

Caterham Art Group



Newsletter

March 2025

Spring is bursting out!

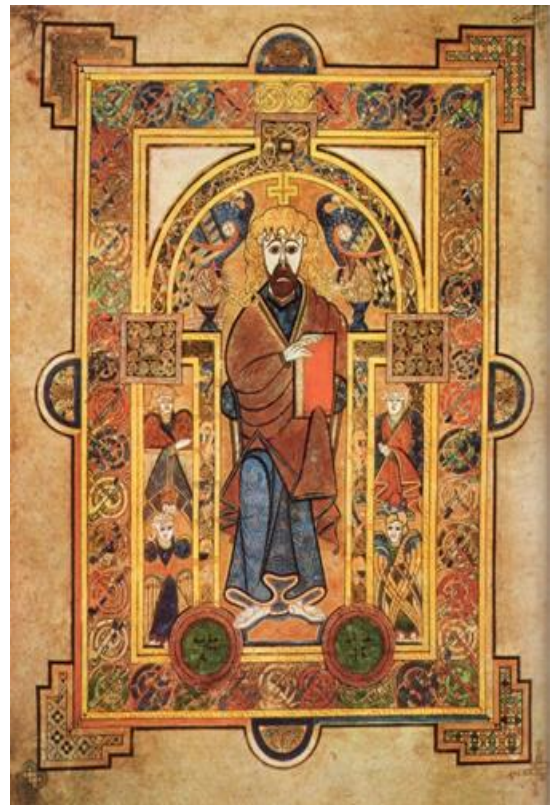
20th March is the equinox marking the first official day of spring. This means plein air painting and more colourful landscapes. Hurray!

It is the most purely Irish thing we have...you can compare much of my work to the intricate illuminations.

-James Joyce on...

The Book of Kells

In this issue we look at this most famous example of Celtic Insular Art.



We will also explore the world of abstract art kicking off with our own Nicole Morrigan. Then we dive into some of the principles of abstract expressionism to better understand it. Read on!

-Suzanne Marie Clinton, Editor



2025 Events

Demonstrations held in United Reformed Church Hall, Caterham, 7:30pm-9:30pm on a Wednesday. Members free/Visitors £5 Homemade cake + coffee/tea £2

Workshops are held in St. Mary the Virgin Church Hall, Caterham, 10am-4pm on a Saturday. Members £40/Guests £45. Coffee/tea provided.

26th MARCH AGM plus MINI DEMO	Karen Bruce: Pyrography
23rd APRIL JOIN-IN DEMO	Ellie Green: Botanical, homemade inks
26th APRIL WORKSHOP	Clare Kent: Acrylic, Telling a Story
28th MAY DEMONSTRATION	Ian Hendersen: Watercolour pet portrait
31st MAY TUTORIAL EN PLEIN AIR	Ginny Singh: Titsey Gardens, Oxted
25th JUNE STILL LIFE EVENING	Caterham Art Group Social
28th JUNE WORKSHOP	Jeremy Ford: Pastel
1st 2nd & 3rd AUGUST CAG SUMMER EXHIBITION	
27th AUGUST DEMONSTRATION	Bill Hall: Charcoal, Shiny still life
24th SEPTEMBER DEMONSTRATION	Joe Dowden: Watercolour – Light, sun
22nd OCTOBER DEMONSTRATION	Ian McManus: Watercolour, Cityscape
25th OCTOBER WORKSHOP	Ian McManus: Watercolour
26 TH NOVEMBER DEMONSTRATION	Rebecca Bush: Acrylic, Fantasy
17th DECEMBER CHRISTMAS PARTY	Caterham Art Group

Plus! Sketching days, visits to galleries, talks and tours, and more.

NOTE! This chart of events above is an updated version due to some rescheduling. You can always see the Events page of our website for the most up-to-date information.

www.caterhamartgroup.org.uk

Did you know a CAG membership makes a nice gift! Email to arrange: secretary@caterhamartgroup.org.uk

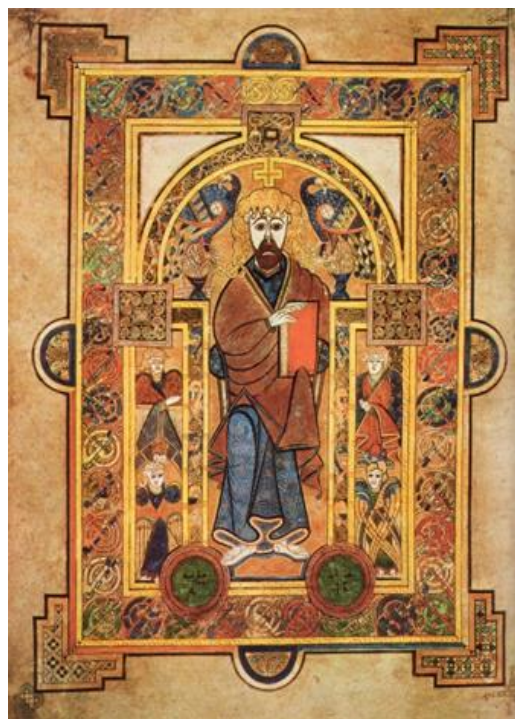
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The Masters: The Book of Kells

The most famous example of Insular Art.

The Book of Kells is an illustrated manuscript of the four Gospels. Many such manuscripts were destroyed by raiders and then by Oliver Cromwell. But the Book survived even the 806AD Viking attack of the Abbey of Iona in Scotland (Martyrs Bay) where 68 monks were killed. Afterwards most of the monks relocated to the then new Abbey of Kells in Ireland. It is therefore held that The Book of Kells was created around 800AD by Columban monks at the Abbey of Iona and finished at the Abbey of Kells in Ireland. The Book is considered Ireland's most precious treasure.



It is an example of Insular Art—a post-Roman style of art found across Britain but predominantly in Ireland and Scotland. It comprises the use of very intricate interlacing designs in metalwork, carving, sculpture and illustration. The Book of Kells displays beautiful lettering, portraits, Celtic-knot motifs and other symbols typical of British Insular Art.



(left) The Chi-Rho page (pronounced "kai-roe") in the book of Matthew is considered one of the most intricate pages in the Book of Kells. Chi and Rho from the Greek alphabet are the first letters of "Christ". Chi is written X and Rho is like a P.

The Book of Kells is made from vellum (fine calfskin), the lettering is iron gall ink, and the illustrations use expensive pigments of red, yellow ochre, green, copper Verdigris, and indigo. Though thought to use lapis lazuli, recent examination shows it does not. And as is customary with Insular Art there is no gold leaf. It is remarkable how well the pigments have retained their vibrancy!

The Book of Kells can be found in Trinity College, Dublin's famous library.



CAG Artist in Profile: Nicole Morrigan

Nicole is one of our Committee members, and she brings us modern art from the perspective of women's politics. Currently doing a college degree in fine art, she was interviewed by your faithful editor...

How would you describe yourself as an artist?

I'm a multi-media artist (painting, digital, video). I don't have a single style because I get bored doing the same thing all the time. But overwhelmingly my work is political, dealing with current issues and events primarily from the feminist POV.

How did you start off as an artist?

I took adult ed classes: life drawing, watercolour and acrylics. My tutor encouraged me to go further and amazingly I got into the foundation course at the Art Academy at London Bridge. I'm now in my third year of a BA in Fine Art at City & Guilds of London Art School.

That's terrific. So, who are your favourite artists?

I love contemporary artists like Nicole Eisenman, Marlene Dumas, and Alice Neel. I have a soft spot for Lucien Freud, Francis Bacon, Gerhard Richter, Georgia O'Keefe, Otto Dix etc.



'Don't Talk to Me in the Morning', Charcoal on paper.

You have a good eye for capturing emotion in the abstract. Can you tell us how this arose? What moves you to paint?

Some of my work starts off as figurative and then becomes more abstract as I go. Other pieces start from a point of pure emotion. It is like therapy: energetic brushstrokes and colours are a form of visual emotional catharsis.

Have you any advice for artists who wish to paint in the abstract, in expressionism, or figurative abstract art?

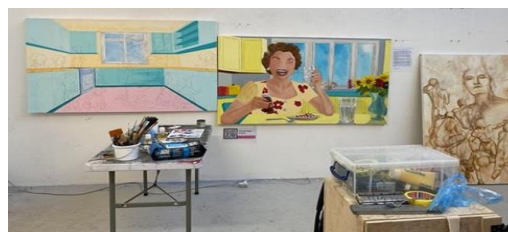
Have a go! Do not be scared and have fun with it. Splash some paint around. Do it blindfolded or use your non-dominant hand—anything to get out of your ingrained habits. And don't worry if it looks a bit random. It is only paper and paint. Then put it away for at least a week. When you see it again, you may be surprised to find that at least parts of it are pretty good.



'Balagan', Acrylic on paper

How is your degree in fine art going?

It's the final year and working towards the graduation show in June, so it's pretty manic. I am in the London studio most days now. I've been working on a difficult subject in a style of painting I have not used before (much more detailed) so I have set myself a challenge! It is hard work, but it is also a lot of fun... apart from the essays.



Nicole's studio. All acrylic ground/oil, canvas



Abstract Expressionism: Feel free

**Expressionism is about spontaneity over accuracy.
It is about freedom and surprise.**

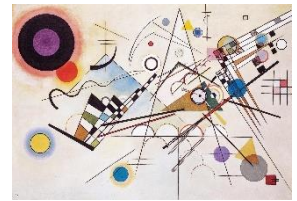
All art is a form of expressionism. There is no art that does not hold, to some degree, the emotion of the artist in it. Likewise, there is no abstract art completely free from some form of representation.

From the Lake Georgia O'Keefe (right)



When Freud hit the scene and the modernist movement was born, it turned cultural perspectives inward. Then came the dawn of photography making realism obsolete, encouraging a whole new type of art. The spiritualist movement of the turn of the century fomented the mystical in this new art. And geometric abstraction sprang from this, as Bauhaus artists sought to link this new form of art with universal truths.

Composition VIII Vasily Kandinsky (right)



Many abstract artists become famous due to their work breaking new ground. Many have focussed on one aspect, such as the pure emotion from abstraction of pure colour. Some from motion and linework. It opened a world of endless possibilities.

(left) *Yellow Over Purple*, Mark Rothko



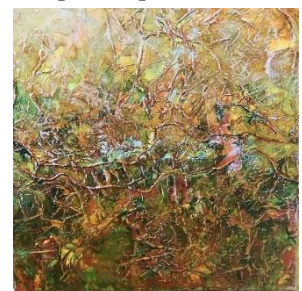
So, what determines art from craft? Nicholas Wilton and other successful expressionist artist/teachers use the same principles of design, value, colour, and texture known to any professional artist to teach artists how to make sophisticated abstract art. The choice of colour, positioning and scale of shapes, the choice of adding texture and where, can make a painting much more interesting. It is the difference between the therapeutic and the sublime. Like learning a language: the more you know these principles of art, the better you can express yourself.

Senecio Paul Klee (right)



What makes it different from traditional approaches to art is the freedom from imitation. The artist begins by rejecting the realism principle: that art is better the more it resembles a photograph. Initially the abstract artist may make marks, splash paint, play with colour—whatever comes to mind—sometimes following a stream of consciousness. It is afterwards that with more objective examination the artist sees something in the piece that develops into a concept and into a finished painting that pleases the artist. This is the 'surprise'. Suddenly the painting takes over and the artist then enhances this 'conversation' with the canvas by applying colour theory and design theory, value etc seeking the end-result: a powerful expression.

Good Morning Sunshine Liz Hauck, oil/cold wax (right)



Recent Events: Demo with Roger Dellar

Another full house! Not surprising as Roger Dellar is a highly acclaimed artist. Yvonne Allen reports on the demo...

Roger's palette: ultramarine blue, cadmium red, cadmium yellow, burnt sienna, and two Winsor&Newton whites in alkyd for faster drying. He laid out the primary colours in a triangle for ease of mixing, with a 'mixing white' at the bottom of the palette and at the top a 'clean white' for highlights. Roger painted on hardboard prepped with three coats of grey gesso. He prefers boards as they can be cut down once painted. (Stretched canvas cannot.) He uses his own mix of oil medium: 1/3 Zest It, 1/3 Damar Varnish, and 1/3 linseed oil. To keep brushes clean he wipes with a cloth while painting and uses turpentine when needed. Roger has his own bespoke brushes with Rosemary&Co!



A reference photo (left) is where he started but he makes changes when he paints to create his own narrative.

Roger first sketched the figure and lines of perspective (bar, shelves, stool) with diluted burnt sienna. Then he added the darks with a mix of ultramarine blue and burnt sienna, avoiding areas of light,

and defining key shapes around the figure. Roger then used warm tones and cool mauves for flesh tones.

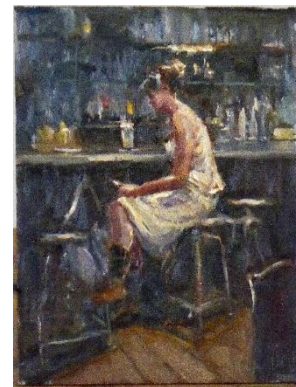
Mauve shades defined the drapes of the dress and bag and was used in the blur of items on the shelves. He then added various items on the bar, stools, and

Painted the hair.

Lastly, he highlighted the dress, the tops of the bar, stools and other items. For extra interest he added more reflected light.



(left) The finished painting after a few 'dots and dashes'—as Roger put it—and retouching varnish.



Roger works in a push/pull manner as things gradually fall into place.

He carves his signature so as not to distract from the painting.



Thank you, Roger!

Don't Miss!
**Mini-demonstration:
Pyrography with
Karen Bruce**

Weds 26th March

Note, the AGM is 7:30pm.

This demo is at 8:15pm.

United Reformed Church, Caterham

Karen is a graphite, coloured pencil and pastel artist who also does

absolutely amazing work in pyrography. What is Pyrography you may ask? It is the free-handed art of decorating wood with burn marks, also known as *Pokerwork*. We are looking forward to learning more about it.

See more of Karen's artwork on her Facebook page: **[Karen Bruce Art](#)**



United Reformed Church, Caterham
Open Morning 5th April 10am-12pm

As part of their 150th Anniversary celebrations the church is holding an exhibition of clubs and activities that take place in their hall.

Caterham Art Group will be there to promote CAG with plenty of information to hand out. And we can answer any queries you may have. Please join us. Do bring any friends who are interested in our art group.

Words of Wisdom

From CAG President, John Ward

Is it wrong to copy another's style? Well, where would Constable and Gainsborough be without Jacob van Ruisdael? Constable's *Landscape with Windmills Near Haarlem* is identical to Ruisdael's but for a bit more red. Lucien Freud's *After Constable's Elm* was an etching of Constable's *'Study of an Elm'*...which painting in turn was taken from Jacob van Ruisdael's *Old Elm Tree*. You decide.



Sharing Gallery



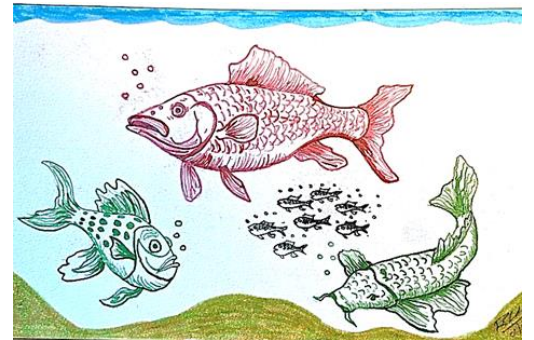
Emma (left)
By Christopher Stack
Watercolour on paper



Cornwall (right)
By Christopher Stack
Oil



Street in Old Delhi (left)
By Bob Cherry
Pen and watercolour



Fish (right)
By Bob Cherry
Coloured ink,
sharpened iced
lolly stick



(left)
by Joseph Trickey
Chalk pastel

Commissioned (right)
By Linda Lambert
Pastel



Share Your Creations! Please send photos of your art with title/medium to gallery@caterhamartgroup.org.uk



Notice Board

- ✦ **CAG's online eShop is now live.** All members can sell their art in the eShop. Anyone wishing to participate at this time, please email secretary@caterhamartgroup.org.uk. At the AGM we will explain in a brief step-by-step with a handout.
- ✦ **CAG members enjoy discounts!** The CAG sponsors list is growing rapidly. Our sponsors likewise appreciate patronage from CAG members. Please check out our sponsors list further below.
- ✦ **The EVENTS schedule has been updated.** Please review and always check the website for the most up-to-date information.

Art About Town

THE COURTALD, London W2

Goya to Impressionism

Masterpieces from the Oskar Reinhardt Collection

Runs from 14th Feb 2025 to 26th May 2025

Toulouse Lautrec, Manet, Renoir, Van Gogh, Cézanne, Goya and more!



VICTORIA & ALBERT MUSEUM, London

The Great Mughals: Art, Architecture and Opulence

Closes 5th May 2025

Celebrates the Golden Age of the Mughal Court 1560-1660.



THE ROYAL ACADEMY, London

Brasil! Brasil! The Birth of Modernism

Closes 21st April 2025

Captures the new modern art that emerged in early 20th c Brazil.



LIGHTBOX GALLERY, Woking

Spring Artist Showcase: Selling Exhibition

7th March-4th May 2025

Featuring works by local artists and makers.



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Know Your Committee

John Ward – President

John has been involved in a leadership role with CAG for many years. In March 2018 John was voted President of CAG.

Terry Servant – Chairman

Terry is the AGM and Committee Lead.

Amita Patel – Secretary and Treasurer

Amita manages communications, events, AGM, and funds.

Sarah Saysell – Membership Secretary

Sarah handles membership including fee collection and support.

Nicole Morrigan and Suzanne Clinton – Publicity Team

Publicity covers social media, website activities, and marketing. Suzanne is also editor of the CAG newsletter.

Agnes Maxwell – Hall Bookings

Agnes handles bookings for meetings, workshops, and exhibitions

Wendy Ward, Ginny Singh, Jacque Wadsworth – Programme Team

The Programme Team plans, books, and manages artists for demos and workshops.

For any enquiries please contact Amita on 07818 815961 or email her at: secretary@caterhamartgroup.org.uk

