

e NEWSLETTER

Women's Arts Association / Cymdeithas Celfyddydau Menywod

Welcome to Women's Arts new eNewsletter - Spring 2012

This publication is designed to work alongside the Website. Where there is occasionally duplication of information it is because the website will be changed when updated whereas information in this newsletter will be saved and achieved as downloadable pdfs from the website.

It is expected that the eNewsletter will be published at least twice a year and sometimes additional supplements may be issued too. These could be a forum for women writers and poets, somewhere to publish short stories, poetry etc.

The eNewsletter will be an opportunity to profile women artists, offer a broad platform for discussion and debate as well as a focus on what is happening that affects women in art politics and politically in Wales, nationally and abroad.

Production of the eNewsletter will be totally due to volunteers happily giving their time and expertise. The content will be dependent on members cooperating by submitting ideas and text for inclusion.

We hope it works as an inclusive experiment! So, this is a call for Members to support Women's Arts and submit material for the new eNewsletter.

Staffing

Currently WAA office operates on Fridays only. There is an answerphone for recorded messages. As the organisation depends on volunteers and the Trustees to do the work, it is not possible to have full time staffing.

WAA would welcome more volunteer help. Please make contact if you are interested in helping out in the office or organising events.

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*The Darnier 2011
oil on panel, 20 x 13 cm
Jacqueline Alkema (WAA Chair)*



WAW Website

A new look website was launched early this year and this newsletter (and others that follow) will be available to download as a printable pdf. To give some permanence to WAA information, once a new newsletter is published, older ones will be archived on the website.

The WAA files do hold some of the older newsletters dating from 2004 and these too will be added to the archive.

The website will carry information, images of members' work, webpage links, announcements about WAA activities and contributions by members.

WAA has a new facebook page. The more visitors and 'likes' we have, the more useful the figures will be when applying for funding. Have a look,

<http://www.facebook.com/WomensArtsAssociation>

WHAT'S HAPPENING

On the 28th June 2011 the Arts Council of Wales sent a letter to the Women's Arts Association informing the Trustees that future revenue funding of the organisation would no longer be forthcoming. By way of an explanation the following was included in the letter.

When the organisation was established in the 1980s there was a clear and pressing need to provide support and service to women artists and to enable to better compete with their male counterparts. Some would argue that this isn't now the case and many other community arts organisations deliver successful projects for women. The business plan argues that there is still a need, but doesn't present convincing evidence or research to support this assertion.

The Arts Council of Wales revenue funding did not allow money for research nor did the Women's Arts remit include research under the terms of any grants received. No research into gender discrimination in the arts is known to have been carried out. The legitimate organisation to commission such research is the Arts Council. An Arts Council Catch 22 was applied to justify the action taken.

This meant that the long established Women's Arts office had to be closed and the staff were made redundant. At the beginning of 2012 Women's Arts moved into a small room in the Butetown History and Arts Centre building where,

thanks to BHAC's generosity, the organisation is able to maintain a part time operation due to the persistence of the Trustees and volunteers.

Women artists all know what the Arts Council of Wales assumption, that there is no need to provide support and services to women artists any more, is not true. A continuous programme of support for women working in the arts is still necessary. (see Desperate Artwives article). It could be said that the success of Women's Arts working in Wales in promoting women artists was what led to the Arts Council of Wales' making its inaccurate assumption of women artists not needing support.

Since the establishment of Women's Arts, more women have had exposure and successes in their fields, job opportunities, help and guidance in running a professional practice, introduction to the new media, opportunities to learn about promotion within their creative disciplines. Contact with other artists has reduced their isolation and provided many other opportunities for advancement in their careers.

The Women's Arts Association is the envy of many artists living outside Wales and although the same provision of services cannot be maintained, Women's Arts is determined to continue and grow again. After all for a time it was known as Permanent Waves, a title created after a number of failed attempts to sabotage its activities. We are permanent and damage to us will result in another wave supporting women artists.

Future Plans

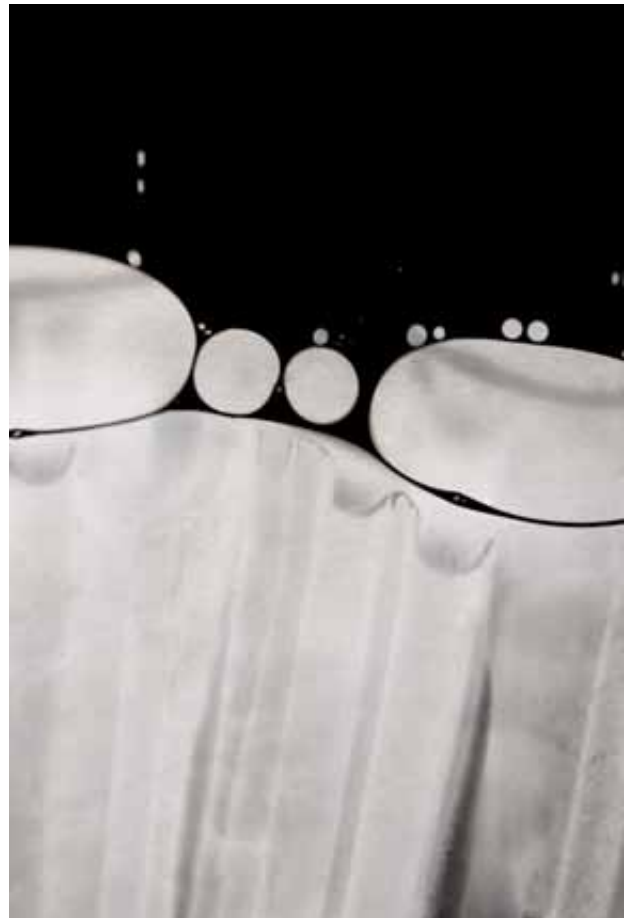
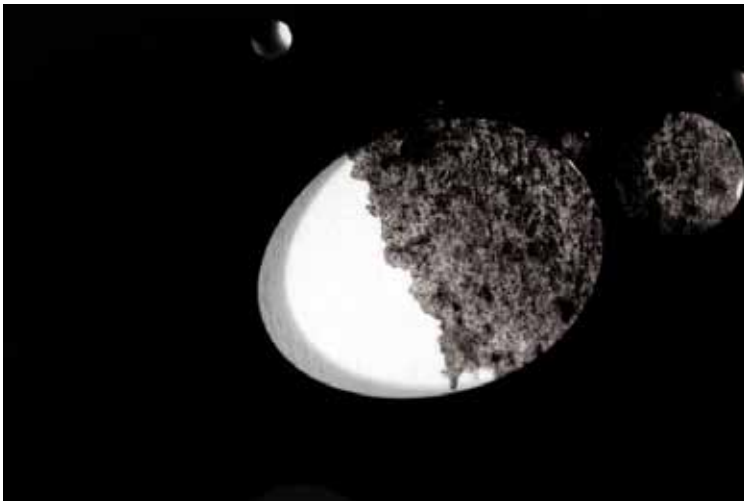
Arrangements for more workshops, artists talks, seminars and gatherings of artists are currently under discussion. Any member is welcome to put forward suggestions for art activities. Soon plans for the AGM will be underway as well as those for the 2013 International Women's Day Celebrations. Members wishing to take part in these events will be contacted in early Autumn but the sooner ideas and suggestions are made to Women's Arts, the greater chance there is of realising them.

The weekly events e-bulletin delivered to your inbox, the website and the Women's Arts facebook page will carry information about what is going on so keep visiting the sites. All interested parties who have registered with WAA giving an email address receive regular mailings. If you know of anyone who would like to have it, email the office or leave a message. Due to costs this eNewsletter will not be printed but some members do not have access to a computer. Again, if anyone knows of a member without an email address, please contact the office and we will try to make some arrangement.

MEMBERS' PROFILES

Patricia Ziad, Photographer

I live and work in Penarth. Abstract photography allows my imagination to take over from the more conventional photographer I can be. The struggle to produce abstract work with a camera is a challenge which I find immensely rewarding. It is an artistic process in which I feel I only need to please myself and where the rules can be thrown through the window, a liberating way of working.



Mandy Nash, Designer Maker



Her three passions are colour, pattern and technique. She loves making things and exploring the possibilities of different materials. Although trained as a jeweller, her work has been heavily influenced by both traditional and contemporary textiles and she works in felt making larger pieces that complement her jewellery collections. Much of her recent work has evolved from looking back at her creative ancestry - how her grandmothers initiated her fascination with making objects by passing on their traditional textile skills and starting her passion in creating anything from colourful materials.

She finds being creative addictive and considers herself extremely lucky to have survived (more or less!) by selling her own work.

EXHIBITIONS

Desperate Artwives

The Desperate Artwives explore the art of balancing work and family.

It's not easy to restart an artistic career after having children, but a new online project offers support for those who do

Returning to work from maternity leave can be a daunting prospect. Faced with the challenges of balancing family demands with their artistic careers, a group of female artists have formed a fledgling movement known as Desperate Artwives – an ironic twist on the title of the hit American drama – to continue exhibiting and working.

The artists – who come from all over the world and were drawn together via Twitter and Facebook – are now preparing to exhibit at the Vibe Gallery in London, in a project backed by the Women's Art Library in London and supported by and featuring a work by, the 2011 Jerwood prize-winner, Nicki Rolls.

Rolls, who is exhibiting a work called Pleasure Principle, says female artists who have young families face specific challenges. "It is quite a male-orientated world anyway, so to be a woman within it is hard enough," she says, adding that the need to make ends meet often means having to do another job and look after the children too. "We are going to the office to work because we need to pay the bills, we look after our families too and on top of this we are trying to produce quality work in our

artistic career. Some women paint at night after everyone is off to sleep. Others take photos during the commute using the train as their office.

"It is hard to find the head space but I think creating art is a way to retreat from that everyday bruising, battling life that you lead when you have got young children. It's somewhere you can find space to be yourself."

Amy Dignam, the founder of the project, who graduated from Central St Martins College of Art and Design, has been overwhelmed by the response to her Twitter and Facebook appeal, which she says has prompted a movement, website and now this collection.

Althea Greenan, special collection curator at the Women's Art Library, says the challenges presented to female artists with families provided the context for their art. "Women's art practice is rich in disruptions, side tracks, blurred boundaries and multiple identities ... This is a fascinating and timely project."

Jane Martinson, Guardian, 15/5/12
Exhibition ran 18th - 29th May 2012.

Desperate Artwives

We are a group of women and artists who have been putting our "artistic needs" on hold to attend to our family and work duties, but who have also never forgotten who we really are at heart. Desperate Artwives aims to be a starting point and a common platform to gather artists and artwork that will make our project unique. We are looking for work that is entirely created at home, in between chores, family and paying bills.

All Work and Low Pay: The Story of Women and Work,

The Women's Library, London
Until 25 August 2012, free of charge

All Work and Low Pay puts paid to the myth that the majority of women did not work until the second half of the twentieth century brought social change, the Women's Liberation movement and equality legislation. In fact, most women have always worked, in paid jobs or in the home, but their work has consistently been unrecognised and undervalued. This exhibition shows the extraordinary range of jobs done by women over the past 150 years, from forging iron chains to

assembling fine electrical components.

On Wednesday 14 March, London Metropolitan University's Board of Governors announced that they will be seeking a new home, custodian or sponsor for The Women's Library.

If a new home is not found by the end of December 2012, the Library will move to opening hours of one day per week for a period of three years, with a further review at the end of that period. The Women's Library and its supporters are campaigning to ensure the best possible outcome is found.

Join the campaign, visit the Women's Library website.

EXHIBITIONS

Jean Walcot

Art Central Barry
May 2012

An exhibition of Jean Walcot's paintings opened at Art Central on 12 May and runs until 9th June.

On show is a range of paintings from her large canvases inspired by moving legs and feet to small digital prints in designs taken from duplicating and distorting feet.

The large paintings may appear flat but there is an inner glow created by the use of colour and the smooth velvety quality of the surfaces. The figure form slithers across the surface; gestural marks introduce movement.



The exhibition hang in Art Central, Barry



Bigfoot 1999, Oil on flax 65 x 65 cm

Smaller works have a more graphic quality. Made with heated wax and crayon on heavy watercolour paper, they are fast and immediate within the medium.

Jean has spent time on a number of artists residencies in America where she freely used a mix and match of different media. The exhibition demonstrates Jean's constant experimentation but the theme changes little over the two decades covered by the exhibition. The location of her ideas lies within her own physicality.

Di Setch

Art Central is located in the heart of Barry inside Barry's Town Hall (entrance via the county library). The exhibition space is a magnificent place to exhibit, visit and appreciate art. Admission to exhibitions is free. Opening Hours 10am to 4pm Tuesday to Saturday

EXHIBITIONS

INSECURITY THE PATH TO SUCCESS? Psychology and Louise Bourgeois.

Recognition came late for Louise Bourgeois, who died in 2010 aged 98 (but as a woman, better late than never – as appears more often to be the case). Her retrospective exhibition at Tate Modern



Louise Bourgeois, Maman, 1999, steel and marble, 9.2 x 8.91 x 10.23 m.

in 2007 had great impact: the giant spider guarding an egg ("Maman") dominated the Turbine Hall. A recent Guardian newspaper article contributes greatly to the understanding of and increasing fascination with her art. "Maman" is currently on view at the Freud museum in Hampstead. For thirty years after her father's death in 1951 she had undergone psychoanalysis for depression: this was in New York where she had lived since leaving France in 1938. She made

copious notes on her feelings of inadequacy. Her father's frequent sexual infidelity generated empathy for her mother with whom she shared talent for creativity in textiles, but also constant self-doubt, insecurity and sense of failure, especially in personal relationships. This included doubt of retaining love of her husband:

in fact he was an art historian and they appear to have had much in common. But needing to be liked by others was one of her obsessions.

At the same time among her perceived shortcomings, she recognised feelings of aggression, stating her belief that "best work has been produced by those whose exclusive concern was themselves". Her view of Freud seems to have been sceptical, especially of his collection of ancient phallic objects, ironically producing a version of one herself, which is exhibited prominently in the museum, with many of her "bulging and sinister patchwork sculptures and installations".

All this positive activity did not prevent her listing "some easy ways to end it": constant insecurity appears to have been a driving

force. Finally, however, she became disillusioned about the benefits of psychoanalysis, writing dismissively about "Freud's toys", having more regard for the effects of suffering as a stimulus for artistic achievement, which on the evidence appears to have been a justifiable conclusion!

From "Analysing Louise Bourgeois: art, therapy and Freud" by Christopher Turner, Guardian 6th April 2012.

Audrey Jones

Cannes 2012: Why have no female film directors been nominated for the Palme d'Or at Cannes?

Of the 22 films in contention for the prestigious Palme d'Or, not one has a female director. And while women's lives are getting more attention on screen, the struggle to break in to the rough and tough old boys' club of directing appears as hard as ever.

NEWS AND INFORMATION

This is how Women's Arts new communications arrangements are expected to work.

The weekly events bulletin will continue to be emailed on Fridays (barring problems arising). The office is only staffed by volunteers on Fridays and not necessarily all day. Emails and telephone messages are answered or passed on then.

Send contributions about events principally involving women to admin@womensarts.co.uk

www.womensarts.co.uk

The newly designed website will carry fixed information. WAA events, members work, general information, the eNewsletter to download and archived old newsletters etc.

The eNewsletter will be available when there is enough content to make an interesting publication. This, in the main, will be dependent on members' contributions. We aim for at least twice a year but ideally we would like it to be quarterly.

Send contributions to the Editorial team: Di - setch@tedi.demon.co.uk:

Jacqueline - alkema37@googlemail.com: Gwyn - pricefamily@swales26.freeserve.co.uk

www.facebook.com/WomensArtsAssociation

Women's Arts facebook page will have more immediate information about Women's Arts and an input from members. To date the page is not open for contributions direct (we think!). These will have to be emailed to the page administrators to post. We are hoping to soon establish a new group page where members can share their thoughts and ideas with each other.

Administrators: Di - setch@tedi.demon.co.uk: Isabelle - Isabelle.a@ntlworld.com

Inevitably there will be duplicated information but the greater the contribution from members, the more variety there will be.

Don't know who to contact? Try any of the above.

Many members have their own websites or have their work featured on other websites. Addresses can be found on the Women's Arts website.

Artists Documentation. The Women's Art Library (MAKE)

The Women's Art Library began as an artists' initiative and continued to run a membership scheme for women artists for 20 years. The scheme encouraged women artists to document their work and deposit slides and any other information to form a unique resource. Individuals and groups came to see these files as dedicated spaces for their work in a public setting. The documentation typically included slides, CV, a written statement, exhibition information, catalogues, invitations and press reviews. However the Women's Art Library also collected audio and videotapes, CD-Roms, books and photographs.

Women artists continue to donate unique material today. Goldsmiths, University of London is eager to maintain the active development of the

Women's Art Library (MAKE) special collection with the same commitment as its donor, MAKE, the organisation of women in the arts.

Contact Althea Greenan: a.greenan@gold.ac.uk

Nearly twice as many men hold senior roles at the BBC as female employees and they earn an average £17,000 more.

The figures, released under the Freedom of Information Act, could reignite the controversy over the BBC's treatment of female staff after it was accused of sidelining older women presenters.

Last year Miriam O'Reilly, the former Countryfile presenter, was awarded a six-figure sum after a tribunal found she was dropped from the show because of her age.

Hollande's cabinet shows Sarkozy how to do gender equality, easy.

For the first time, the French cabinet has an equal number of men and women, thanks to increased parity in higher education