

Art Appreciation Meeting - February 2017

Gustave Caillebotte (1848 - 1894). '**The Floor Planers**' (1875) in Musee D'Orsee, Paris, France. Oil on canvas. Caillebotte, a lesser known Impressionist, was a very rich man and a very good painter. He collected Impressionist paintings and used his wealth to support Impressionist painters as did Paul Durand-Ruel. He sponsored the 'Big 7' exhibition (Renoir, Degas, Monet, Manet, Sisley, Morisot, Pissaro), but omitted his own paintings which were of the same quality. There is movement and power in the painting, 'The Floor Planers', which depicts three men preparing a ballet school floor. This painting is one of the first representations of the urban proletariat genre. **Links:** [gustave caillebotte the planers > les raboteurs de parquet - Wikipedia.](#)

James Cox (1723 - 1800). The '**Peacock Clock**', in The Hermitage, St Petersburg, Russia. James Cox was a London goldsmith, jeweller and entrepreneur. The Peacock Clock is a large automaton featuring three life-sized mechanical birds. The cockerel crows, the owl turns its head and blinks and the peacock extends its tail. It was manufactured by the English entrepreneur James Cox in the 2nd half of the 18th century and was commissioned by Prince Grigory Potemkin as a gift for Catherine the Great as a token of his love. The clock cost 11,000 roubles in the late C18 and is made of gilded silver, jewels and pearls. We were shown two short films on the Peacock clock (see links below). **Links:** [james cox peacock clock > go to bottom of page and click on > peacock clock hermitage video > Catherine the Great's amazing peacock clock, uploaded 18 February 2012 by Museum Secrets by Kensington Communications \(in English\) and james cox peacock clock > go to bottom of page and click on > peacock clock hermitage video > Peacock clock horloge du paon Ermitage museum St Petersburg Tchasi Pavlin \(in Russian but exquisite photography\).](#)

Carl Frithjof Smith (1859 - 1917). '**After the First Communion**' (1892) oil on canvas genre painting, in the Museo Civico Revoltella, Trieste, Italy. Size: 136.5 x 183cm. Frithjof was born in Norway and died in Weimar, Germany. He studied art in Munich. There is a lot of light in the painting, exaggerated by the girls' clothing. There are three girls as the main subjects of the painting: the number has religious symbolism. The girls are demure, devout and anxious. The front girl draws you in to the painting, looking both bold and wistful at the same time. There is a lot of detail in the painting, such as in the fabrics, the baskets and the floral head wreaths. The painting is a 'sharp', well defined picture. **Links:** [after the first communion carl frithjof smith](#)

Francisco Goya (1746 - 1828): '**The 2nd of May 1808**' (also known as '**The Charge of the Mamelukes**') (painted 1814) and '**The 3rd of May 1808, in Madrid**'. Oil on canvas. Can be seen in Museo del Prado, Madrid, Spain. Both these paintings depict scenes during the Peninsula Wars and the group were given details of and the historical

background to the Peninsula Wars that were pertinent to the two paintings. The painting '2nd of May' has a lot of detail, and portrays violent actions. '3rd of May' contrasts the dark colours of the executioner soldiers with the light clothing of the victims. The perspectives in the latter painting are not accurate and there are discrepancies about the painting eg how close the executioner soldiers are to their victims. The paintings are in Impressionist style that would later influence French painters. Goya executed the painting some years after the events shown, but made sketches during the Peninsula War. **Links:** Goya painting 2nd of May 1808 (also known as 'The Charge of the Mamelukes) and Goya painting The 3rd of May 1808.

Marianne Stokes nee Preindlsbesrger (1855 - 1927). '**Madonna and Child**' (1905) painted in tempura, in Wolverhampton Art Gallery, UK. Born in Graz, Austria in 1855 Marianne Stokes studied art in Munich and Paris. She moved to Brittany in 1883 and it was there that she met the English artist and writer Adrian Stokes, whom she married in 1884. Their shared aim was to study 'en plein air' realism at first hand. Their marriage marked the start of a renowned artistic and personal collaboration, which was to last for more than 40 years. They travelled extensively throughout Europe. On one of those travels they visited Croatia and enchanted by the beauty of the Dalmatian coast, particularly Dubrovnik, they produced many paintings there. In 1886, the couple moved to Cornwall, where they became leading figures in the St Ives artists colony and the Newlyn School. Adrian's work had a groundbreaking influence on the early years of the St Ives colony in Cornwall and enthusiasts for his work included the great actor-manager Henry Irving and D.H.Lawrence. In the 1890s, Marianne changed her style completely and began painting in a Mediaevalist style, influenced by the Pre-Raphaelites, often using tempera. Such works include 'Madonna and Child', which was the 2005 UK First Class Christmas stamp. In 1899, Marianne and Adrian Stokes moved away from Cornwall, basing themselves around London and travelling widely in continental Europe. Marianne died in London in 1927, aged 72. Johann Strauss, Sohn, dedicated his 'Licht und Schatten Polka', (Light and Shade Polka), to her. We also looked at '**The Parting**' (1884), a very poignant painting and '**Polishing Pans**'. **A book:** 'Utmost Fidelity - The Paintings of Adrian and Marianne Stokes' by Magdalen Evans, has been published. This is the first book-length study of a major husband-and-wife painting team prominent in the Cornish art scene from the late 1800s to the early twentieth century. Marianne Stokes was considered one of the leading women artists in Britain of her time, along with her friend Elizabeth Forbes whose career has many parallels. Marianne is notable as a woman artist whose work did not suffer from marriage and who did not play a secondary role to her husband's painting career. Both artists' work is widely represented in public collections throughout the world. **Links:** wolverhampton art gallery marianne stokes or marianne stokes madonna and child (the image with the thorns)

<https://archive.org/details/hungary00stok> gets you the online book page by page of the Stokes' journey through Austria and Hungary plus illustrations.

Adriaen van de Velde (1636 - 1672). '**The Beach at Scheveningen**' (1658), oil on canvas. Seen at the Dulwich Picture Gallery, London, UK, but on loan from the Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister in Kassel, Germany. Van der Velde was one of the finest landscape artists of the Dutch Golden Age, with a mastery of lighting effects and human figures. He was also famous for his beachscapes. The painting shows a broad expanse of beach and a lot of light. There are various focusses in the painting: 1 - a group of well to do people. 2 - Children playing. 3 - A rider on horseback. 4 - A church spire. 5 - Foreground fishermen preparing their baskets. 6 - A lone figure, pensive. Comments made by the group about the painting were that the sky has a touch of Constable and that the painting may have been a forerunner of and influenced the Haagse School of art of the c19. We also looked at '**The Hut**'. Adriaen van der Velde was renowned for his preparatory drawings and sketches. We noted the detail of the shepherdess and also a red chalk drawing of the shepherdess in a similar pose. The foreground animals showed beautiful details and we also viewed red chalk drawings of this subject. Adriaen van der Velde always made meticulous preparation for his paintings. **Links:** van der velde beach at scheveningen

Comment was also made about the Dulwich Picture Gallery. It was designed by Sir John Soane in 1817 and was the first public Art Gallery in England. A special feature of the gallery is its innovative lighting, which helps all the paintings to be seen to the best effect. **Links:** dulwich picture gallery > about

Herman, Paul and Jean de Limbourg (all died in 1416) '**Les tres Riches Heures du Jean, Duc de Berry**' (The Very Rich Book of Hours of Jean, Duke de Berry), ink on vellum, painted 1413 - 1416 for the Duc de Berry. The Book can be seen in the Musée Condée, Chantilly, France. These c15 illuminated manuscripts, showed daily contemporary scenes and Bible stories and were intended for personal devotions. January shows the life of the Duc de Berry, and gives an impression of vibrancy, colour, detail, and the very impressive lifestyle of the Duc. February shows the life of the peasants, chopping wood; a peasant and donkey going to market; others warming themselves by the fire, and a rather cheeky peasant exposing himself. September shows the grape harvest, with a detailed castle. Each painting has a sign of the zodiac, and there is painstaking detail in each picture. All 3 brothers, Jean, Herman and Paul, died in 1416, aged under 30, probably of the plague. All were skilled miniature painters painting complex and artistic works. All the brothers born in Nijmegen, Holland. **Links:** duc de berry book of hours.