold.

Our recent big highlight was our participation in The London Art Book Fair at the Whitechapel in September which was a complete departure for the Group. There was a lot of interest in our table, and large numbers of visitors throughout the fair, so it was brilliant for networking and will have significantly raised awareness of the Group. 22 members produced a wide range of books of high calibre and fascinating diversity which ensured that our table looked impressive and sat well with the others around us, some of whom were National Art Museums.



It was an honour for us to be positioned amongst such notable company and with Ben Uri nearby – the centrepiece of their display was their recent Centenary publication on The London Group and we enjoyed being next to Gimpels Fils. Rene Gimpel wrote that it 'was a pleasure for Lukas and me to adjoin stands with you, given the prominence of The London Group, both historically and also, 'on the day' with your many visitors'. We

sold 30 books and feel that the event couldn't have been more worthwhile and we look forward to next year. Thank you very much to Lydia Julien who initiated the venture and worked with unbounded energy, tenacity and passion and to her helpers Tisna Westerhof and Marenka Gabeler.

Plans are well underway for 2015. Gill Ingham, assisted by Suzan Swale and Charlotte Mortensson, is hard at work organising *The London Group Draw II* which will take place in April at The Cello Factory. Draw tickets are £100 and everyone takes home a work. Details will be available on The London Group website in January. The proceeds will fund future London Group exhibition venues and it is hoped to find a venue for the Open 2017 which will be big enough to show all the exhibitors at once.

Following immediately after the Draw, and also at The Cello Factory, there will be a Small Group Exhibition entitled *Bridge* with 11 members showing, all of whom are women. There have been lively discussions amongst these members in their endeavours to find links and bridges in their work and with each other and this demonstrates the very best opportunities a Small Group Exhibition makes possible.

Work has just started for the 2015 Open which will be held in October/November at The Cello Factory. We will be introducing online submissions, under the care of Amanda Loomes and Tim Pickup, and have already been given a major prize by the Chelsea Arts Club Trust. The Open is crucial to the raison d'être of the Group and supporting young and emerging artists is one way in which the Group shapes the future of British art. This is an interesting time to look at the future having just experienced so many insights into the Group's past, not least through the publication of David Redfern's book, *The London Group: a history 1913-2013* and through his lectures. We have enjoyed much enriching exposure to historic London Group members' work through our Centenary shows at Ben Uri and Southampton and through the breadth of recent exhibitions and documentaries marking the beginning of WW1. So by remembering these past members, and the remarkable legacy we have inherited from them, I hope that together all of us members can do what we can to ensure that The London Group continues to have a significant presence in the future.

Susan Haire

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## Dates for the Diary

**The London Group Draw II** Preview will open on Wednesday 15 April at The Cello Factory. **The London Group Draw II** Event will take place at The Cello Factory on Thursday 23 April.

**Bridge** an exhibition by 11 members of The London Group: Laura Carey, Marenka Gabeler, Aude Hérail Jäger, Samantha Jarman, Amanda Loomes, Charlotte



Mortensson, Susan Sluglett, Suzan Swale, Tisna Westerhof, Susan Wilson and Erika Winstone.

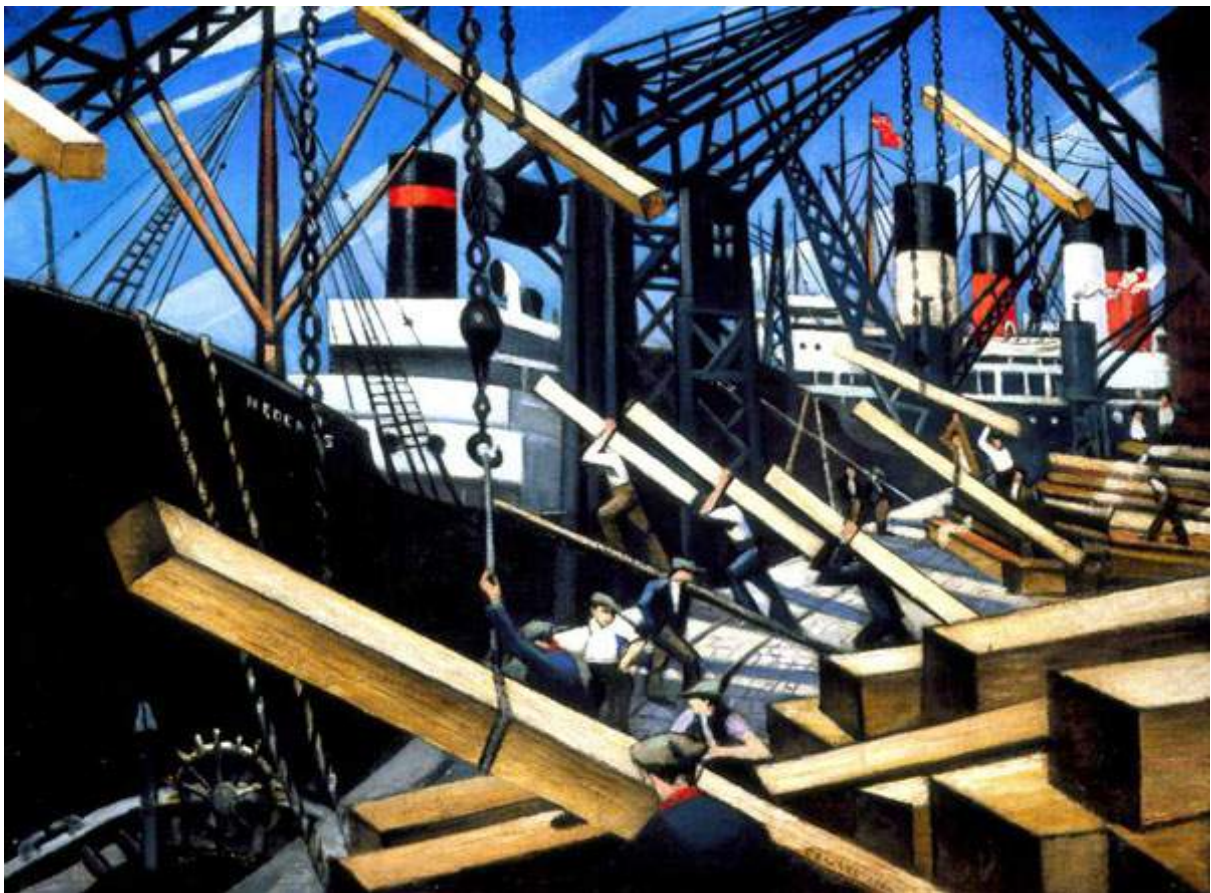
PV Tuesday 28 April at The Cello Factory. Exhibition continues Wednesday 29 April - Saturday 9 May.

Coming soon - online entry to The Open 2015. This will be the **82nd Open** exhibition in the Group's illustrious history and will be held in October/November at The Cello Factory.

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### **“From David Bomberg to Paula Rego: The London Group in Southampton”**

Southampton City Art Gallery 28 June to 1 November 2014



This exhibition was in two parts. One gallery held a selection of historical works from Southampton's collection selected by Victoria Rance and David Redfern with the support of Southampton's Curator of Art, Tim Craven; and a larger gallery showed the work of contemporary members curated by Sam Jarman and Bryan Benge. Tim said that with hindsight he would have given the Group more space, ah well, another time. This is perhaps the first time since the Tate Jubilee show in 1964 that London Group members over the whole of its history have been exhibited together.



The historic show included thirteen of the Founder Members, David Bomberg, Harold Gilman, William Ratcliffe, CRW Nevinson, Duncan Grant, Robert Bevan, Spencer Gore, Jacob Epstein, Percy Wyndham Lewis, Charles Ginner, Walter Sickert, Sylvia Gosse and Henri Gaudier Brzeska. We were very pleased too that so many of the current Group took part, seventy-three out of ninety-three members in 2014. Bearing in mind that the curators wished to highlight the contribution of women to The London Group, thirty-one of the seventy-three contemporary exhibitors were women.



The beautiful catalogue designed by Jane Humphrey sold well in the bookshop, a



lasting testament to the Group and exhibition. Another legacy is that Victoria Rance started a Twitter account especially to help promote the show and this reached 900 followers by the time Susan Sluglett took over at the beginning of November. The show was promoted by Jessica Wood of *artsinform* and widely covered by regional press and radio.



Curator Victoria Rance's Introduction:

The London Group has visited Southampton Art Gallery before; 'A Selection From The London Group Exhibition 1954' was shown here in 1955. The Group was only forty-two years old then, but the gallery much younger, having opened to the public only sixteen years earlier and it had been energetically collecting and benefitting from the input of far sighted curators, advised (according to the terms of its foundation) by Kenneth Clark and Philip Hendy at the National Gallery. The active collecting of contemporary art and the importance of The London Group in the twentieth century has meant that the relationship with Southampton is an exceptionally strong one.

It was after reading that the gallery had one of the largest collections of work by London Group members that I suggested to our president Susan Haire that we approach them in our hundredth anniversary year. When I contacted Curator of Art Tim Craven he responded enthusiastically and proposed his long held vision for The London Group's hundredth anniversary; a show in two parts, with work selected from the Southampton collection of former members, alongside an exhibition of contemporary members.

As the initiator of the project I was lucky enough to be given the role of curating the historic part in partnership with our archivist David Redfern (whose painting 'Work' is also in the Southampton collection). It has been a dreamlike experience for both of us – David found nearly one hundred members represented in the collection, some by several works.



We were given the chance to select from a very eminent collection made all the more enjoyable by Tim Craven who had an insightful story for each artist or painting (we wished we had had a tape recorder with us). His patience and good humour, with his own insight as a painter himself, made our visits absolute treats. We both wanted to include as many women as possible, and seven women artists fitted into our remit of former members now deceased. They are all in our show, especially fitting as the character of The London Group was formed by being open minded and inclusive of women and émigré artists, and this has enriched the Group immeasurably.

We would both like to thank Tim Craven for his wonderfully generous spirit in allowing us to curate this show. He and the staff there, particularly Andrew Ball and Dan Matthews have been patient, kind and efficient. It was a surprise to us to discover that one quarter of the artists in our selection were in the 1955 show too, and perhaps some of us will be around for the 150th anniversary visit in 2064. What will that be like?

Victoria Rance and David Redfern, December 2014

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**A day in the life of Matthew Kolakowski - in the studio 09.11.14.**





'Post exhibition the studio takes on a more melancholy aspect, finding storage space for the returned work, re-establishing some order over the chaos that ensues in preparing for a show and then picking up the threads again in the work that didn't make it; uncompleted but now the fag end of a different cycle soon to be lapped into the new surge.'





'I have several medium size stretchers ready as the recent focus had been on small. Cutting and stretching canvas, sizing, priming, taping up edges and all the while thinking "What am I going to do that is different?" "How does the work move on in a more ambitious, considered, expressive, knowledgeable or referenced way?" The stream of consciousness streams on against a backdrop of radio five live, some radio six esoteric playlist, the polite radio three, sedate radio four or hyper radio one. No one listens to radio two!'



'Pay attention to the detail in that which works. "Why is this picture working better than the others?" Recognition of that moment is key. Not so much obvious structure (determined) but maybe it's to do with openness and responding, glimpses of the spaces in-between and then the commentary continues on.'

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### **The London Group artists and the First World War.**

As it is both the centenary of the First World War and of The London Group, David Redfern, our archivist, thought it would be of interest to current members to see how some of the historic members were involved.



The following are notes taken by David Redfern during his research of the exhibition “British Art of the First World War” on Level 3 of the Imperial War Museum, closing on March 5th, 2015 [www.iwm.org.uk](http://www.iwm.org.uk)

Walter Bayes (Founder Member 1913) was teaching at Camberwell School of Art during the war. Aged 45 at the outbreak of war. He is best known for his large painting “The Underworld: Taking Cover in a Tube Station During a London Air Raid, 1918”. The tube station in question was Elephant & Castle, through which he may have passed on his journey to work.

David Bomberg (Founder Member 1913) was at first denied by the army as he was “too scruffy”. However, by 1918 he was tunnelling as a sapper with the Royal Engineers. Later in 1918 the Canadian government commissioned him to record the St Eloi tunnelling operation where a huge underground mine had been detonated in 1917. His first painting was rejected as too Futurist but his second is now in the National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa.

Sydney Carline (1922) originally a despatch rider he became a fighter pilot flying Sopwith Camels over the Italian front with the Royal Flying Corps. After the war the two Carline brothers, Richard and Sydney, Henry Lamb and Stanley Spencer formed an artistic circle in Hampstead. Spencer later married the Carlines’ sister, Hilda, in 1925. In 1919 the Carline brothers were sent by the Imperial War Museum to Palestine and Mesopotamia for over a year.

Frank Dobson (1922, President 1924-26) was given two commissions but both were rejected because of their "Vorticist roots".

Jacob Epstein (Founder Member 1913) joined the Royal Fusiliers in 1917. He was denied four commissions prior to this because of "offending public sensibilities" (with his sculpture) before the war.

Henry Lamb (Founder Member 1913 but did not exhibit) was an army doctor serving with the 5th Battalion, The Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers. Shortly after being transferred from Palestine to the Western Front he was poisoned in a gas attack late in the war and did not fully recover until 1919.

Percy Wyndham Lewis (Founder Member 1913) became a Second Lieutenant in the Royal Garrison Artillery in March, 1916. He was in charge of an artillery emplacement, "serving in direct contact with some of the most scientific and destructive weaponry of the war". In February, 1919 he held an exhibition entitled "Guns" at the Royal Academy. Lewis stated, "War enslaves and debilitates humankind".

Bernard Meninsky (1919), born in Ukraine of Russian and Jewish parents and coming to Liverpool as a baby, was a private in the Royal Fusiliers. Sickert recommended him for a British War Memorials Committee commission in January, 1918. "The Arrival of a Leave Train, Victoria Station, 1918" (1919).

John Nash (Founder Member 1913) joined the 1/28th Battalion The London Regiment (1st Artists' Rifles). His painting "Over the Top" of 1918 depicts a disastrous action in which he was involved when almost the entire company of the Rifles was killed or injured at Marcoing on December 30th, 1917.

Paul Nash (1914) joined the army as an infantry man with the Artists' Rifles at the outbreak of war. He saw action at the Ypres Salient in Belgium but was invalided out in 1917. He later returned to the front in the same year as an official war artist. In June 1918 he was invited to join the British War Memorials Committee scheme to paint a Flanders battlefield for the Hall of Remembrance. He worked in a barn/studio in Chalfont St Peter in Buckinghamshire.

C.R.W. Nevinson (Founder Member 1913), despite poor health, joined the Friends Ambulance Unit as a driver in Northern France and Flanders in 1914. The following year he served with the RAMC at General Hospital, Wandsworth. He was discharged due to ill health in 1916. He was one of the first artists to bring back images from the front line, returning there as an official war artist in 1917. He observed preparations for the Passchendaele campaign.

William Roberts (1914) joined the Royal Field Artillery as a gunner in 1916. In April,



1918 he was invited to work for the Canadian War Memorials and later the British War Memorials Committee scheme.

Randolph Schwabe (1915) was declared unfit for military service. In 1918 he was commissioned by the British War Memorials Committee.

Stanley Spencer (elected 1914 but did not accept) served as an army medic with the 68th Field Ambulance on the Salonika front in 1916.

Edward Wadsworth (Founder Member 1913) served as a naval dock officer supervising the dazzle camouflage painting of ships.

H.S. Williamson (1933, Chairman from 1937-43) enlisted, at his second attempt, in January 1916 with the King's Royal Rifle Corps and was injured in 1918. Later worked as an orderly in the operating theatre at No. 6 General Hospital in France.

Duncan Grant (1919) and Adrian Allinson (1914) were both conscientious objectors and laboured on farms.

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### Juliette Losq in conversation with David Wiseman



**JL - We share in common a childhood in Essex (with parents moving out from London). Do you think that growing up in this semi-rural / suburban environment has influenced your work, or experiences as an artist in general?**

DW - I was brought up on one of the first sprawling council estates to be built in Essex, in the also newly built Basildon New Town. But we were surrounded by countryside and spent all our free time as kids outside, summer and winter. I remember there were

special mysterious woodland places, special trees and streams that you grew up with so I suppose this may have had an influence.

### **Do you have any artists in your family? Were your family behind your decision to pursue art as a career?**

My daughter recently researched our family tree going back to the 19th Century and sadly there was no trace of anybody remotely connected to the arts. They were mostly from the East End dockland area too busy staying out of poverty. I seemed to have come out of the blue as an artist. I don't know where it came from but it seemed to take hold from my early teens almost beyond my control. My mother was always supportive but had no real inkling of what went on. My father though was absolutely against it and he expected me to leave school early and bring in another wage. But ironically in very late life, despite his aversion to my art, started to paint himself making naive Alfred Wallis type pictures of local places. Even to the extent of the local paper publishing an article about his work with the headline "Father follows in sons footsteps".

### **You began your art school career by studying in Colchester – how was your experience here?**

Colchester was a small, independent proper art school and I spent two years there before going to St. Martins. We worked in large wooden huts. I loved it and it was a very formative time. We were totally immersed in art with some very influential teachers such as John Carter, Richard Bawden and John Nash, Paul Nash's brother.

### **Which artists - historical or contemporary - have influenced you over the years?**

Which artists have influenced me! So many artists have been very special to me over the years; Matisse, Miro, Bonnard, Van Gogh etc. But for a real direct influence I would probably go with my friends and contemporaries such as Jeff Dellow, Clyde Hopkins, Graham Crowley, who I've taught with, exhibited with and shared all the ups and downs of making art. Some contemporary landscape painters have interested me such as Michael Honnor, John Virtue and Michael Porter.

### **You make your drawings outside as opposed to in your studio. What are your motivations for this?**

Most of my work on canvas is made entirely in the studio. The works on paper made outside are an important gathering of information, and are part of the process of absorbing the landscape. But I would never work directly from a finished drawing as it would become a process of imitation losing that initial spark and feeling of uncertainty that the studio paintings need. I regard the work made outside as a more direct, intuitive response to what is in front of me as opposed to the more manipulated, slowly evolving studio paintings. It is the experience of working outside that I love as much as the

finished product.



image: David Wiseman - 'Waters Edge - Glowing Light' 2014

**You describe your paintings as "playful but not necessarily topographical". How would you describe the balance between the importance of representing a landscape in some way and the process of mark-making / exploring material qualities in your work?**

I have come to the landscape from a history of abstraction so I have an overriding feel for and love of paint. I like the paint to turn into the landscape. I love the act of painting, to throw the paint on, dribble it, wipe it away, roll it on with rich texture, sponge it on etc. Although I have particular special places in mind, the paintings are not really planned. I start out with a series of marks and see where the painting takes me. I like Jim Faure Walker's quote on Heron "as if the painting was in command and of course this is what it feels like to be absorbed in a painting. It takes you outside of yourself, your identity dissolves into the painting."

**You've made a number of public artworks. How important do you think it is for artists to engage with public art projects? Have any been more challenging or rewarding than others?**

For about 15 years I completed a series of large scale public artworks. Many artists in the past such as Matisse and Miro made public art and both had a big influence on me. The importance of public artworks is obvious especially in places such as hospitals



where they can be positive and uplifting. But it doesn't suit all artists and often the practical difficulties are the most challenging, They are time consuming and although I loved all of them, I do think my studio work suffered and it really took off again after I had made the last one.

### **What, for you, was the driving factor behind joining The London Group?**

I absolutely love The London Group. It has always been in the background of my art making over the years. I have been taught by, taught with and exhibited with many past and present members of the Group and have exhibited in a number of Open exhibitions over the years. I love the Group's links to artists of the past and its ongoing aim to be diverse and challenging. I was pleased and proud to be elected somewhat late in life.

### **If you could have a two person show with any non-living member, including a dinner and a chat, who would you choose?**

It would have to be Patrick Heron. I have always loved his work in all its various guises and his writing has always inspired me. I met him a few times when teaching at Winchester and I couldn't think of a better person to share an exhibition and socialise with. My second choice, if I am allowed one, would be Ivon Hitchens whose work is probably more closely related to mine and would be wonderful to exhibit with.



image: Juliette Losq - 'Broken sentences and forgotten names wink like fossils among the ruins' 2006

The London Group thanks Annie Johns and Susan Sluglett for compiling and editing the December 2014 newsletter.

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



image: Carel Weight - 'Albert Bridge' 1947

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