

THE DISCERNING eye

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IN THIS EDITION //
DISCERNING EYE AT C24 GALLERY, NEW YORK / ING DISCERNING
EYE EXHIBITION 2019 / LORNA MAY WADSWORTH IN LOCKDOWN



David C. Terry



Rainbowface Figure 1 by Petra Börner



Lorna May Wadsworth

The first draft of this newsletter was put together back in April, when things were moving so quickly with Covid-19, it was impossible to predict and report on exactly how we would be able to deliver a 2020 ING Discerning Eye exhibition.

Since then and throughout the crisis, the DE board of directors have been unanimous in the opinion that, this year more than ever, it was the DE's duty to artists to ensure that an exhibition of some kind would go ahead.

With bans on social gatherings being enforced as part of an ever lengthening lockdown, our ambitions of being able to mount a physical exhibition come November were further challenged with every passing week. Predicted gallery opening dates were pushed further into the future and live-event after live-event cancelled. Even if we could get access to the Mall Galleries, how could we possibly organise the collection and selection of so many works from around the country? Plus would anybody have the confidence to come to Private Views and a physical exhibition in the centre of London, when

most businesses were predicting that working from home would continue at least until the beginning of 2021?

Many exhibitions decided to cancel or postpone, others went for the virtual/online option. While the virtual approach means not seeing works 'in the flesh', it still offers artists a shop window, which in our case, is under the banner of a recognised and respected exhibition, with an established list of buyers. However, being in an exhibition is not purely about sales, it is also about the value of being selected and the possibility of winning a prize, which can enrich any CV/biography and help build reputations and careers.

For these reasons, and after close consultation with the Mall Galleries and our sponsor ING, as you will by now have seen on social media, we decided that the only feasible and safe way forward for the 2020 exhibition was for it to be a fully virtual event. As a result, for this year only, all submissions and the final exhibition will be virtual/online. The format of the exhibition will otherwise remain the same with six selectors, a number

of prizes, and all works being available for sale. Further information and entry details can be found at:

<https://www.parkerharris.co.uk> and
[https://thediscerningeye.artopps.co.uk/
online-entry](https://thediscerningeye.artopps.co.uk/online-entry).

It already seems like a long time ago, but some of you will remember that pre-lockdown, a group of artists, who had exhibited in the 2019 DE Exhibition, were invited to show in the C24 Gallery, New York. Inside this edition is a report by art critic Anthony J Lester, who attended the Private View with Elizabeth R Meek, one of the DE artists involved.

Finally, in the midst of lockdown we asked artist, and winner of the 2018 DE Founder's Prize, Lorna May Wadsworth, about the impact lockdown was having on her work; inside this newsletter, she tells us how she responded.

We look forward to mounting our first fully virtual exhibition later in the year and to receiving your submissions. In the meantime, stay safe.

Tony Humphreys CEO - September 2020

DISCERNING EYE AT C24 GALLERY, NEW YORK

**Having been an
ING Discerning Eye
selector in 2002,
art critic Anthony
J. Lester reports on
his visit to the C24
Gallery in New York.**

Start spreading the news, I'm leaving today, I want to be part of it: New York, New York. These lyrics, from the 1977 film *New York, New York*, which were later made iconic by Frank Sinatra, started reverberating into my head as our Virgin flight landed at JFK Airport on 28 January 2020. My wife, Elizabeth Meek, and I were on a mission!

Elizabeth was one of 23 artists whose work had been selected by David C. Terry, Director and Curator of the C24 Gallery, New York, for a special display entitled *The Seventh View*. All the artists had been participants in *The Discerning Eye Annual Exhibition* held at the Mall Galleries, London in November 2019 and this exciting event was the first time *Discerning Eye* and a leading New York gallery had collaborated.

The gallery is situated in the Chelsea neighbourhood of Manhattan and with over 15 galleries, including the Lisson

Gallery, Metro Pictures and the global mega-dealership Gagosian, the street has become a significant art hub. C24 had kindly invited us to the VIP exhibition lunch and we were enthusiastically welcomed by the gallery's manager, Deborah Oster Pannell. Established in 2011 by Turkish internet mogul, Emre Kurttepe, his wife Maide and attorney Mel Dogan, C24 moved to its impressive, modernistic space at 560 West 24th Street in 2015. The entry level has an open floor plan with large glass windows, while the lower floor features an impressive atrium rising over 6 metres. It was in this lower space that the *Discerning Eye* pictures were admirably displayed and while surveying the eye-catching works we were introduced to Richard Powell and Daniel Halpin from the British Consulate-General. They viewed each picture with tremendous attentiveness and walked around making notes. They informed us that the Consulate

As is the custom, many of the street's galleries hold PV on the same night and guests stroll from one to another. It's all very convivial.



Deborah Oster Pannell, Elizabeth R. Meek and Anthony J Lester

was to host an event at the gallery for around 200 of New York's premier business people while the show was on. I thought, wow, what incredible exposure for the exhibiting artists.

That evening we attended the private view which brought a wonderful, eclectic mix of people together. As is the custom, many of the street's galleries hold PV on the same night and guests stroll from one to another. It's all very convivial. We returned to the UK uplifted and full of admiration for *The Discerning Eye*, exhibition organisers, the Parker Harris Partnership and C24 for their enterprise – such projects need to be applauded.



Studies of Winston by Elizabeth R. Meek



That is why, particularly in this difficult period, organisations such as The Discerning Eye are profoundly essential.

The exhibition was due to continue until the end of April but a devastating, invisible, enemy suddenly appeared around the world. Covid-19 hit New York with a vengeance which, of course, resulted in the gallery's lock-down on 16 March. As I will soon be celebrating my 75th birthday and I purchased my first painting – an atmospheric watercolour by the Scottish artist, William McTaggart (1835-1910) – when I was just eleven, I think I can claim that I have been involved with the art world for 64 years. During that period I have witnessed dramatic changes in art fashion and recessions that have resulted in ups and downs of the art market. However, like all of us, I have never experienced anything as devastating as the effects of COVID-19.

Whatever is thrown at them, artists will always create – as the American painter, Albert Pinkham Ryder (1847-1917) wrote: “The artist need but a roof, a crust of bread, and his easel, and all the rest God gives him in abundance. He must live to paint and not paint to live.” While that is a rather simplistic and romantic appraisal there is something in the DNA of creative people

that they have to do what they do. That is why, particularly during this difficult period, organisations such as The Discerning Eye are profoundly essential. I am also heartened by the resourcefulness of many artists particularly Sussex-based painter, Matthew Burrows. He is the brains behind the Artists Support Pledge, a simple concept whereby artists post images on Instagram of their work to sell for no more than £200 each, then, when they have sold work to the value of £1,000, they pledge to buy another artist's work for £200. Within a few weeks over £20 million had been generated. I know it has become a cliché, but we will get through this.

With this in mind, I give you two thought provoking statements. The first is from Grayson Perry, sometimes known as ‘Claire’: “I believe that art can get us through this crisis. It can help us explore our creativity, inspire and console us and tell us some truths about who we really are.” The second is from the watercolourist, Leslie Worth (1923-2009): “Art speaks to a need, a dimension in our lives – essentially mysterious – which cannot be satisfied by buying new curtains or changing the car.”

ING DISCERNING EYE EXHIBITION 2019

As the 2020 Exhibition enters into the virtual world brought about by the strictures of COVID-19, and we prepare for a new experience, a reminder of last year's show at the Mall Galleries. And don't forget that you can see all of the 2019 works on our website in the 2019 Exhibition Archive: www.discerningeye.org

The 2019 ING Discerning Eye Exhibition saw stronger sales overall than for some years.

The selectors for the 2019 Exhibition were Artists Gill Button and Charlotte Hodes, Collectors Kwame Kwei-Armah and Sir Tim Rice and Critics Louis Wise and John Penrose (our outgoing Chairman).

John passed on the baton to new Chair Sarah Hall with a lovely mix of works from the open submission and from invited artists whose works he had chosen over the previous 12 years for his annual Chairman's Prize (many of whom had been open submission artists themselves). His selection attracted the most buyers, as he sold 36% of his works, 14 from his invited artists, 10 from the open works. Two of his selected works also bagged two of last year's prizes: Thomas Lamb's Evening Light in the snow, winner of the Discerning Eye Founder's Prize and David Brayne's Ebb Tide, which won the Wright Purchase Prize.



Evening light in the snow by Thomas Lamb

Freelance writer and editor specialising in the arts, style and wider features, Louis Wise is the former Associate Culture Editor for The Sunday Times. Works from 30 artists filled his section, with 44 works from his invited artists and 21 chosen from the open submissions. Just over 10% of total sales came from Louis's selection.



The two Collectors' sections were placed on opposite walls in the Main Gallery, with over 100 artists hanging works. Ninety six per cent of Kwame's exhibitors came from the open submission and 83% from Sir Tim's open choices, giving support to the Discerning Eye's ethos of giving opportunities to all artists (and perhaps those lesser known) to show alongside internationally recognised artists at this prestigious exhibition. Between them, sales of the works in their sections accounted for over 50% of the total.



Our sponsor ING also chose their Purchase Prize from Sir Tim's section: Nina Murdoch's tempera and oil Minute Three.



Minute Three by Nina Murdoch

Artist Gill Button exhibited her 79 works in the spacious East Gallery. In her catalogue piece she spoke about the “joyous and insightful experience” of being “on the other side of the fence”. Five artists in Gill's section were awarded prizes: Jad Oakes' small scale video installation, Dreams of Somewhere Else took the Aesthetica Prize – listings in the Aesthetica Magazine's Artists' Directory – a global network of artists; Discerning Eye's Original Print Prize



Ancient Wilderness (1) by Corinna Spencer

going to Angus Hampel's Watchmaker. Three of the “regional” prizes, awarded to outstanding entries from the national regions and selected by Discerning Eye's Education Board were also chosen from Gill's works – Pippa Gatty's The Slip (Scotland), Corinna Spencer's Ancient Wilderness (1) 2019 (West Country) and Freya Pocklington's Hatfield House Park, first walks (East Anglia).



Hatfield House Park, First Walks by Freya Pocklington

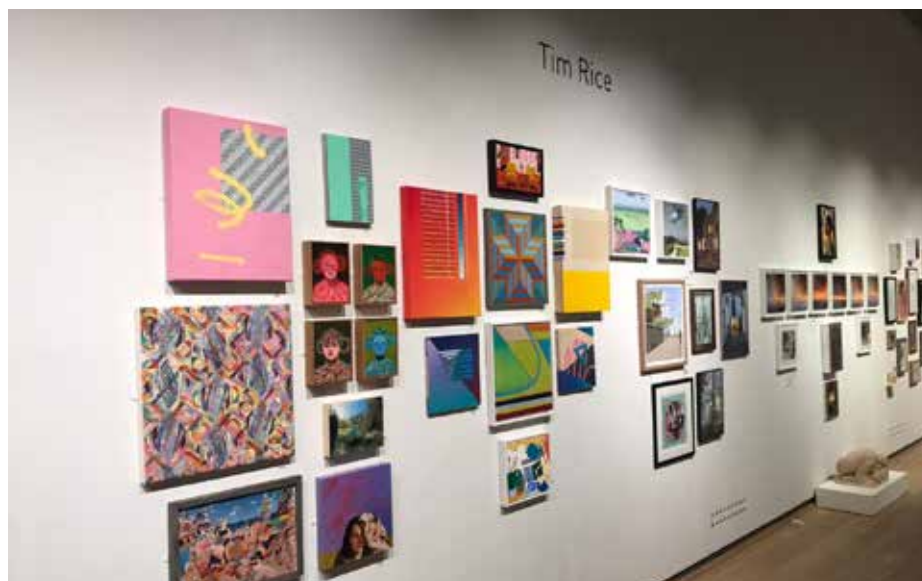
Charlotte Hodes' 35 artists contributed 80 works to the 2019 Exhibition. Her selection, exhibited at the top of the West Gallery gave strong representation to 3D works, to which visitors to the Mall were immediately drawn. Our valued supporter, St Cuthbert Mill, specialist paper manufacturers of artists' papers, awarded its annual prize to Louisa Crispin's work Flight Path XXI.



David Brayne's Ebb Tide



Louisa Crispin's Flight Path XXI

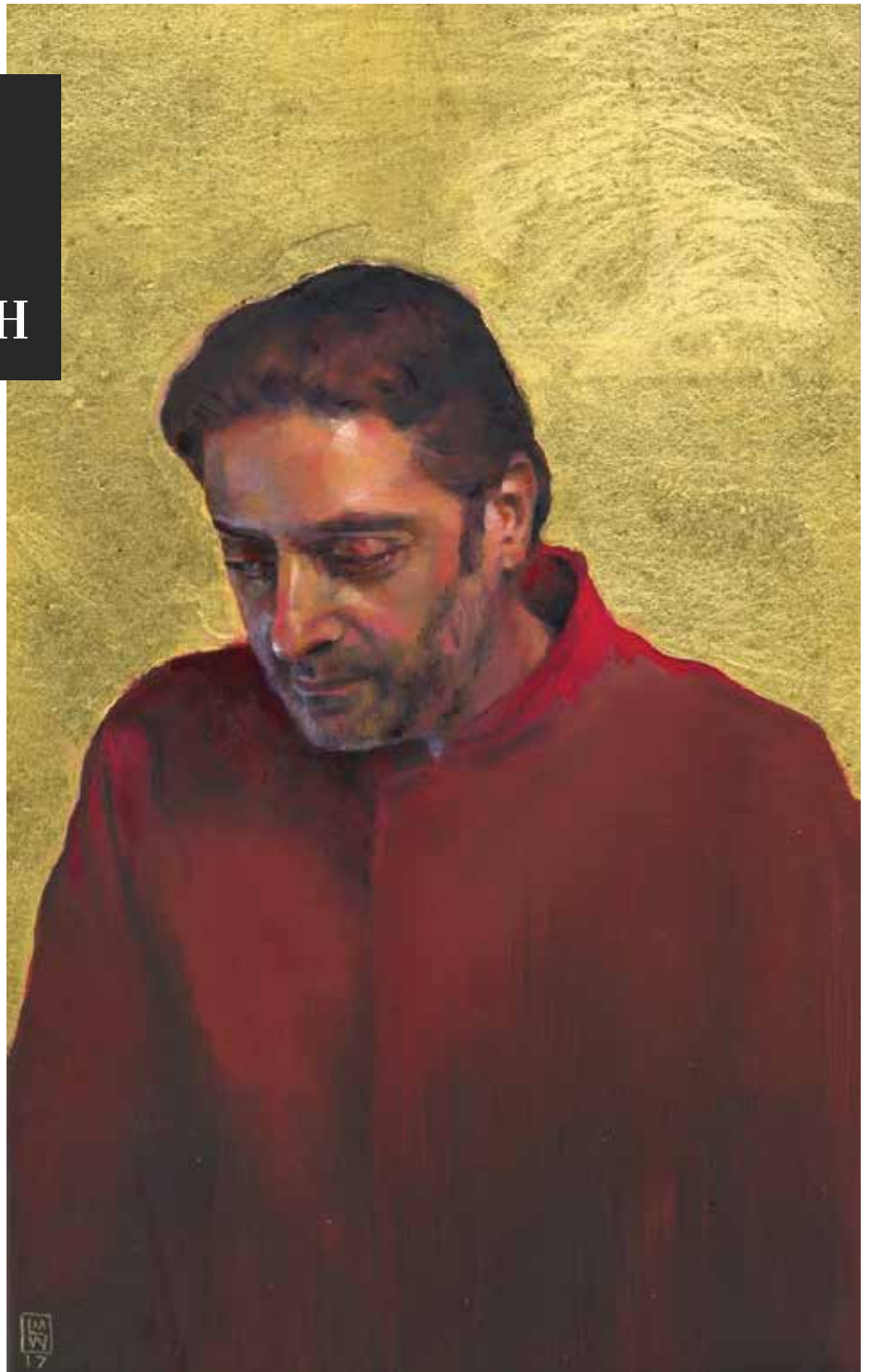


The 2019 ING Discerning Eye Exhibition saw stronger sales overall than for some years. We very much hope that buyers will embrace the new virtual world this year – and hope even more that we will be back in the Mall Galleries as usual in 2021.

LOCKDOWN WITH LORNA MAY WADSWORTH

Lorna May Wadsworth was the 2018 winner of the Discerning Eye Founder's prize with her little painting in memoriam to Bernie Katz. Bernie was known affectionately as 'The Prince of Soho', and was the legendary manager of the Groucho Club who sadly passed away in 2017. The piece was recently loaned by the DE collection for inclusion in her retrospective exhibition **GAZE at Graves Gallery Sheffield**, which featured over 100 of her celebrated portraits.

We asked Lorna how her work was being affected by lockdown.



Bernie Katz: In Memoriam

As a portrait painter I initially felt like a singer without a song, deprived as I am of my human sitters. I've turned my attention to painting still lifes in my flat, swapping skin for silver and faces for flowers. Philip Mould, who represents me for portrait commissions, has been encouraging me to paint more still lifes for ages, as he's loved the bits that have cropped up incidentally in my portraits. Ever since the silver in my double portrait of restaurateurs Corbin & King rather stole the show, (which won the de Lazlo Silver Medal and the Exceptional Talent Award at the 2015 Royal Society of Portrait Painters

Exhibition) he's been telling me to paint more silver teapots.

I have obliged! He's put the first one I painted, at my dining table, on his website in a new section of works entitled New Collectors. This initiative is dedicated to assisting perceptive new collectors, offering assistance in buying, condition, hanging and displaying works.

As a portrait painter I initially felt like a singer without a song...

On the last day before lockdown I rescued some beautiful parrot tulips from the florist Rebel Rebel as they were shutting up shop. They were already on the droop, as is tulips' wont, so I had to throw myself in to capturing them. (Probably excellent distraction therapy.)

I set them up on my mantelpiece and tried to avoid daubing the soft furnishings. I somehow finished before the petals dropped, and put them on Instagram. Philip encouraged me to take progress pictures, so I had set up another (very rickety) second easel behind me and used my old phone to take a photo every 15 minutes, then half an hour, setting an alarm so I didn't forget. Not exactly cutting edge technology and admittedly a bit of a faff, but It was nice to share the process with people.

The Tulips were snapped up by a long standing collector of mine, which was a cheering outcome as so many portrait commissions have been postponed. My friend (and sometime sitter) the author Neil Gaiman inadvertently gave me an excellent title for them when I sent him a progress pic: 'Perfect Tulips Escape Fictional Jug'.

I also did some charcoal sketches of 30s movie stars in the first week of lockdown to help spread the word about a brilliant initiative by artist Matthew Burroughs on Instagram called #TheArtistsSupportPledge. In a bid to keep the art economy moving, artists post works available to purchase for £200 +P&P,



Perfect Tulips Escape Fictional Jug

via posting with the hashtag, and they buy another artist's work for every 5 pieces they sell. This has been a phenomenal success and is helping many artists through this time.

In addition to all this painting and drawing I have been very busy helping set up Bourlet Young Masters, an art prize for children aged 12 and under on Instagram. My favourite framer, Richard Rendell of Bourlet, had the idea for an art competition for kids in lockdown to raise money for the Cavell Nurses' Trust, a brilliant small charity which assists nurses, midwives and healthcare workers in times of financial hardship. A very pertinent cause when

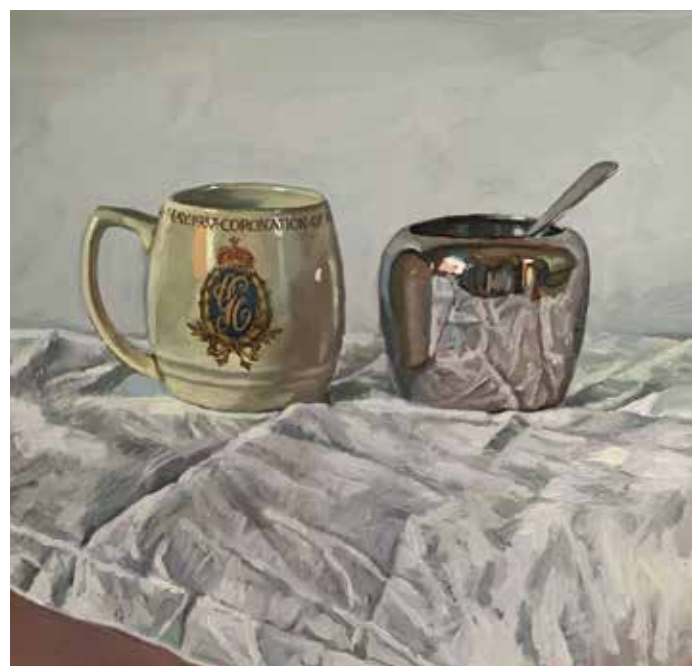
healthcare workers are putting themselves in harm's way every day for all of us.

The winner gets their picture framed by Bourlet and it will hang in The Philip Mould Gallery once the world returns to normal. They also win a trip to London to see it in the gallery and £150 in CASS Art vouchers.

Some of the entries have been astounding, it's so difficult to choose the winner... You can see all the brilliant entries and find out more about the prize on Instagram @bourletyoungmasters. There's already talk of running it again next year!

Lorna May Wadsworth

www.lornamaywadsworth.com



ING DISCERNING eye EXHIBITION 2020

CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

A VIRTUAL REALITY

This year's exhibition will be virtual only.

All submissions must be made online.

Full details are available via:

<https://thediscerningeye.artopps.co.uk>

Artists should direct any queries about the submission process to the exhibition organisers, Parker Harris.

Email: de@parkerharris.co.uk

Telephone: 020 3653 0896

Full rules and guidelines are available via the artopps site:

<https://thediscerningeye.artopps.co.uk/rules-guidelines>

KEY DATES

27 July 2020

Online submission process for entries OPENS

1 October 2020

Online submission process CLOSES

Week of 12 October 2020

Artists will be notified of the results by email

20 November 2020

Virtual gallery open for sales

31 December 2020

Virtual gallery closes

KEY INFORMATION

All entries must be made by uploading digital images; there will be no physical hand-in of works in 2020.

Artists may submit up to 6 works, each work costing an entry fee of £10.

All work must be for sale – see entry rules for information as to commission.



DJ Sarah Lamptey - opening night 2019



The Discerning Eye Directors

Sarah Hall (Chair)

Tony Humphreys (CEO)

Brenda Fenton (President)

John Penrose

John Caine MBE

Richard Moxon

Dr Giles Brown

Education & Advisory Committee

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James Lloyd (artist)

Anita Klein (artist)

Elmo Hood (artist)

Nicholas Usherwood (critic)

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