



The Royal Society of British Artists

## **Newsletter Summer 2011**

Welcome to the first RBA e-newsletter which I hope will be a useful tool for members to keep in touch with each other and with what is going on at the RBA. I plan to issue 4 editions a year, but between editions there could well be shorter notices about exhibitions and other news. Please let me have anything you would like to be included in the next e-newsletter.

### **Members' News**

RBA members **George Large, Chris Myers, Julia Sorrell, Peter Weaver and Andy Wood** will be exhibiting at the Bankside and Mall Galleries in July and August as part of the second joint RI/RWS High Watermark exhibition. The Show is at the Bankside Gallery from 7 to 24 July and at the Mall Galleries from 16 to 20 August.

**Colin Orchard** is taking part in a three-man show entitled 'Studies in Light' at the Red Rag Gallery in Stow-on-the-Wold starting on May 15<sup>th</sup>.

**Nicholas Verrall** held a very successful one-man exhibition at the Catto Gallery in Hampstead in April.

**David Sawyer** is having a one-man exhibition at Panter and Hall, 8<sup>th</sup> June to 1<sup>st</sup> July.

**Cheryl Culver** writes: 'I wrote three articles for The Artist Magazine published September, October and November 2010 on DIY framing. I have just written three more on 'Can the Artist still continue to be COMPUTER ILLITERATE in the 21st Century' these are due to be published at the end of this year. The Leisure Painter has an article about my painting coming out in the July issue this year. I have work in a Pastel Society exhibition at Thompsons Gallery Aldeburgh opening in July this year. I am featured artist at the SCA

Gallery Shropshire in October this year. I am demonstrating at Patchings next month in Nottingham.'

**Richard Sorrell** writes: I will be showing at the RWS exhibition at the Albert Hall, Summer Exhibition at Petleys Gallery in Cork Street, RA Summer Exhibition (2pictures) and the Small Pictures Group exhibition at the Russell Gallery.

**Miranda Halsby** was the subject of a four page article in the March edition of 'Dorset Life'. The article written by Stephen Swann and entitled '**Miranda Halsby: The Acid Test**' carried colour reproductions of 9 etchings. In conjunction with the article Miranda held an open studio and exhibition at Newland Gallery which, despite the economic gloom, was a great success. Miranda took part in the 'Early Summer Exhibition' at the Blackheath Gallery, London and is taking part in the gallery's 'Summer Exhibition'.

## Exhibitions

2011 is the centenary of the first exhibition of the Camden Town Group which took place on in the early summer of 1911 at the Carfax Gallery in Bury Street, St James's London. It was an important exhibition for English painting and its influence has continued to be felt by contemporary artists. **The Fine Art Society** in Bond Street is holding a Centenary Exhibition of the Camden Town School 15<sup>th</sup> June to 14<sup>th</sup> July.

## Obituaries

### **Selina Maria di Girolamo RBA BA (Hons) 1969-2011**



It was clear from early childhood that Selina was destined to be a special person with a mission to make the world a better place, when asked what she would like for her birthday she replied, "for the sun to shine and everyone to be happy". She was blessed with beauty, being able to express herself verbally, musically and visually but above all she possessed extraordinary psychic and persuasive powers.

At the age of nine prior to the General Election she wrote a poem predicting the outcome which subsequently Margaret Thatcher read aloud to her staff at Checkers. Aged thirteen she was invited to perform some of her songs at Amnesty International where she received a standing ovation, her lyrics reducing the audience to tears. Soon after she turned down an offer to perform on television which was subject to changing her 'punk' appearance. Her first band 'Fast Bus Through Aston Clinton' which later became 'The Love Pirates' continued to endorse her quest for eradicating suffering and promoting love.

Following the breakup of her first marriage she attended Amersham School of Art and Design where she achieved a BTEC diploma in general art and design. After a short spell at Buckinghamshire College of Higher Education she transferred to Middlesex University where she was awarded a BA Honours in Fine Art. She married Michael Fairclough, fellow student throughout her art studies who proved to be the love of her life. Selina set out to make a career as an artist and writer also lecturing at the prestigious Missenden Abbey Summer School, Aylesbury College, Chiltern University College and later Hastings College. She exhibited in many local and national exhibitions including the RBA. Election to the Buckinghamshire Art Society and the Royal Society of British Artists swiftly followed.

Serving on the Council of the RBA and the Education Committee, she was part of the group instrumental in providing assistance to a number of educational establishments to secure national validation for their courses. She was also elected by representatives of the member societies to chair the FBA education committee. Together with her husband Selina was part of the negotiations that secured substantial sponsorship for the RBA via Scott Goodman Harris and later UBS.

One of the highlights during her short time as an RBA was when Mr and Mrs Thompson, the proprietors of Thompsons Galleries visited the annual exhibition searching for new talent, both separately chose her name without conferring. Another occasion that gave her much pleasure was when Peter Kelly borrowed her sketchbooks to demonstrate good practice and excellent drawing.

In 2004 following Mike's appointment as Headteacher of West Rise Junior School in Eastbourne the family moved to Ninfield near Hastings. Selina threw herself into the artistic community and began using her paintings to reflect the diversity of local beaches, woodlands and downs. Expressive statements of her spirituality combined with the atmosphere of Sussex soon earned her local respect. She was elected to both the South Coast Artists Group and the Council. Selina played a key role in establishing and running the town's Arts Forum and in addition she and her husband Mike, who at the time was a member of the Arts Council of Great Britain, assisted in promoting the proposed scheme for building the Jerwood Gallery in Hastings. [currently being built] Throughout this period her paintings, drawings and Raku fired Goddess sculptures exhibited locally, nationally and internationally became much sort after. Selina also worked with Yorkshire Television, Channel Four and the BBC on several programmes. She has appeared in Stonehenge, The Why Files, In Search of Christmas, Heaven and Earth, Lost Civilisations and Newsnight.

Selina was not only a successful artist but also a truly inspirational woman who devoted much of her energy to empowering women and educating parents on the importance of

long term breastfeeding and attachment parenting. A mother herself at seventeen she understood the prejudices and difficulties facing teenage and single mums and made it her mission to help any expectant mother she came across. The Di Girolamo family take great comfort in knowing that there are so many children who benefitted as a direct result of the contact their parents had with Selina. As well as her love for art she was also a passionate advocate for women's rights and wrote for a host of journals on the subjects of parenting and witchcraft. Selina's poetry and artwork have regularly been published in 'International Women's Diaries'. The current publication commemorating thirty years has eight of her contributions, unsurpassed by any other writer or artist. Her stunning depiction of The Black Madonna was selected as the image to represent the 2011 International Women's Day Centenary.

In her own words:-

"As a mother and artist living in contemporary society I have been slowly awakening to the esoteric realms of women's culture, mythology and history. Archaeology and folklore hint at a female centred communities at the root of the origins of civilisation, art and spirituality."



When Lourdes left Brighton

Selina was laid to rest during a most moving Pagan ceremony at Clayton Woods Natural Burial Ground, overlooked by her beloved Downs and attended by an unprecedented number of people many of whom travelled long distances to be there. She is survived by her beloved husband Michael Fairclough and three much loved and talented sons Johnny 24, Taliesin 14, Indigo 6, her parents Romeo and Megan, her sister Dr Emilia Di Girolamo and family. As a family we are grateful for all the love and support shown in the hundreds of tributes and moving messages sent during her illness and her death.

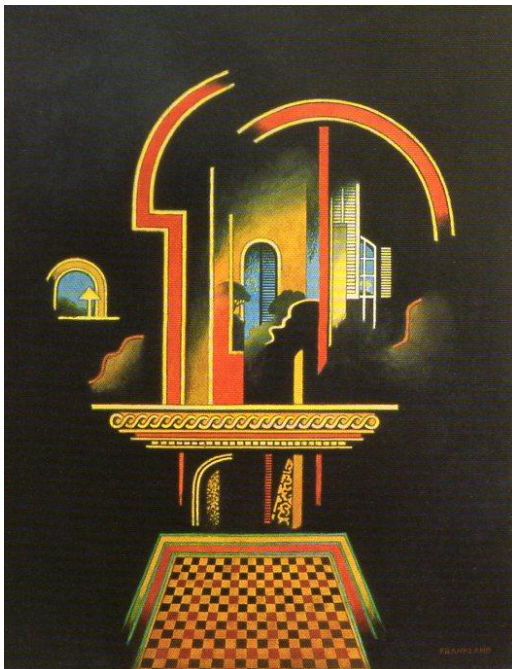
Romeo and Megan di Girolamo

## Trevor Frankland RBA RE PPRWS Hon RI 1931 - 2011

Trevor Frankland was one of the most unusual and interesting people I have had the privilege of meeting. Born in Middlesbrough, and although he dreamed of becoming an artist and studying at the Royal Academy Schools, circumstances required that he trained as an apprentice shipyard draughtsman at Southbank on Tees. In 1950 he met Dorothy Southern who was also an aspiring artist and together they drew and painted on the Yorkshire Moors.

Called up for National service, Trevor joined the RAF and was able to ask for an educational posting which enabled him to study at the Laird School of Art at Birkenhead and in 1954 won a place at the Royal Academy Schools where his tutors included Peter Greenham, Bernard Fleetwood-Walker and the Keeper, Sir Henry Rushbury. During his years at the RA Schools (1954-1958) Trevor won numerous prizes including the David Murray Studentship and the Landseer Scholarship. In 1957 he won the Royal Academy Silver Medal for Drawing and later in the year married Dorothy Southern (now RBA) at Middlesbrough Registry Office.

On leaving the RA Schools, Trevor began teaching at several art colleges. He enjoyed teaching and his pupils have told me of their respect for him, but he also realised that he should never take a full-time post if he wanted to develop his own career as an artist. In the mid-1960's Trevor taught for 2-3 days a week at Hornsey College of Art, where he became friendly with the late Richard Robbins, Hon RBA. During this period Trevor was working on a series of large three-dimensional wood and hardboard reliefs which he painted in bright colours using polyurethane to give a glossy finish. One of these was bought by Rank Xerox for 100 guineas and in 1970 he was given a one-man show at Billingham Art Gallery on Teeside where the local papers took pride in a local boy who had made good in London. Most of these large reliefs were composed as hexagons allowing endless permutations of geometrical division. Middlesbrough Art Gallery bought a relief from the exhibition.



Villa Contarini No 2

Between 1972 and 1983 Trevor held many one-man shows at prestigious venues including the Caluste Gulbenkian Gallery in Newcastle upon Tyne, the Williamson Art Gallery in Birkenhead, Birmingham University and Worcester City Art Gallery often selling pieces to local authorities. Trevor began exploring his ideas as paintings rather than as relief sculptures and the acquisition of a printing press in 1986 marked a move towards printmaking. Trevor's interest in structure and composition was carried over into his watercolours and prints, as he developed his unique style which often consisted of simplified objects and interiors placed against a black background.

In an interview I conducted with Trevor for an article in 2005, he said :  
"I describe my art as the persistence of the past, a combination of inner and outer worlds. I believe that the influence of the past on the present can be seen in every aspect of the world around us, from human thought to the structure of landscape. I am interested in the geometry of 'interior space' governed by memory and imagination, where images appear and disappear as in a crystal ball, but in the process create a curious perpetual present. Finding the appropriate forms so that these elusive images can have their own reality requires a combination of formal structure with descriptive detail'.

In 1995 Trevor was elected Associate of the Royal Watercolour Society becoming President in 2003, his Presidency coinciding with the bicentennial celebrations which included visits from Her Majesty the Queen, HRH The Duke of Edinburgh and HRH The Prince of Wales who is an Honorary Member of the RWS. A dinner was held at the House of Lords and two new books on watercolours were commissioned and published by the Society. Trevor proved to be an effective and inspirational President. In addition Trevor was elected RBA in 1995 and served for many years on the Council where his experience and wise counsel was invaluable. He was also a member of the Royal Society of Painter-Printmakers, London Group, Art Workers Guild, Small Painters Society and Hon Member of the RI.



Trevor Frankland with HRH The Queen and Simon Fenwick at the Bankside Gallery 2004

Trevor had many other interests in addition to his art. He was passionate about gardens and design and very proud of his London garden based on a dry stone, waterless Japanese Zen garden. He and Dorothy were also great travellers with a particular love of Italy, North Africa and the Middle East. Unbeknown to many of us, Trevor was also involved in Freemasonry.

Maybe the crowning achievement of Trevor's life was the appearance in 2009 of Simon Fenwick's biography '**Trevor Frankland. Between Clarity and Mystery**'.

I found Trevor a charming and amusing companion, and extremely generous. Over the years he gave me 5 books about the RWS and the London Group and my abiding memory is a vision of a smiling Trevor coming across the Mall Gallery with a book under his arm, always wrapped in an old plastic carrier bag : 'Hello Julian. I know how much you like art books, so I've brought this along for you'.

Julian Halsby