

Press Release

22 November 2010

PURE GOLD: 50TH ANNIVERSARY EXHIBITION OF THE FEDERATION OF BRITISH ARTISTS

INCLUDES WORKS BY EDGAR DEGAS, WALTER SICKERT, JOHN SINGER
SARGENT AND AUGUSTUS JOHN

To celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Federation of British Artists (FBA), in February 2011 the Mall Galleries is hosting *Pure Gold*, an exhibition to celebrate the rich history of the nine art societies that make up the FBA. Significant works from past members of these societies will be on display alongside a showcase of outstanding works of art by current member artists.

Though the Federation was founded in February 1962, the individual societies that make up the FBA date back to 1807, so the exhibition will consist of notable British artists from the 19th century to present day. *Pure Gold* will chart the progress of each society, highlighting the departure with mainstream arts movements and the Royal Academy that led to the creation of these alternative art societies.

Major public and private collections have loaned these works to the Mall Galleries for the purpose of the exhibition, which includes four works on loan from the Tate's collection: *The Mirror* by William Orpen, *Mrs Frederick Barnard* by John Singer Sargent, *Almond Trees*, *Le Lavandou* by Lucien Pissarro and *St Mark's, Venice* by Walter Sickert.

The 50th anniversary of the FBA coincides with the 40th anniversary of the Mall Galleries on The Mall, where the FBA is based.

The launch of the FBA's digital archive will coincide with the exhibition's opening, and records from the FBA's history, as well as artefacts from artists' studios (such as that of William Orpen) will also be on display.

A celebratory publication will accompany the exhibition. *Ends.*

For more information and images contact:

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Press view 8 February 12pm

Open 9 to 19 February 2011, 10am-5pm daily (Admission free)

MALL GALLERIES

Listings

Pure Gold: 50 years of the FBA
Mall Galleries
The Mall (near Trafalgar Square), London SW1
Tel: 020 7930 6844
www.mallgalleries.org.uk

Editor's notes

The Federation of British Artists consists of nine art societies, all of whom are based at the Mall Galleries. The societies are:

New English Art Club

Founded in 1885 by a group of young London artists who were dissatisfied with the exhibition potential of the very academic Royal Academy. Notable artists members include: John Singer Sargent, Walter Sickert, Sir William Orpen, Paul Nash and Lucien Pissaro.

Pastel Society

Founded in 1898, early members included Edgar Degas, Auguste Rodin, William Rothenstein and George Frederick Watts.

Royal Institute of Oil Painters

Founded in 1882. Artists who have shown work in ROI exhibitions include: Alma Tadema, Walter Sickert, John Macwhirter, Dame Laura Knight, Fantin Latour, Adrien Hill, Ann Redpath and Auguste Rodin.

Royal Institute of Painters in Water Colours

The beginnings of the RI can be traced back to 1807 with the formation of the New Society of Painters in Water Colours. RI exhibitions attracted some of the foremost watercolorists of the time including, J.M.W. Turner, Peter de Wint and John Sell Cotman.

Royal Society of British Artists

Established in 1823 as an alternative to the Royal Academy, its first two exhibitions were held in 1824. Prominent members of the RBA include: James Whistler, Henry John Boddington and Edward Burne-Jones.

Royal Society of Marine Artists

Founded in 1939 after the Earl of Cork and Orrey suggested the formation of a formal society, which became the Royal Society of Marine Artists.

Royal Society of Portrait Painters

Founded in 1891 by artists dissatisfied with the selection policies of the Royal Academy, its first exhibition was held in 1891. Early members include: John Everett Millais, George Frederick Watts, John Singer Sargent and James McNeill Whistler.

Society of Wildlife Artists

Founded in 1964 by a group of artists including Sir Peter Scott who wanted to take advantage of the widespread and growing interest in natural history. The society aim to advance the public appreciation of works of art depicting wildlife, as well as nurture the public interest in natural history.

The **Hesketh Hubbard Art Society** is a group of artists who meet on a weekly basis in the Mall Galleries for an untutored life drawing session.