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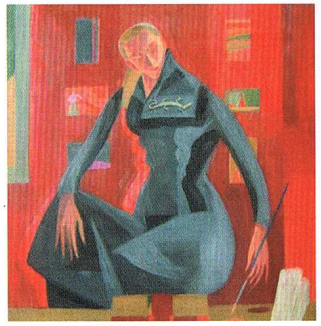
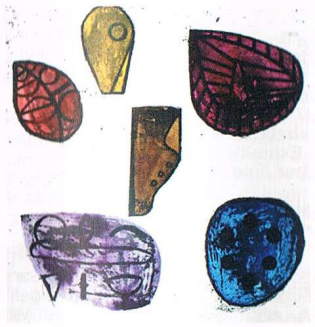
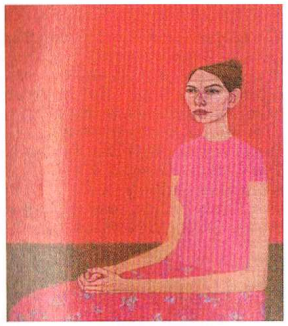






Enos at 10

This year **East Neuk Open Studios** celebrate their 10th birthday, with 32 artists participating along this delightful stretch of the East Fifeshire coastline on the first two weekends of November. To mark the occasion, there's also a special exhibition of their work in the Byre Theatre, St Andrews from 7th November to 9th December. If you don't know this part of the world, it's an excellent excuse to go and have a look and the work comes guaranteed good!

A Remarkable Woman

Everything about Ruth Borchard and her life was amazing, from her time as Jewish refugee in an Isle of Man internment camp, devising a programme of morale-boosting jobs for her fellow detainees and bringing up her daughter there (then writing a semi-fictional novel about it) to her post-war scheme of writing to artists offering 21 guineas for a self-portrait. She was rarely refused and built up a superb (and very large) collection during the 50s/60s that included Roger Hilton, Ann Redpath, Carel Weight and other such notable names, many before they achieved a wider prominence. This is now exhibited regularly under the aegis of the **King's Place Gallery** and has become the core of a collection that is being usefully extended into the 21st C. via a biennial show, the Ruth Borchard Self-Portrait Competition.

The first, in 2011, won by Celia Paul, saw a number of other significant additions from women artists – Maggi Hambling, Marcelle Hanselaar and Mary Mabbutt among them. Indeed 30 in all were bought from that exhibition and all are on show there currently (along with a selection of earlier works) to launch the 2013 version. Deadline for this competition is 30 April and, with not only a £10,000 First Prize but also substantial further purchases in the offing, well worth trying. Details on the website.

Wild Art

Founded in 1964 at a time when painting of wildlife was only just beginning to emerge out of the shade of book illustration, the Society of Wildlife Artists was lucky enough to be, from the outset, a member of the FBA (Federation of British Artists) and this association has certainly helped it to thrive and prosper over the last half century. From 149 works from its 35 founder members, this has now grown to something over 75 members and an annual show this year at the **Mall Galleries** (1 to 11 November) of over 350 pieces – sculpture and prints as well as paintings, drawings and watercolours. It's a rich and often surprising mix full of some very buyable things . . .

Meanwhile for a more domesticated form of animal life let me also draw attention to the Society of Equestrian Artists' 'The Horse in Art' at the **Menier Gallery.**

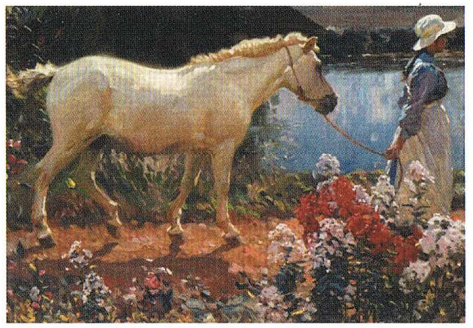
Abigail McLellan

Rebecca Hossack's latest exhibition commemorates the life and works of Abigail McLellan (1969–2009). Though McLellan died prematurely, latterly struggling with MS, her work is anything but sombre. Paintings such as *New Drum* (1996) and *Yellow Jacket* (1998) demonstrate her ease with colour, which is always vibrant and playful, often creating an entire spectrum of one hue on a single canvas. Meanwhile her portraits bear an interesting element of sparseness and flat perspective to them, perhaps influenced by her fascination with Japan. Indeed, *Louise* (1996) was exhibited at the National Portrait Gallery, London, as part of the BP Portrait Awards.

McLellan lived in Scotland all her life and was a graduate of Glasgow School of Art so it's no surprise then that her paintings are likened to the Scottish Colourists. It is particularly apt therefore that, among others, some of her work is now held in the prestigious **Fleming Collection** of Scottish Art, London.

Nicola McCartney

From left: **Mary Mabbutt** 'Red Studio Portrait' 2011 at King's Place
Dom Theobald 'Shoe' 2012 at Hester Gallery
Abigail McLellan 'Louise Sitting' at Rebecca Hossack Gallery
Peter Joyce 'La Saline Grand Champ' March 2012 at Jenna Burlingham Fine Art
Carry Akroyd 'A Field Full of Swans' at The Society of Wildlife Artists, Mall Galleries
Alfred Munnings 'Path to the Orchard' 1908 at Richard Green



. . . and Bloomsbury Too

Our district focus this month (p12) is on the currently booming Fitzrovia scene in London, but my money is on this spilling over into Bloomsbury sooner rather than later. Which would be nice for long-term Museum Street resident **Abbott & Holder,** showing from 17 November Charlotte Ward's recent paintings on wood.

Change of Scenery

When your work has become well-rooted in the look and feel of a certain landscape, taking on another, completely unfamiliar one, can be a distinctly tricky business. And you cannot imagine a more thorough contrast than that involved in the decision Peter Joyce took when he decided, in 2005, to start dividing his time between the Dorset landscape he had been painting for nearly two decades and that of the Marais-Breton region of Western France. Yet, moving between the tucks and folds of sweeping downlands, glimpsed sea-vistas and dense valleys of Dorset and the low-lying salt-pans and oyster-beds of a French landscape made by man only 300 years ago (when it was, in large part, recovered from the sea), far from proving a problem, seems, instead, on the evidence of this new show, 'A Year in the Salt Pans' at **Jenna Burlingham**, to have had a distinctly galvanizing effect. For, in the contrast between the huge, empty skies and these complex man-made geometries beneath them, Joyce seems to have found a hugely fertile and exciting new pictorial language, one that may well prove to be quite as enriching as Dorset ever was.

Enfolding the World

The great physicist David Bohm put forward a wonderfully satisfying theory about the relationship between quantum field mechanics and human consciousness that involved the ways in which our mind and our senses – the explicate order as he termed it – was continually unfolding elements from the hidden structures of the world – the implicate and generative orders – to give form to the world we live in. Looking at the coruscating body of work in Dom Theobald's new show at **Hester Gallery,** Leeds, with its myriad webs of vibrating abstract lines and marks and colour fields enfolding their mysterious cargo of object/forms – shoes, petals, children's toys, natural history specimens, bones and feathers among them – I become increasingly aware that the really good artists already know all this intuitively. Paul Klee, for example, to whom I find myself frequently turning to find appropriate analogies for what Dom Theobald is aiming to achieve, namely an impassioned statement of belief in how, as I have written before of his art, "the truly magical ordinariness of things can come to embody the most profound sensations of the sacred and numinous."

Munnings Revisited

There is perhaps no 20th C. British painter who has been so consistently misunderstood and misrepresented as Sir Alfred Munnings. Still remembered by many only for his notorious 1949 Royal Academy speech attacking Picasso and Matisse and thought of even by his more sympathetic admirers and collectors largely as an equestrian artist, it is to be hoped that this latest, and hugely impressive loan show, currently at **Richard Green** may finally begin to persuade people otherwise. Munnings certainly saw himself differently, I believe, in later life, often liking to quote the unattributed remark about himself "First you're a landscape painter, second a pig painter and only third a horse painter." This seems to me, too, to get much closer to the truth of his art and, if you come to look at the work he produced at the beginning and end of his life alongside a highly selective best of the commissioned 'horse pieces' he did in between (as in this exhibition), there emerges a lyrical and often intensely poetic vision of the English landscape scene. In short put aside your prejudices and go to see this splendid exhibition.