

THE EAST ANGLIA ART FUND - A SYNOPSIS

History

In 1989 Nicholas Serota approached Norwich with the suggestion that the Tate Gallery might open an eastern 'outpost' gallery in Norwich. There was already a *Tate in the North* in Liverpool, and *Tate St. Ives* was under construction at this stage. This *Tate in the East* proposal was welcomed enthusiastically in Norwich, and various empty buildings plus brown field sites were considered for the location of a new, stand alone *Tate in the East* Gallery.

Ultimately, for a variety of reasons, not least a major economic downturn, a stand-alone gallery was never built. Instead, Norwich Castle Museum & Art Gallery established a long-standing partnership with the Tate, by which the Tate would send regular exhibitions to Norwich Castle, or the Tate would lend on a large scale to exhibitions here, generated from within The Castle. The East Anglia Art Fund evolved out of the Tate in the East Project. During the last twenty plus years the East Anglia art Fund, has supported financially, with varying amounts of money, well over 50 exhibitions!

On the back page of our EAAF leaflet that we state our three main functions.

- 1) **Sponsoring art exhibitions.** From the start EAAF pledged to back exhibitions at Norwich Castle through raising sponsorship money from local businesses and our members – both corporate and individuals. Although most of our energies are centred on Norwich Castle, we also regularly give donations to exhibitions at other venues, especially those featuring the work of local artists. Towards the end of the 1990s, EAAF raised over £800,000 as the seed-corn money for a major refurbishment of Norwich Castle – and key to this ambitious project was the creation of two top quality, large exhibition galleries. The Heritage Lottery Fund then gave £10 million to make the overhaul happen. In 2011 we raised £50,000 towards the refurbishment of the Norwich School Galleries at the Castle.
2. **Supporting local artists.** Every three years or so we hold an Open Art Exhibition here at Norwich Castle and we take a 35% commission on sales, which we plough back into our funds for future Castle exhibitions. Due to the Castle's prestige and reputation we always attract a large number of submissions ie over 1000 pictures. The tricky task of selection we leave to a special panel of artists, usually from outside Norfolk. In 2005 we invited three Royal Academicians to undertake this challenge, and then for our 2008 Open Show – we had a panel of three New English Art Club members. In the Autumn of 2012 we held our third Open Show, and as always this ran in parallel to another show at the Castle, on that occasion early works by *Cedric Morris and Kit Wood*. In Summer 2014, we shall hold an Open Show paired with *The Wonder of Birds* exhibition. In 2008 EAAF has also sponsored three one man shows at The Castle, and these were all selling shows.
3. **Art Master Classes for Sixth Formers.** Our third aim is educational. For over ten years now, we have been funding Art Master Classes for Sixth Formers studying 'A' level Art at state schools. Although a number of charities fund various musical courses and classes, we discovered that there was no provision for teenagers studying art at 'A' level. Working with colleagues in the Learning Department here at Norwich Castle, we invite a local artist, or sometimes two artists, who have a proven track record of teaching, to take an all day class with a group of up to twenty sixth formers. They all spend time in the current exhibition (or sometimes the permanent collection), talking about some of the artworks in front of them. Then back in the Education Room, the Artist/Tutor encourages the students to create a piece of art, stimulated or inspired by what they have seen in the galleries. We usually fund six classes a year.

I often sit in on these Master Classes for an hour or more and talk to both the students and their teacher. Many of these teenagers have never been into a gallery or museum and looked at a top-notch work of art – so the classes are much appreciated! We pay for the Artist/Tutor, plus materials needed for creating the art, we pay for transport costs and for their teacher to come with the students. (If need be, we pay for a supply teacher back at the school to cover the Art Teacher).

Adeane Bequest

Back in 1993, EAAF was given a huge boost by the important bequest of 22 modern artworks which had belonged to Sir Robert and Jane, Lady Adeane. Artists included Rodin, Max Ernst, Magritte, Chagall & Sutherland. These works are housed at The Castle, which kindly displays them from time to time.

EAAF'S day to day role

Since moving into an office in the Shirehall in 2002, EAAF has steadily played an larger role in the Castle's Art Department. Our advice is often sought and given, and through our wide range of contacts, we can frequently suggest speakers for events, exhibition openings etc etc. Charlotte Crawley sits on the Castle's ***Exhibitions Programming Committee*** and is an ex-Officio member of the ***Norwich Area Museums Committee***, and she occasionally curates exhibitions. EAAF masterminded the refurbishment of the Benefactors' Room in 2003, with Charlotte Crawley and Emma Taylor working closely together with FNM & C&TA to transform what was a seriously dingy room, into light and airy space – ideal for events and meetings. EAAF contributed £15,000, FNM - £5,000 and C&TA - £1,500.

EAAF has two part-time paid employees - I have worked as Director since 2004, and my colleague Angela Dunn, who is our Administrator, joined EAAF back in 2002. We have a Board of Trustees which meets annually, and we have an Executive Committee, chaired by Nichola Johnson, which meets twice a year and advises us how best to spend our money. Since 2005 we have benefitted greatly from having a Board of Patrons, and as a thank you for their generosity, they enjoy a special annual dinner or lunch – we held the 2013 Lunch in the splendid setting of the Orangery at Oxnead Hall, the former home of the Paston family until the 1720s..

For our members, we organise events in association with just about every exhibition which we support – these range from Bangers & Mash Lunches with lively speakers at Norwich Castle, to coach trips to Tate and elsewhere. Most years we support the annual contemporary art exhibition at Cley Church (formerly held at Salthouse Church), and our sponsorship is always pinned to a Tour of the show by the guest curator, and then Lunch at the Wiveton Café. Food often seems to play a prominent role in these popular fund-raising events!

In 2008 we staged a very successful Fashion Show at The Castle in one of the exhibition galleries. Against the back drop of Susan Gunn's stylish abstract pictures, the latest contemporary fashions were modelled by Jarrolds Department Store and then a wonderful array of Norwich Shawls came down the catwalk – it was a really memorable evening.

EAAF – the agitator!

As a charity we have a role in trying to suggest improvements to the modus operandi at Norwich Castle. Our office in the Shirehall gives us a unique grasp of some of the Castle's operations and activities, and since the EAAF staff are paid by the charity and not Norfolk County Council, we can take a more independent stance in our views. Rattling the 'municipal cage' has been something we have undertaken on a number of issues – eg. better Private Views parties, better promotion & marketing, national advertising for the Head of Museums post, more microphones, retention of the Timothy Gurney Gallery for modern & contemporary art displays and better exterior signage & banners.

Lastly, if you care to look at our website (www.eastangliaartfund.org.uk), you can see photos of some of our events and find out more about us.

I hope you find this synopsis useful as a reasonably comprehensive summary of the East Anglia Art Fund.

Charlotte Crawley
January 2014