

BRIDFAS News

BRITISH DECORATIVE AND FINE ARTS
SOCIETY OF BRUSSELS

www.bridfas.org

January 2010

The **next lecture** will be held at 20.00 pm on Wednesday, January 13
at the Woluwe St-Lambert Town Hall, Ave Paul Hymans 2.
Welcome drinks will be offered starting at 19.15.

COMMITTEE COMMUNICATIONS

CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

December's Lecture

What is the difference between a rose cut and a brilliant cut? I had no idea until Jennie Baeten of the Antwerp World Diamond Centre visited us at **BRIDFAS** to illuminate us on the fascinating and mysterious industry of the king of all jewels: the diamond.

The first country to mine and utilize diamonds in jewelry was India. Diamond cutting had not been invented yet, so they were just rough, little nuggets which didn't shine nor glisten. Not so highly valued by the Romans who preferred brilliantly coloured stones and faceted pieces of glass, they only became popular in Europe during the late Medieval and Renaissance. Originally, they were worn exclusively by noblemen.

All of that changed when Maximilian, the Archduke of Austria, made a gift of a diamond engagement ring to his future bride, Mary of Burgundy, in 1477. This is where the tradition of the diamond engagement ring began.

And why do women wear their engagement ring on the fourth finger of their left hand? That custom, instead, came from the ancient Egyptians who believed that a vein in that particular finger extended directly to the heart. It was referred to as "the vein of love".

Although diamonds began to be cut in the late Medieval, the technique was far from perfect. Only in the 1800s did it become somewhat accurate. Then with the advent of modern machinery, it finally became an exact science. This also explains the availability of diamonds. Once the exclusive privilege of nobility, they became fashionable for the well-to-do in the 1800s, and in modern times they became a right of passage for nearly all western women.

Over the centuries Antwerp has always been the centre of the world's diamond industry. Today it is not only the hub of diamond trading, but it is also the most famous place to have the stones cut and set. Remember that when judging the quality of a diamond, always look for the "4 Cs": carat, colour, clarity and cut.

The lecture ended with our traditional raffle. Instead of a book, this time we raffled three large boxes of assorted Ferrero-Roche' chocolates. All wrapped in shiny gold and silver paper, they glistened almost as if they were jewels themselves. It was a fun way for **BRIDFAS** to begin the holiday season.

January's Lecture

Welcome back to **BRIDFAS**! We hope that you had joyous holidays and that you are ready to start the new decade with us.

January's lecture will feature another topic regarding Belgium's rich artistic heritage. Unlike jewelry making, a decorative art which continues to flourish, we will be taking a closer look at a fine art that was extremely popular in the 1800s but is no longer practiced. This is the art of the panorama and cyclorama. Once used to illustrate 360 degree scenes of places, battles and other important events, only 28 of them have survived the test of time, and only 16 of them are currently open to the public. We are extremely fortunate to have a magnificent example of a panorama painting at the Waterloo battlefield. It describes the history of the battle in minute detail. While it is important from the historical point of view, it is also an artistic masterpiece.

Ian Beckett, a professor of history at the University of Northampton, will be our lecturer for the evening. He will talk to us about the Waterloo painting, and he will put it into context with the other panoramas which were being painted in Europe and America at the time. Professor Beckett is a widely published author on diverse aspects of military history and has lectured at many prestigious universities as well as to the U.S. Marine Corps.

After the lecture we will be going for drinks at the Tomberg Tavern. It is a quiet, intimate tavern that we discovered in December. It is right across the street from the town hall at the top of Rue Tomberg. It is a mere one minute walk from the hall, so there's no need to move your car. All are welcome!

Paula Cagli

SPECIAL FEATURE AT THE JANUARY LECTURE **Annual Used Book and Art Objects Sale**

Christmas has come and gone, and a new decade has begun. It is a good time to say "out with the old and in with the new", and **BRIDFAS** can help! We will be holding our annual used book and art objects sale from 19.15 to 20.00 before the start of the January lecture.

Here's how it works. Members are asked to donate whatever they'd like: art supplies, loose art work, decorative objects, used magazines, paperbacks and hardbacks on any subject. For instance, I'll be donating some DVDs that I've already seen. This is a perfect occasion to put used items to work for a good cause.

All you need to do is to put a sticker on each item with a price on it. The committee suggests something like 1 euro for magazines, 2 euro for paperbacks and 5 euro for hardbacks. Bring them to the January lecture, and put them on the sales table. The committee will do the rest. There is no need to man the table and sell your own items, but if you'd like to help, just approach any committee member and they will find a job for you.

It's easy and fun, so come with your items and a little bit of spare change!

(Please remember to take all unsold items home with you at the end of the lecture. Items left at the hall will be dispensed with.)

Paula Cagli

THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Introducing the New Committee

At the December lecture we also held our Annual General Meeting. I have been to a lot of AGMs over the years, but I've never been to one in which there was so much laughter. I always thought that they were supposed to be serious, tedious events. Well, I was wrong. We did conduct business in an orderly and professional fashion, but we had fun while we did so. We had all of the normal features such as the Chairman's Report, the Treasurer's Report, the election of the Auditor and Committee, etc.

As the newly elected chairman I'd like to repeat my thanks to the excellent committee with whom I worked during the past year. In addition, I would like to thank Lindsey Evoy who helped me start the on-line newsletter and Andrew McCubbin who made such valuable contributions to each issue. I'd also like to mention the hosts who took care of our lecturers as well as the members who attended our events. My thanks go to you all as well.

The meeting ended by the members thanking the committee for what turned out to be a very successful year and by showing their appreciation for the publication of an article about **BRIDFAS** and its Young Arts Project in the NADFAS magazine, the "Review". Flashing on screen the whole time were photos I took of the children, their art work, and their final exhibition.

And now I'd like to present this year's committee:

Paula Cagli – Chairman
Robert Perry – Treasurer
Patricia Gerrie – Secretary
Pauline Kwakernaak – Programme Secretary
John Holmes – Membership Secretary
Tony Dodd – Treasurer Elect
Victor de Vries
Julian Hartland-Swann

Paula Cagli

LOCAL STUDY DAY

"The Mandarin's Three Dreams"

I am happy to say that 10 **BRIDFAS** members and their guests have signed up for the local study day, "The Mandarin's Three Dreams", which will be held at the ING Exhibition Space on Saturday, January 23 at 11:00. The address is Mont des Arts, Place Royal 6. The exhibition will be accompanied by a one-hour guided tour in English.

Tickets were purchased for 15 people, so there are still 5 places left. If you would like to attend the exhibition and haven't signed up yet, please email me at the address below to see if places are still available. You can then fill out the form on the following page and send 10 euro to the **BRIDFAS** account or you can pay me in person at the lecture on January 13.

So if you've ever been tempted by the thought of looking at China from a different perspective, come with us and explore the dreams ever present in the Chinese art and literature of the Mandarins of the 17th a 18th Centuries.

For more information and a sample of the exhibition, visit the ING website at:

http://www.ing.be/about/showdoc.jsp?docid=145516&menopt=ArS|art|exp&WT.mc_id=DE_Redirect_art

After the exhibition we plan to have lunch on the top floor of the Museum of the Musical Instrument, a converted Art Nouveau department store from which there is a fabulous view of the Brussels skyline.

Paula Cagli
paulacagli@skynet.be

BRIDFAS Study Visit to “The Mandarin’s Three Dreams” at the ING Espace Culturel in Brussels

A Private Guided tour of the exhibition “**The Mandarin’s Three Dreams**” has been arranged for *BRIDFAS* members and friends on **Saturday, January 23, 2010**.

The subject of the exhibition is the artistic and intellectual world of the mandarins in China during the 17th and 18th Centuries. The mandarins were the empire’s administrators and they formed an elite group of “men of letters”. Their duties were onerous. Therefore, they often reverted to escaping in time and space, traveling and collecting works from a past shrouded in nostalgia. This escape also took the form of what could be called “dreams”. Art and friendship; love; and nature and freedom were the themes in which they indulged themselves while in the confines of their offices.

The guided visit – given in English – will commence at **1100 hours** on Saturday, January 23 and will last approximately 1 hour. A reservation has been made for a group of 15 persons, and tickets will be allocated strictly on a “**first pay, first served**” basis. The charge for the Study Day will be **€10 per person**.

We will meet at the entrance to the **Espace Culturel ING, Mont des Arts, Place Royale 6** at no later than 10.50 am on January 23.

Detach and send to: Paula Cagli, Rue Fr. Gay 9, 1150 Bruxelles

BRIDFAS Visit to Mandarin Exhibition, Brussels – January 23, 2010

Please reserve ____ places in the name(s) of

for the *BRIDFAS* Mandarin Study Day in Brussels on Saturday, January 23 commencing at 1100 hours.

I have made a Virement payment of €_____ to *BRIDFAS*, Boulevard Leopold III, 1110 – Bruxelles: Bank Account 310-0540751-62. Message should read “*BRIDFAS* Mandarin Study Day”.

I acknowledge that places will not be reserved until payment is received, and that no refund will be made in the event of cancellation or non-attendance by my part.

_____ (Signature) _____ (Name)

_____ (Address)

_____ (Tel. No.)

BRIDFAS IN BRUSSELS

An Evening with the Ambassador

The British Chamber of Commerce (BCC), in conjunction with the BBKA (Brussels British Community Association) organises an annual cocktail at the residence of the UK Permanent Representative to Belgium. This December, from **BRIDFAS**, Paula, Pauline, Tony and Marialuisa attended. Robert and Diane also attended on the invite of the British Junior Academy.

The British Ambassador to Belgium, Dr Rachel Aron, gave an excellent address which emphasised that it had been a difficult year for many British in Belgium. She handed contributions to social funds and charities in Belgium like CHS (Community Help Service) and the Charitable Fund. Steven Maisel, head of the BCC, gave a brief review of the 2009 activities and looked forward to the challenges for BCC in 2010.

BRIDFAS friends may be interested that, a little further along Rue Ducale, there is the House in which Giacomo Puccini died 85 years ago after a battle with throat cancer. His Brussels funeral was very grand but his body was later transferred to Milan and then to Torre del Lago, his home in Tuscany.

Tony Dodd

SUGGESTION BOX

A Word from the Members

Do you remember the old-fashioned suggestion box? You don't see too many of them around anymore. Even if we don't have one at **BRIDFAS**, we are always happy to hear from you. For instance, at the last lecture someone gave me the idea to place the upcoming lectures at the end of the newsletter, so that the programme would always be handy. And what about our lectures? We'd love to know which ones you like the best, which topics you don't care for, and what you think of our lecturers. This will help us with our various monthly duties as well as to design better programmes in the future. So don't be shy; feel free to express yourself to any committee member.

Paula Cagli

TOUR

"The Panorama Mesdag"

DFAS The Hague is sponsoring a tour of the Panorama Mesdag on Sunday, January 24 at 12:15. The Panorama Mesdag is located in The Hague and will be discussed in the January lecture at **BRIDFAS**. This is the perfect occasion to get a behind-the-scenes tour and learn more about this rare and fascinating art form. The cost is 10 euro for DFAS members and 12.50 euro for non-members. If you are interested in booking or would like more information, please contact: Sue Bridgewater.

suebridgewater@versatel.nl

MEMBERS' FORUM

HELP RESTORE "The Panorama Mesdag"

The reason that so many panoramas have been closed to the public is because many of them are in desperate need of restoration. I recently discovered how fun and easy it can be to help restore one of Europe's most beautiful panorama paintings. For a modest donation you can sponsor the restoration of your own patch of the Panorama Mesdag in the Hague. Of course, the more you contribute, the larger your patch will be. Each sponsor is then listed directly at the site. I became a sponsor last month, and you can become one, too. Or else, you can purchase a sponsorship for someone else as a gift or in their honor.

To learn more about the Panorama Mesdag, go to:

<http://us.holland.com/e/8296/Panorama%20Mesdag%20The%20Hague.php>

To learn how to become a sponsor and to see the Panorama Mesdag in action, go to:

<http://www.panorama-mesdag.com/#pagina=849>

The website is in Dutch but it is easy enough to understand. If you'd like help, just see me at the next lecture.

Pauline Kwakernaak

"VOYAGE TO ITALY" Invitation to My Latest Photography Exhibition

As so many of you have seen, photography is a big part of my personal as well as professional life. My passion began when I was about to spend my junior year of university in Rome, Italy. A small-town American majoring in art history, I was finally going to realize my dream to study in the city of Michelangelo, Caravaggio and Bernini! Before embarking on my adventure, I decided to take a photography course. My amazing good fortune was to have Myron Barnstone, a visiting professor from Great Britain, as my teacher. He not only instructed me on photographic technique, but he taught me to see and to interpret the world around me in a way I had never done before.

Over the years I cultivated this passion and eventually turned it into a profession. Now I'd like to share my vision with you. A collection of my Italian work will be on display during the months of January and February at the U.S. Department of State. The inauguration of the exhibition will be held in the first week of February, and I would like to invite all of you to come celebrate the event with me. I will be sending you a formal invitation via email closer to the time.

The exhibition will be curated by Stephanie Manasseh, the director of the Brussels Accessible Art Fair. www.accessibleartfair.com

I hope to see you there and to give you a hearty "benvenuti" to my pictorial "Voyage to Italy".

Paula Cagli

SURFING THE INTERNET

In Search of Weekend Activities

The Internet coverage for Belgium's tourism is rather patchy, ranging from the excellent to the abysmal. In recent years the Flemish region has dropped way behind the Walloon region, the latter having the best website in the country.

The Tourism Office for Wallonia and Brussels (Wallonie-Bruxelles) can be found at www.opt.be. In the top right corner you choose your language, English=EN. Then you choose Wallonie or Bruxelles and you are into this massive web site. Click on "Agenda" for what's on, enter the name of a city, town or village for a list of attractions, or search for a hotel or Gite. This site has many hidden marvels; just keep surfing for ideas.

For a long time the City of Liege has had a very poor website. That is now changed with the advent of www.liege-leodium.be, inspired, it is said, by the English National Trust and English Heritage. Excellent for information under 36 main sections, it will inspire you to visit this fascinating city. Leodium is its old Roman name.

Other interesting web sites are:

Pays de Bouillon www.bouillon-tourisme.be information about this delightful town on the River Semois.

Ost Kantons www.eastbelgium.com out beyond Liege is the lovely countryside of the German speaking region of Belgium,

Maredsous www.maredsous.be this well known abbey with all its attractions is a favourite weekend destination, excellent walks.

Ostend www.toerisme-oostende.be well worth a weekend break, discover its varied attractions.

Andrew McCubbin

NEWS FROM FLANDERS

Emphasis on Art

We have to get used to abbreviated names for our museums today: "M-Leuven" for the new Leuven city museum, "Musezee" for Ostend's newly extended art gallery, and now Gent has added to MSK, SMAK and MIAT. There is also a new name "STAM". STAM is the Stadsmuseum Gent, a museum telling the history of the City.

The basis of the new museum is old Bijloke Museum where a massive new museum is being built. We are promised great things and there is a degree of competition with Antwerp and Brugge over this project. The opening day has been announced for the 9th October 2010, well worth a visit.

Brugges used to be rather blasé about tourist promotion, a rather basic map for which you had to pay was about all on offer. Now a series of excellent new brochures is being produced and the City is actively promoting itself as a conference destination. Last September it hosted 3,000 delegates and partners for the IUMI, the International Union of Marine Insurers, annual meeting, providing what the organisers said was the best conference infrastructure they had experienced around the world. This all means that the Tourist coffers of Brugge will be full through the recession. The first example of this is a new festival to be called "Bruges Central" which from September 2010 will show the artistic relationship between Bruges and Central Europe. Also opening next October is an exhibition entitled "Van Eyck to Durer". Bruges's hotels have a winter promotion giving 3 nights for the price of 2 for the period up to 16/3/2010 for stays starting on Sunday, Monday or Tuesday, only bookable through www.bruges.be/winter

Andrew McCubbin

"CHANGING APPEARANCE OF OBJECTS IN MUSEUM COLLECTIONS" ***A Talk by Dr. Vincent Daniels***

On Friday, January 29 Dr. Vincent Daniels will be giving a talk for the Royal Society of Chemistry Belgium Section on the Science of Art Preservation.

Following his PhD studies at University College Cardiff, Dr. Vincent Daniels joined the British Museum in 1974 where he conducted research on a wide range of conservation issues with a particular focus on paper and cellulose-based materials, dyes and pigments. He made an impact on most fields of conservation science, introduced plasma reactions to conservation, and rediscovered the Russell effect (an image produced on photographic plates by oxidising material).

He left the British Museum in 2003 and became a Research Fellow at the Royal College of Art. He is currently an Emeritus Researcher at the British Museum, a Fellow of the International Institute of Conservation, a Fellow of the Royal Society of Chemistry and a visiting professor at the University of the Arts. In 2007 he was awarded the prestigious Plowden Medal for his long and exceptional contribution to arts conservation.

In this talk Dr Daniels will discuss the changes in appearance due to chemical and physical processes that happen as objects in museums get older. Museums have to ensure these changes are kept as small as possible. The talk will examine some of the more interesting phenomena which occur and the ethical problems posed to curators and conservators. The lecture will also examine the methods conservators use to ensure that changes to objects are minimised and how processes can be designed to slow the rate of deterioration.

Entry to the lecture is €5 for adults and is free for bona fide students. Refreshments will be provided afterwards. To book your place(s) for this RSC Belgium event, please send an email to rscbelgium@skynet.be or call on 02 640 3226.

Friday 29 January 2010
19:45 for 20:00
Brel Theatre, British School of Brussels
Leuvensesteenweg 19, 3080 Tervuren

EXHIBITION SCENE

Brussels:

MAGRITTE MUSEUM

Place Royale

Newly opened flagship museum for Brussels, 100,000 visitors by 7th August!

Tickets can be booked on line

"THE PAINTERS OF THE FOREST OF SOIGNES 1850-1950"

@ Musee Beaux Arts de Ixelles 29/10/09 - 10/1/10

Open Dly x Mon 1300/1700

"EUROPALIA CHINA"

Arts festival 8/10/09 - 14/2/10

"SONS OF HEAVEN"

@ BOZAR 10/10/09 – 24/1/10

The history of the Chinese Emperors over 5000 years

"ASIA-EUROPE Faith and Trade"

@ BOZAR 25/6/10 - 3/10/10

"THE SILK ROAD"

@ Museum of Arts & History 23/10/09 - 7/2/10
The treasures of the mountains of Western China

"WESTERN TRAVELLERS IN CHINA"

@ Bibliotheca Wittochiana, Avenue du Bemel 23
Open Daily x Mon 10/17/10

"WU ZUOREN" ON THE CROSSROADS OF EAST AND WEST

@ Hotel de Ville Grand Place 15/10/09 - 17/1/10
Chinese painter 1908-1997 trained in Belgium

"SHANGHAI MODERN 1900-1949"

@ Centre d'Art de Rouge Cloitre 27/10/09 - 24/1/10
Posters etc illustrating design in pre revolutionary Shanghai

"THE ORCHARD PAVILLION AND CHINESE CALLIGRAPHY"

@ Royal Museum of Fine Arts 14/10/09 - 31/1/10
The Art of Writing in China

"DELVAUX AND THE ANCIENT WORLD"

@ Royal Museum of Fine Arts 23/10/09 - 31/1/10

"THE THREE DREAMS OF A MANDARIN"

@ ING Place Royale 22/10/09 - 14/2/10

"MEXICO festival"

@ BOZAR 16/1/10 - 25/4/10

"AFRICA festival"

@ BOZAR 11/6/10 - 20/9/10

"LUCAS CRANACH AND HIS TIME"

@ BOZAR 20/10/10 - 23/1/11

"GILBERT & GEORGE"

@ BOZAR 28/10/10 - 30/1/11

Antwerp:

"ON THE HEELS OF BARTOK, LAJOS VAJOLA & HUNGARIAN SURREALISM"

@ Royal Museum of Fine Arts 17/10/09 - 17/1/10

"ROOM FOR ART IN 17th CENTURY ANTWERP"

@ Rubenshouse 28/11/09 - 28/2/10

Willem van Haechts treasure rooms

"DELVAUX 180 YEARS OF BELGIAN LUXURY"

@ MoMu Fashion Museum 17/9/09 - 21/2/10

This is Handbag-Delvaux not Nudes and Trams- Delvaux

Liege:

GRAND CURTIUS

Now open the new museum that brings together the collections along the banks of the Meuse

Louvain La Neuve :

HERGE MUSEUM

A new purpose built museum opened in May 2009 to celebrate Herge and his most famous creation Tin-Tin

Tongeren:

“AMBIORIX ROI DES EBURONS”

@ Museum Gallo-Roman 4/10/09 – 31/3/10

London:

“MOCTEZUMA – AZTEC RULER”

@ British Museum 24/9/09 – 24/1/10

The Aztec civilization through the life its last ruler (1502-1520)

“TURNER AND THE MASTERS”

@ Tate Britain 23/9/09-24/1/10

“HENRY VIII DRESSED TO KILL”

@ Tower of London 3/4/09 – 17/1/10

It is 500 years since Henry's accession to the throne, this expo filling three floors of the White Tower has armour and arms of the period including Henry's own armour, this is the first time the collection has been seen together since the reign of Elizabeth I

“MAHARAJA – THE SPLENDOUR OF THE INDIAN ROYAL COURTS”

@ Victoria & Albert Museum 18/10/09 – 17/1/10

“MAHARAJA – THE SPLENDOUR OF THE INDIAN ROYAL COURTS”

@ Victoria & Albert Museum 18/10/09 – 17/1/10

“KINGDOM OF LIFE-SCULPTURESOF WEST AFRICA”

@ British Museum 4/3/10-6/6/10

“FRA ANGELICO TO LEONARDO: ITALIAN RENAISSANCE DRAWING”

@ British Museum 22/4/10-25/7/10

“THE SACRED MADE REAL”

@ National Gallery 21/10/09 - 24/1/10

Spanish Painting and Sculpture 1600-1700

“CHRISTEN KOBKE - DANISH MASTER OF LIGHT”

@ National Gallery 17/3/10 - 13/6/10

“VENICE , CANALETTO AND HIS RIVALS”

@ National Gallery 13/10/10 - 16/1/11

Expect heavy crowds, book in advance

“PAUL NASH:THE ELEMENTS”

@ Dulwich Picture Gallery 10/2/10 - 9/5/10

“VICTORIA AND ALBERT: ART AND LOVE”

@ Queens Gallery 19/3/10 - 31/10/10

“THE REAL VAN GOGH: ARTIST AND HIS LETTERS”

@ Royal Academy 23/1/10 - 18/4/10

Oxford:

7th November the Ashmolean Museum reopens after major re-building

Den Haag:

“CEZANNE-PICASSO-MONDRAIN”
@ Gemeentemuseum 17/10/09 - 24/1/10

Rotterdam:

“EDWARD HOPPER AND HIS TIME”
@ Kunsthal 26/9/09 - 17/1/10 www.kunsthal.nl

Paris:

“TITIAN, TINTORETTO AND VERONESE, RIVALS IN VENICE”
@ Louvre 17/9/09 - 4/1/10

“JAMES ENSOR”
@ Musee d ‘Orsay 20/10/09 - 4/2/10
A major retrospective of one of Belgium’s greatest artists, previously shown in New York

“RENOIR IN THE 20th CENTURY”
@ Grand Palais 23/9/09 - 4/1/10
Works from the painters’ last two decades

“LOUIS COMFORT TIFFANY - COLOURS AND LIGHT”
@ Musee du Luxembourg 16/9/09 - 17/1/10

Lausanne:

“EDWARD HOPPER”
@ Fondation Hermitage 25/6/10 - 24/10/10

Andrew McCubbin

UPCOMING LECTURES

13 January 2010	Ian Beckett <i>“The Waterloo Panorama and the Art of the Panorama and Cyclorama”</i>
3 February 2010	Helen McCabe <i>“Houses and Gardens of Normandy”</i>
3 March 2010	Christopher Bradley <i>“Splendours of North Africa”</i>
14 April 2010	Colin Lattimore <i>“History of the Long Case Clock”</i>
12 May 2010	James Taylor <i>“Ocean Liner Art”</i>