



Friends of the Mercer Art Gallery NEWSLETTER

Spring 2015

Website: Harrogate.gov.uk/museums

Registered Charity No: 1011431

The Mercer Art Gallery: All About Our Art Collection

How many times have you been told that this country is full of public art galleries that have huge collections of art that nobody ever sees?

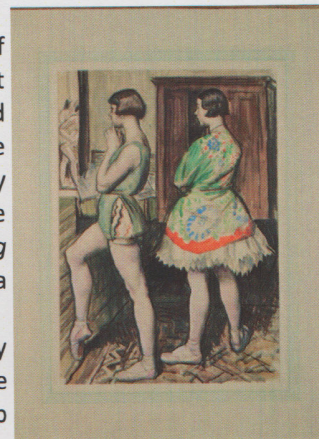
Indeed, you may have even heard this about the Mercer Art Gallery. Not true of course. Yes, we have an excellent, wide ranging collection of art, but NO, we don't shut it away so that nobody can see it. Indeed, over the last 2 years we have had £200,000 of Arts Council money to fund many different ways of ensuring that people do get to interact with our collections - through exhibitions, events, talks, films, study days, books and much more. There are ten new books about our collections in the Mercer shop, all of them beautifully illustrated. The latest publication is called *Writing About Art: Literary Connections in the Harrogate Fine Art Collection*, written by Lara

Goodband, curator, and John Wedgwood Clarke, poet.

One of the focal points of the book is a group of new works by the artist Sarah Pickstone called *The Writer's Series*. These works were bought for the Mercer just last year with the help of the Friends of the Mercer Art Gallery, because the Friends

pay the £1,200 per year subscription fee for the gallery to belong to the Contemporary Art Society. So, not only does Harrogate have a great art collection that we show and interpret in many engaging and exciting ways; we also continue to add to that collection. Public art collections should not stand still in time; they should grow, find new friends and audiences. If we do not acquire contemporary art the Mercer will become stuck in a time warp. In the case of Sarah Pickstone, the London artist liked our collection and gallery so much that she came here to make drawings from works in the collection and has produced new paintings for show at the Mercer this spring and summer - *The Rehearsal*, her large paintings of dancers that reflect our own beautiful drawing of ballet dancers by Dame Laura Knight. In the last ten years the Friends of the Mercer have made many generous contributions of money that have enabled the gallery to buy significant works, for example three paintings by William Powell Frith have come into the collection helped by funding from the Friends. We are ever grateful for the Friends' help to buy new works of art for Harrogate: this ensures that our collection continues to grow, to thrive and to be seen by as many people as possible.

Jane Sellars, Curator of Art and Acting Manager of Culture



WHY NOT ENTER THE HARROGATE OPEN 2015

IF YOU ARE AN AMATEUR OR PROFESSIONAL ARTIST LIVING, WORKING OR STUDYING IN THE
HARROGATE DISTRICT YOU COULD ENTER YOUR WORK INTO:-

THE HARROGATE OPEN 2015

AT THE MERCER ART GALLERY—4 JULY—8 NOVEMBER 2015

ENTRIES CAN BE IN ANY MEDIUM, INCLUDING; PAINTINGS, DRAWINGS, SCULPTURES, PHOTOGRAPHS, TEXTILES AND CRAFTS.

YOU COULD BE A PRIZE WINNER: 1ST PRIZE £400, 2ND PRIZE £200,

SIX HIGHLY COMMENDED AT £50 EACH, THE PEOPLE'S PRIZE £100.

BRINGING-IN DAYS ARE 24—28 JUNE 2015 INCLUSIVE.

Further details and Entry Forms are available at The Mercer Art Gallery or www.harrogate.gov.uk/mercerartgallery.