

NEWSLETTER

The Arts Society of West Suffolk



Next Meeting: Tuesday 7th December 2021

Painted Pleats: A History of European Fan-making Jacob Moss

From being a lesser branch of decorative arts, fan painting became a guild-controlled craft and remained the essential fashion item of the aristocracy into the 19C. They acquired prestige when artists like Gauguin, Degas and Sickert experimented with the art-shaped format. This lecture illustrates the evolution of fan painting from the 17C to today.

Jacob Moss is curator at the Fan Museum, London, where he worked for almost a decade following the completion of a master's degree in fashion curation at London College of Fashion. He became an Arts Society lecturer in 2019.

This talk will be followed by Festive Mince Pies and Sherry



VISITS:

THE GUILDHALL, BURY ST EDMUNDS
TUESDAY 30th NOVEMBER 2021

Cost £12 to include cream tea

Contact Julia Eeles on 01359 240838 for further details

OBSERVATIONS—THE MARY BEALE COLLECTION

An exhibition of 17th century portraits by Suffolk artist Mary Beale will be on display in Moyses Hall Museum, Bury St Edmunds, until 30th January. Standard admission £5 adult, £4.50 student, £3 children. Book your tickets on the website: <https://www.moyesshall.org/>

Jewellery and Metalwork 1855 – 1940: Helen Ritchie, our speaker this month, gave a beautifully illustrated overview of the dynamic period of design of jewellery between 1855 and 1940. The Fitzwilliam Museum collection, has several such pieces, mainly due to the generosity of Mrs Anne Hull Grundy, an avid and eccentric jewellery collector confined to her bed by respiratory disease. In her final years, she gifted her treasures mainly to the British Museum, but also to various less well-known museums choosing pieces relevant to each museum's location or style. The 19C generated historicist style jewellery with designs from books and paintings of ancient Egypt, Greece and Italy. The Castellani family copied designs from architectural excavations, reviving Etruscan style pieces in gold with granulation, filigree and high value jewels. These were displayed in galleries for wealthy visitors to buy at excavation sites. Other jewellers soon copied these designs, occasionally incorporating genuine pieces into their jewellery. During Queen Victoria's reign one of the most successful British jewellers was Phillips, who also looked to the past with creations inspired by Scandinavian and Indian neo Gothic designs copied from paintings. A highly ornate wine decanter designed by William Burges, and now in the Fitzwilliam Museum collection, is reminiscent of Gothic cathedral architecture and incorporates ancient Persian design in its handle decoration. In 1876 Christopher Dresser's visit to Japan inspired him to design more minimal pieces, which only became popular in the 1930s when his work was rediscovered. More traditional jewellery was also being produced featuring flowers, birds and animals (for example by Hunt & Roswell) in bespoke boxes often showing the maker's name and date. Charles Ricketts, a very talented late 19C artist, author and printer, designed unique jewellery solely for his friends. He selected gem stones, then designed jewellery around them, often in Renaissance style or inspired by Hans Holbein's paintings. Each piece had a particular significance or allegorical meaning. From 1866 there was a move away from ornate Victorian design, focusing on a more natural look. The Arts and Crafts movement led by John Ruskin and William Morris created exclusively handmade pieces. In 1888 Charles Robert Ashbee, silversmith, set up the Guild of Handicraft, a group of craftsmen originally working together in London's East End with the end products being retailed by expensive London jewellers. Ashbee persuaded the craftsmen and their families to move to Chipping Camden, but the local markets eventually became flooded with their goods and the Guild ended. The value of their jewellery lay not in the raw materials used, but in their artistic treatment. Enamelling, hand-hammered silver and smooth cut jewels were skilfully used by the craftsmen, but were later copied in factories. Hart's Jewellers, whose founder, George Hart, was a member of the Guild, continues to this day. Phoebe Traquair was a talented enameller, and John Paul Cooper, greatly influenced by Henry Wilson, created intricate delicate jewellery as well as stylish shagreen caskets banded with silver. Archibald Knox designed silver and pewter for Liberty, which displayed British Art Nouveau and Celtic influences. Sadly he was not well paid for his work and died in relative poverty. Omar Ramsden's designs show a rather subdued Arts and Crafts style, and H G Murphy adopted an unusual Art Deco style. Sibyl Dunlop's jewellery, typically incorporating metallic symmetry with cabochon semi-precious stones, was a combination of her design, her workshop manager's handicraft and her suppliers' stoneware and enamel. The period from 1855 to 1940 saw unprecedented vitality and innovation in design of metalwork and jewellery before restriction by high taxation. The wonderful creations exemplify the words of Charles Ricketts, "It seems such a pity to see visions when you can make them."



URGENTLY NEEDED!

Honorary Secretary

or someone to take minutes of committee meetings

Please contact **Tony Callender on 01379 651259** for further information.

Further reading: Designers and Jewellery 1850-1940: Jewellery and Metalwork from the Fitzwilliam Museum
Paperback by Helen Ritchie