## THE ARTS SOCIETY SPARKENHOE

**2023-2024**

**MONDAYS, 7.15 PM**

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| 4 SEPT 2023 | **Indians, buffaloes & storms: the American West in 19thC Art**  Artists were never far behind the explorers who opened up the west of America in the 19th Century. Painters like Alfred Miller, Frederick Church and Albert Bierstadt have left us a powerful, if romanticised, record of the country and people that the settlers found and the opening of America’s west - the arrival of the railroad, the confinement of native Americans into reservations, and the extermination of the buffalo. IIlustrating the lecture are some of the largest and most grandiloquent paintings of the era. After a period of deep neglect, they are now very much back in vogue; but whatever one thinks of their artistic merits, they are, above all, great fun. | **Toby Faber** is an experienced lecturer and public speaker who has been accredited by The Arts Society since 2012. His career began with Natural Sciences at Cambridge and has been through investment banking, management consulting and five years as managing director of the publishing company founded by his grandfather, Faber and Faber, where he remains on the board. He is also non-executive Chairman of its sister company, Faber Music, a director of Liverpool University Press and an author. Toby makes a welcome return to The Arts Society Sparkenhoe. |
| 2 OCT 2023 | **Madmen & artists: how the advertising industry exploited Fine Art.**  From the Renaissance to the present day, fine art continues to provide opportunities to enhance Brand imagery with admiration, humour, satire & irony. Tony describes some of the processes by which these advertisements have been created & why the works of Leonardo da Vinci, Raphael & Michelangelo have been a particularly rich source. | **Tony Rawlins** started his career in advertising before setting up on his own in 1985. Remaining active as a consultant in the industry, he now concentrates on more philanthropic projects. He has been a member of the Arts Society for many years. |
| 6 NOV 2023 | **Britain as Workshop of the world, The Great Exhibition of 1851 & the Establishment of the Victoria & Albert Museum**  This lecture focuses on the design impact of the Great Exhibition and the need for a 'legacy institution' in the form of the South Kensington Museum. We look at the building as a work of art and explore the work of William Morris, Fredrick Lord Leighton and other influential designers of the Victorian Age. | **Anna Warrillow** has a BA in History of Art & Italian from the University of Sussex and an MA in Renaissance Decorative Arts & Design from the Royal College of Art. She has worked as a curator in the Sculpture Department at the V&A as well as in smaller collections. Anna is an award-winning blue badge guide in London and lectures at The American International University in Richmond teaching undergraduates The History of London. |
| 4 DEC 2023 | **A Tale of Two Cities: London & New York on the Musical Stage** *West Side Story, Guys & Dolls, Sweeney Todd & Oliver* are only a few of the familiar shows that have put London & New York centre stage. So what do metropolitan musicals reveal about the real cities & the characters who live in them? Answers are frequently colourful, often unexpected. This lecture uses audio & video examples. | **John Snelson** worked for the Royal Opera House for 20 years & is well known as a writer & speaker on all aspects of the lyric stage - musicals, opera, ballet. His publications include *Andrew Lloyd Webber*. He currently lectures at Goldsmiths, University of London & is completing a book on British musical theatre. |
| 5 FEB 2024 | **How to get down from a Yak: Adventures in Central Asian Nomadic Textiles**  Houses made from wool that warm in the depths of winter, carpets that tell stories, woven bands that appease ancestors, embroideries that ward off evil, and kilims that store kitchenware, with everything ready to be packed and carried on yak, or camel, at a moment’s notice; the little-known nomadic textile cultures of the Kyrgyz, Turkoman and Karakalpak are explored in this lecture, along with the rise and fall of nomadism and where nomadism fits within the modern world. Chris also shares from his own experience of working with nomadic yak herders in the High Pamirs for three years. | **Chris Aslan** was born in Turkey (hence the name Aslan) and spent his childhood there and in war-torn Beirut. After school, Chris spent two years at sea before studying Media and journalism at Leicester University. He then moved to Khiva, a desert oasis in Uzbekistan, establishing a UNESCO workshop reviving fifteenth century carpet designs and embroideries, and becoming the largest non-government employer in town. He then took a year in Cambridge to write A Carpet Ride to Khiva followed by several years in Tajikistan, training yak herders to comb their yaks for their cashmere-like down. After a spell in Kyrgyzstan living in the world’s largest natural walnut forest and establishing a wood-carving workshop, Chris studied at Oxford, and is now based in Cambridge. When he’s not lecturing for The Arts Society, he writes. His latest book, Unravelling the Silk Road, is published by Icon Books. Chris also takes tours to Central Asia, returning there whenever he can. |
| 4 MAR 2024 | **Trees in Art**  Throughout the history of European art, the tree has been of great importance as a punctuation mark within a composition, to create perspective, to draw attention, to offer a framework or to give meaning to the subject of the painting or sculpture. Dead or broken trees can symbolize death, a living tree in contrast can indicate everlasting life or resurrection & in the Garden of Eden the Tree of Knowledge is crucial to the fall of Adam & Eve. Many artists, such as Piero della Francesca or Constable, use trees in their work. | **Clare Ford-Wille** has an Honours degree in History of Art from Birkbeck College, University of London. Her regular commitments include the Centre for Lifelong Learning, London University, National Gallery, V&A Museum, WEA, Morley College, City Literary Institute as well as the Art Fund & National Trust. She also leads study tours abroad. |
| 8 APR 2024 | **Walls That Speak: The Alhambra Palace-Fortress**  The beauty of the Alhambra of Granada, built by the Nasrid dynasty in the 13th and 14th Centuries, speaks for itself – or does it? Many visitors, while stunned by the exquisite architecture, are unaware that the walls, covered in Kufic script, are talking directly to them. This lecture describes the structure and function of the monument, as well as the broad decorative programme of the Nasrid palaces within the complex. It explains the hidden meanings in the complex geometry of the glazed tilework and the stalactite-like muqarnas plasterwork, and takes a closer look at the significance of the poetic inscriptions. | **Ian Cockburn** is anart historian with a BA in art history, an MA (Courtauld Institute of Art) in medieval Spanish art history and a specialist in the nearly 800 years of Moorish occupation and Christian reconquest of medieval Iberia. He is founder and director of a company specialising in guided culture and arts tours in Spain, and lectures at institutions such as the V&A, SOAS, Christies Education, and the London Art History Society. |
| 13 MAY 2024 | **Woodblock prints of the Edo period: Hokusai & Hiroshige (18th-19th)**  The Edo period (1603-1868) was the highpoint for crafts of all kinds. The most prolific of these artists, Hokusai & Hiroshige, created extraordinary & beautiful images that are still revered today. | **Suzanne Perrin** is an independent researcher & historian specialising in Japanese History, Art & Culture. She is Culture Director of Japan Interlink which she founded in 1995 to promote the understanding of Japan in the UK through educational & cultural events including Kimono exhibitions & demonstrations. Suzanne studied Nihonga traditional Japanese painting at Nagoya University of Arts & lectures on a wide range of Japanese subjects to various universities & museums. She has published articles on traditional & contemporary aspects of Japan, including Japanese architecture, gardens & lifestyle, ‘greening’ the environment for Odyssey magazine in SA & articles for various magazines. In 2016 she published *Bridges: Anglo-Japanese Cultural Pioneers 1945-2015*. She visits Japan on a regular basis & is working on a second book on Japanese craftspeople in Kyoto. |
| 10 JUNE 2024 | **The Brilliance of Brunel – the Man who Built the Modern World**  We are still living amongst the infrastructure created by Isambard Kingdom Brunel in the 19th century. He changed the face of the English landscape with his ground-breaking projects including railways, bridges, tunnels, ships, and grand buildings such as the magnificent Paddington Station. He merged art with engineering and science and was a pioneer and a revolutionary. And he was brilliant. We'll look at the man, his background, his work, and his legacy. | **Ian Swankie** A Londoner with a passion for art and architecture, Ian is an official guide at Tate Modern, Tate Britain, Guildhall Art Gallery and St Paul’s Cathedral, and gives tours around each venue. He is also a qualified and active freelance London guide and leads regular tours for various corporations and organisations. Since 2012 he has led a popular weekly independent art lecture group in his home town of Richmond in West London. He is a Freeman of the Worshipful Company of Art Scholars, one of the City livery companies. Ian makes a very welcome in-person return to Sparkenhoe, his previous Zoom lecture (during Covid) on Great Railway Stations having been particularly well received by the online audience. |
| 1 JULY 2024 | **‘Wonderful things!’ Tutankhamun’s Tomb & Treasures** 2022 celebrated the Centenary of the greatest archaeological discovery – the excavation in 1922 of Tutankhamun’s tomb by Howard Carter. The name of this boy-king conjures up wonderful imagery & mysterious tales of the pharaohs. In this talk Lucia explores this unusual tomb & its iconic treasures. She examines the design & decoration of the most famous tomb in the Valley of the Kings, discusses Carter’s discovery & what happened to the incredible wealth of funerary goods found within. Enjoy the art on the walls of this extraordinary tomb & fabulous treasures, from Tutankhamun’s golden shrines to his ornate board games. | **Lucia Gahlin** is an Egyptologist who works in museums & on excavations in Egypt, but mostly lectures. She is an Honorary Research Associate at University College London’s Institute of Archaeology & has taught Egyptology at several UK universities. Lucia also works at the Petrie Museum of Egyptian Archaeology, London & leads tours to Egypt. She is a former Director of Bloomsbury Summer School at UCL. |