

Minutes of the CLARE COLLEGE ART COMMITTEE Easter Term 2023

Held in Godwin Room on May 11th, 1PM

Present: Bill Harris (as chair), Patricia Fara (by zoom), William Foster, Paul Bristowe, Paul Edwards, Louis Klee, Jacqueline Tasioulas

Apologies: Douglas Headley, John Guy, Glynnis Maynard, Anna Piper-Thompson

1. The Finance Committee asked the Art Committee to come up with a prioritisation list for the conservation of the college's art (see also item 8), an asset strategy for the art, and a statement of purpose for the College's collection. Drafts of these documents have been completed and discussed with the Bursar. It was decided these documents should now be presented to the Council and the Finance Committee for discussion, possible amendment, and then potential ratification by the Governing Body.

ACTION – Bill Harris to submit to the relevant committees.

2. See 1.

3. At our previous meeting, we discussed Clare's 4th Plinth (a space in the North Range where members of Clare College might display their art on a rotating basis). We decided that the space on the outside wall of Small Hall would be perfect to take a collection of about 5 paintings and hereby wish to claim this space for this 4th Plinth. It was clear that rules need to be drawn up for this (how many pictures, what sizes, what period of year rotation? How to enter the competition? Who decides? etc.)

ACTION: A small committee (Paul Edwards, Patricia Fara and Bill Harris) will draft an initial framework of how this will run. Paul Edwards will do the first draft. The agreed draft will be circulated to members of the Art Committee for further input.

4. Re the two valuable drawings by Henri Gaudier-Brzeska, the Art Committee unanimously agreed that the College should keep (not sell) these drawings and hang them in the Thirkill Room, perhaps near to the Rothenstein portrait of Sassoon as Rothenstein and Gaudier-Brzeska were contemporaries.

ACTION: Bill Harris to talk to Sophie King about reframing and some conservation work on these as a first order of business.

5. The Loretta space on the balcony outside the SCR. The Art Committee agreed that we should rotate through trios the Hedgecoe portraits of female fellows, starting with Ottoline Leyser, Tamara Follini, and Helen Thompson who have agreed to be the first trio. Other Hedgecoe portraits (male and female) will go along a new hallway in the North Range and the trio on the balcony will be exchanged back there. Loretta has indicated that she will be getting her portrait done in time for 2026. So, the plan is to rotate in other portraits of female fellows who are willing to have their photo portraits up there on a schedule that ends in 2026 when Loretta's portrait is complete.

ACTION: Bill Harris to write to female fellows whose portraits were done by Julia Hedgecoe to ask if they are willing to have their photographic portraits up there and draft a schedule of rotation.

6. The question was what to put up on the walls of Small Hall. After some discussion about whether to put up some of the drawings and coloured sketches of the portraits of recent fellows (some of which were in Small Hall previously and some of which are now in the Godwin and Latimer rooms), some of the architectural drawings of the college such as are now in the Latimer Room, or requisitioning paintings from Fellows' rooms for this, it was decided that we would explore options by trying out which might work best and in which arrangement.

ACTION: Bill will organise a working group (hopefully including Tamara Follini, Wendy Pullan and Louis Klee) to do this.

7. Future of Art Committee. The Art Committee was largely in favour of some sort of amalgamation of the Art Committee with the Conservation Committee with appropriate representation also of the Finance Committee.
8. Jonathan Miles (Trumpington Gallery) dusted and did a bit of exploratory surface cleaning of a very small part (about a square inch) of each of the portraits of the Earl of Exeter and the Duke of Newcastle that remained in Great Hall during the refurbishment. This revealed that each painting is actually quite magnificent: the frames alone are worth close to £50K. We recommend that the conservation of these paintings move up to the top of the priority list for conservation as they are permanent features of Great Hall and are extremely valuable.

ACTION: Bill Harris will revise the priority list for conservation accordingly.

9. Hommage. The sculpture is worth £500,000. The artist Helaine Blumenfeld will let us have it for approximately £30,000 (an astonishing bargain -- basically the cost of the Italian marble from her quarry, giving us the labour and inspiration of her and her team to us for free). We have already been given £10,000. leaving £20,000 to raise, or £16,000 given gift aid. This seemed not an impossible sum. The Art Committee was unanimous in supporting this by fundraising amongst the Fellows and alumni.

ACTION: William Foster will discuss this with Toby Wilkinson hoping that Loretta can raise this possibility at the GB meeting on Monday.