

AMA REVIEW OF THE MEETING DISCUSSION 4TH FEBRUARY 2014

It was decided to make the February meeting a discussion meeting, looking at ways of materials. Three of the committee gave a short talk about their work to start things off.

Sheila Graham, a successful actress, has been making and selling many years. She showed us her Japanese style tea sets. The teapots, kyus and of a medium size. They had straight round spouts and a similar design on one side. This was to enable the tea to be poured in the manner, using one hand with the thumb holding the lid secure. For bowls, Chawan, do not have handles. If the bowl is too hot to be lifted the tea is considered too hot to drink without damage to the internal. She also showed us a slightly larger shiny brown bowl known as a T. This is an ancient design named after the Chinese Mountain where they were first made. It was discovered when the priests were dissatisfied with the tea they were drinking, made from a mixture of any old tea, and travelled in search of a better brew. They discovered from specially picked leaves, with great flavour and took the tea and the bowls back to Japan. The bowls are treated with reverence and any small fault or imperfection in the glaze is regarded as a mark making the bowl of greater value.



Sheila told us how she makes sure that the spout of the pot is always above the top of the pot, pours well. The holes in the lid are not, as often thought, to let steam out but to allow air in to pour. She is careful when cutting off the top of the spout to make a sharp edge as this avoids dripping.



Katharine Barker's work is influenced by her extensive work as a Textile Conservator. Katharine has worked for the major museums and the National Trust. She commenced by showing us four pieces of fine linen textile couched on to a piece of cloth on a wooden stretcher. Next we saw one of her linen paintings and she explained how it was done. New linen can be folded in to and retains pleats. Katharine took a large piece and folded pleats, she then destroyed and distressed the edge on one side, before hand sewing on to a backing piece which had been stretched on to a hand made frame. The piece was then coated with a PVA solution and painted in the normal way. Katharine has made many beautiful textile pieces, some with cord emerging through the linen, tacked, tie dyed and with varying degrees of paint applied. She uses the different cloths and techniques and always hand sews the pieces. Surgeons' fine curved needles are used around the edges of the pieces.

Katharine has recently decided to take a more commercial approach and has been making paintings of great love - St. Ives, scenes of the houses round the bay and fishing boats ploughing through the water. She has been grateful for the advice of Moira Lamont, who, when Katharine became tired of painting in a little window, suggested she sat in the car when it was raining with her camera and took photographs which would not show all the detail! Katharine has also been doing some life drawing and has just started a new course, where she again wishes to be inspired by her textile work.



Moira Lamont has had a career teaching art and is a well known producer of prints and after etchings. Moira spends a lot of time in France but it is a trip to Inverness that inspired the work she was talking about this time.

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Moira had seen work which used gold leaf and she wished to put embroidery on to her etching. The paper used for etching is very thick, it is damp and the ink is sticky. This made it extremely difficult to apply gold leaf in the normal manner and it was too tough to hand embroider. Moira was inspired by Antony Caro, who wished to use Papier Mache to make a sculpture and she has never been so advanced to go on a course and learn a new technique. Moira went to a course with Sue O'Grady and learnt to do machine embroidery. This was fine except that the needles broke through the thick paper so she had to think again.

Moira went to Intaglio Printmakers in London to try to source a suitable paper which would be thick enough to print on and fine enough to sew. She has now found a fine paper, which she backs with adhesive backing paper which is used for collage in needlework. The paper is dampened for a few minutes between damp blotting paper. She still wished to improve on the gold and tried ink but the colour was not good. Then Intaglio directed her to Cornelius's, where they had some pure gold watercolour, £30 for a tiny amount was extremely expensive but the amount needed for each work is minimal and the result is stunning.

This was a very successful informal meeting with everyone joining in with questions and discussing similar techniques. It was thought to be a good idea as it did not involve members in a long meeting but helped us to know more about members' work and the help we can give each other. We will be arranging another discussion meeting of this kind and one with advice from members on a press release and putting on an exhibition.