

Our Art website: <http://www.kalitheafreeuk.com>
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SPRING EQUINOX - Edition #5

20th March 2022



“Through primrose tufts, in that green bower,
The periwinkle trailed its wreaths;
And 'tis my faith that every flower
Enjoys the air it breathes.”

W. Wordsworth
'Lines written in Early Spring'

With some welcome daffodils nodding their heads and tiny lambs in the lanes and fields of the Forest, it really does feel like the long, rather boring winter is at an end. And so we welcome you to this our Spring Equinox edition of our newsletter.

As we mentioned in earlier editions, this quarter we include the first of a series of journals about our travels in mainland Europe: “**ART AND ABOUT**”, where we combine our love of the countries surrounding the Mediterranean Sea, their culture, climate and above all, the many art treasures they hold.

It's early days yet in our studio, where Stuart has braved the cold and wet to begin a series of new-style portraits, by using 'image placement' - i.e. including a backdrop or background for the subject, in keeping with the mood of the work.

Apart from contributing this issue's “Art and About” article, Carmen has been compiling a new selection of greetings cards, this time with the accent upon Spring - which are well suited to Spring holidays and festivals.

We now have the dates for this Year's **FarOpen Art Trail Exhibition**, which will take place at our studio here in Brockhollands - and all over the Forest of Dean - from Saturday 2nd July to Sun 10th July 2022 inclusive. More details in the June issue.

“ART AND ABOUT”

We hope you'll enjoy our new, occasional series Art and About, featuring various artists whose work we've encountered during our travels: intentionally,

accidentally ...or even reluctantly!

Pursued by Picasso



Pablo Picasso

Prior to the pandemic, we loved a holiday that combined a warm climate with an arty connection, so where better than the south of France? Over the past two centuries, so many renowned artists have been drawn to the area like a magnet and we hoped that, by following in their footsteps, we too would experience at first hand how some, like Monet, were

captivated by the scintillating light on the sea along the Cote D'Azur, while others like Van Gogh were inspired by the bright, intense colours of the countryside around Arles.

And so it was that back in 2015, having planned our first pilgrimage to the region, we flew out to Nice, followed by a bus ride to Antibes, where we stayed briefly, before setting off on a roller coaster road trip that would take us way up into the Maritime Alps, then down again, via Avignon, to Aix, Cezanne's home town, then on to Arles, where Van Gogh painted his wilted sunflowers and the 'Starry Night Café'. From there we returned to Aix for one night, before making our way back, via the coast road, to Antibes, where we did nothing but laze on the beach for a couple of days, before flying home.

The following summer we flew out to Nice again but because Stuart had recently undergone major surgery, our itinerary was very different: no roller coaster road trip this time; just a 10 day chill-out stay in Juan Les Pins. However, after only a couple of days on the beach we got itchy feet and decided to stroll over to the Musee Picasso in Antibes, which we had failed to visit the previous year, even though our hotel had been close by.

Yet frankly, as Cubism had never appealed to either of us, this museum hadn't been very high up on our 'must see' list. Nevertheless, we

each aimed to keep an open mind....



Musee Picasso in Antibes

The museum is housed within the Chateau Grimaldi: a very imposing fortress-like building which dominates the Vieux Port. Once inside, we drifted off in different directions and hadn't been there long, when a particular painting caught my eye, for I was surprised by the texture of the brushstrokes: they'd been executed in a style such as I'd never before associated with Picasso. As I inched nearer and nearer to take a closer look, I had become so engrossed that I nearly jumped out of my skin, when one of the attendants upbraided me for crossing over the demarcation line which, as it wasn't a rope barrier but merely a strip of tape stuck to the floor, I'd failed to notice before.

No sooner had the hushed ambiance of the place re-established itself and the muted murmurings of the art aficionados, as they filed slowly by the rows of paintings, recommenced, when a sudden raucous laugh - halfway between a harrumph and a low, guttural guffaw - resonated around the gallery. Still smarting from my admonishment by the attendant and consequently, still feeling somewhat guilty

about my albeit venial transgression, I reeled round to see a man standing in the centre of the room and that, as I followed his gaze, the object of his hilarity was none other than my own dear husband who, instead of making any effort to engage with the paintings or even to pay them cursory lip service, had positioned himself resolutely by one of the gallery's few small, high windows, where he stood, unashamedly gazing out at the sea and the sky beyond. Not surprisingly, we didn't linger much longer after that, except to look at the ceramic plates, the designs on which I thought were charming and joyful and which Picasso had made whilst he used the Chateau as his studio in 1946. Indeed, he was responsible for reviving the formerly burgeoning pottery centre in nearby Vallauris, which had fallen into decline.

Fast forward to 2018, when once again we were holidaying in the region, revisiting some of the places we'd liked most, during our first visit; only this time we let the train take the strain.



Van Gogh Fondation, Arles

While staying in Arles, we revisited the Van Gogh Fondation, yet now it was my turn to harrumph with hilarity at the dismayed look on Stuart's face when, on

approaching the gallery, he saw a banner proclaiming that a major temporary Picasso exhibition was now showing there!



Cezanne's Studio, Aix

From Arles we went on to Aix where, having revisited Cezanne's studio, we headed off to the Musee Granet, as it reputedly housed a significant collection of his works.



Musee Granet, Arles

Now, this is where things got really strange, as once again we discovered that this gallery was currently staging a major temporary exhibition and the artist was...yes, you've guessed it! By now it really did seem that wherever we went and whatever we did, we were, most definitely, being pursued by Picasso!



The pursued.

New Cards

Because Carmen's first series of handmade greetings cards were so popular, she has chosen another group of pictures to match the finer weather. As before, the cards are not specific to any particular event or occasion but, being plain inside, can be used for any occasion: 'thank you', 'birthday', 'get well', 'invitation' etc. We feel that one's own wording is far more personal.

So here they are. They all appear on our art website, where you can order just one or two, or a selection.



Bluebell Woods #2
(photo - Carmen Rooksby)



Spring at Mayfield House #1
(oils - Carmen Rooksby)



Bluebell Woods #1
(photo - Carmen Rooksby)



May in the Forest of Dean
(photo - Carmen Rooksby)



Spring at Mayfield House #2
(oils - Carmen Rooksby)



Spring in Montpellier,
Cheltenham (watercolour -
Carmen Rooksby)

Visit our Art Website at:

<http://www.kalitheafreeuk.com>

for all cards and all our art.

Portraits: The next step

Don't you find that nearly always, a photo of someone which you agree would make very nice portrait is spoilt by some aspect of the background you'd rather not be reminded of?

I hear things like...

"A bus came past just as I pressed the shutter..."

or

"It's a lovely picture of her but there's that lamp post in the background..."

or even

"That's a nice one of me on the beach but there's that bloke behind me changing his trousers..."

Yes, well, we've all been there! And even if there is no offending backdrop, it would sometimes be nice to place the image of your subject in an interesting or romantic setting, to give the portrait a desirable atmosphere.

But seldom do people's faces and their backgrounds tie up.

To illustrate what I mean, I used an existing picture of Carmen where she looks pensively out of a window in subdued lighting and tried to give it a more creative and mysterious look.

The great advantage of art is that you can remove things you don't like and put in the things you do. Then, provided the subject's and the background's lighting are consistent, you're in business.



'Eagle flew out of the night' - gouache by Stuart Rooksby

You can see this and our other new works at our summer exhibition and on our website:

<http://www.kalitheafreeuk.com>

Our very best wishes to all of you, 'till next time.
