

Norfolk Contemporary Art Society

Report to Norwich Area Museums Committee, September 13th 2016

60 years of NCAS

As I reported to the Committee in March, 2016 marks the sixtieth anniversary of the founding of the Norfolk Contemporary Art Society, which was set up in 1956, initially chaired by Lettice Colman, in order to encourage the Castle Museum to acquire work in the modern idiom to balance its fine collection of the nineteenth-century Norwich School of painters. Since then the Society has acquired its own art collection which forms the basis of holdings in post-war art in the Castle. Among the items the NCAS has lent to the Castle are works by Edward Barker, Jeffrey Camp, Prunella Clough, Eduardo Paolozzi, Graham Sutherland and Colin Self. Pieces that the Society has purchased and then given to the Norfolk Museums Service include works by Derrick Greaves, Howard Hodgkin, L.S. Lowry, Mary Mellor and Derek Morris. In addition other works have been part-funded by the NCAS, the latest being a contribution of £3,000 in January towards the acquisition of an Andrew Dadson photograph, now in the Castle collection.

I mentioned in March that we were hoping to stage an exhibition of those NCAS-funded works in the Castle collection to mark our 60th and I am very pleased to tell you that this exhibition will now be taking place - and here I would like to take the opportunity profoundly to thank the dedicated Castle staff who have made this possible. In fact the exhibition is due to be opened by a descendant of its first Chair in the Timothy Gurney Gallery on Monday, 26th September. At the same time we shall be launching an updated version of the Society's history, *Sixty Years On*, which I'll be distributing to committee members at your next meeting, when hopefully we shall also be able to tour the exhibition, since it is due to run well into next year. You may be interested to know that some of the early work in particular is now quite valuable, and is regularly on demand for loans to exhibitions elsewhere. For instance the Allen Jones painting, *Thinking about women*, will not feature in the Castle exhibition because it will be travelling to the Kunstmuseum in Wolfsburg, Germany, for a major exhibition on British Pop Art (from 30 October 2016 to 19 February, 2017). For anyone who is interested there is a full inventory on our website (www.n-cas.org.uk) of all the artworks in our 'Castle collection', including other works visible around the City, such as the George Fullard *Mother and child* sculpture in the Cathedral Close and Bernard Reynolds' *Parrot head* in the Castle Gardens.

Brenda Ferris DL,

Chair, Norfolk Contemporary Art Society