

PRISM

News of art and events

December 2021



www.stalbans-artociety.org.uk



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Members' input is very popular so please carry on sending in your articles for inclusion in the magazine and your feedback.

email: newsletter.saas@gmail.com



A very Happy Festive Season to you all

Welcome to our winter edition of PRISM and a new beginning. We ended last year's programme with a great exhibition as reported.

By the time you receive this, our planned first full year's programme of renewed activities will have commenced with five life drawing sessions, one talk, two demonstrations and two full workshops. You can read further information on those workshops in this issue.

At this time of the year winter evenings, colder days and nights have arrived we have more SAAS programmes offering an engaging, warm outlook and providing cheer to all members. It is therefore even more important that you take full advantage of these enjoyable life drawing classes, inspirational demonstrations, interesting talks and amazing workshops to brighten your art experience.

Your committee and organisers have been working hard putting risk assessments in place to ensure all of our programme venues are safe for members. From feedback the first

workshop members were quick to comment on how safe they felt, a few having had some anxieties about attending.

If you have concerns or need to discuss anything linked to our programmes please contact me or any organising committee member.

A polite reminder: All fees should have been be paid by the end of October. It would be appreciated if you could let the membership secretary know if you are not re-joining.

This is your Society and it can only be a vibrant for our membership if our requirements are met. I therefore wish to encourage your comments and ideas about future ideas or suggestions. If you feel you could offer even more, why not volunteer to join the committee? A warm welcome awaits.

I wish you all a very Happy Festive Season and a Prosperous New Year.



Sally Griffiths Chair

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Hello Everyone,

It's not long to the big festive season and we all know how time flies. Hopefully all will be well, and we can enjoy meeting our families and friends again. With a view to the future the Committee is beginning to consider what to plan for lectures, demonstrations, workshops etc., but we would love fresh ideas coming from the membership so don't hesitate to send in your advice and comments which will be much appreciated. It's time to have your say in what goes on. We have the spring season planned for next year but there is the summer and autumn to consider even 2023 following. Yes, it all starts from now to bring you an excellent programme.

However, for those of you who have forgotten, I would like to remind you to renew your membership. The fees enable the Committee to hire the venues and to carry out the business of the Art Society. Your committee are all hardworking volunteers, but we

want to give you the best service possible. This is your last chance before we revise the membership list and sadly some will miss out on things like the Newsletter, PRISM, and the activities which you enjoy.

I would like to draw your attention to a need on the committee for some additional members, so please have a think about what you can do and let us know if you are willing to join us. We would dearly love to rope you into service.

Anyway, enough for now, have a brilliant festive season.

Margaret Channon
Secretary



Subscription renewal reminder

The membership renewal forms for 2021-2022 were included in the September issue of PRISM.

The renewal date was **1st October**. If you haven't renewed yet, a reminder form is inserted in this issue. When your subscription is received you will be sent your membership card with details of the programme for the coming year as well as names of committee members.

Please include a **STAMPED SELF ADDRESSED ENVELOPE** with your renewal form. If you have misplaced your renewal form, please contact the

Membership Secretary, Janet Blackham email membership.saas@gmail.com

GENERAL DATA PROTECTION REGULATION (GDPR) is a legal framework that sets guidelines for the collection and processing of personal information of individuals. **IMPORTANT: if you want to continue to receive information from the Society, you must actively 'OPT TO ACCEPT' how SAAS will hold and use your personal data.** Details of this are on the renewal form enclosed. **Please tick the box on the form.**

With the restart of the Society's programme following all the covid shut downs, the Society hopes that members will feel safe when attending any meetings or workshops. To this end, the committee has created a new list of safety guidelines, for all attending, to follow.

Safety Procedures

- All members, models and tutors required to be double vaccinated.
- You will need to sign in and print your name at each meeting - non-members will need to add telephone contact
- Report to the society if you develop Covid symptoms up to 3 days after attending

Please do not attend if

- you have Covid (you must isolate for 10 days before attending, even if vaccinated)
- you have Covid symptoms
- you are feeling unwell i.e. any coughs, colds, fever, sore throat, sneezing, muscle aches etc.
- you have been in contact with anyone diagnosed with Covid in the previous 10 days (you should isolate and ideally take a test)

We would expect

- members to maintain social distancing when entering and leaving the building, using the toilets and moving around the hall and voluntary wearing of masks when not seated
- that members allow space between each other especially if/when viewing work of tutors/participants and do not invade personal space
- members to report back to any committee member (or Karin if life drawing) if you develop symptoms up to 3 days after
- to provide wipes for any tables and chairs used so each member can wipe their own at the end of the session
- some help to wipe surfaces down after

the session including door and window handles, sink and any surfaces

- Members to bring their own drinks (no refreshments provided at the moment) and to take their own rubbish home or place the bags in the bins outside the centre.

We will ensure

- Tables and chairs are to be kept at least a metre, if not more, apart
- Hand sanitisers are provided (please feel free to bring your own)
- Anti-bacterial wipes are available
- Room will be kept aired with windows open. (There are heaters, if needed bring warm clothes)
- Surfaces are wiped down before session starts
- Window are closed at the end

Workshops at United Reformed Church - Extras

All the above

- Help will be needed when setting up and putting tables and chairs away (having been wiped first)
- When putting away tables, only two people allowed at a time in the store room
- Only two people allowed in the kitchen at any time to wash equipment
- Please bring your own bag to collect and take your rubbish home
- Wipe kettle, sink, and toilet surfaces down after using

SAAS committee September 2021

Subject to possible changes due to government updates

Winter Programme of events for 2022

See page 11 for information of the venues

For a full list of the Society's programme visit: www.stalbans-artsociety.org.uk

LECTURES AND DEMONSTRATIONS

Marshwick Community Centre,
The Ridgeway, St Albans, AL4 9TU.
7.30 - 9.30pm

PORTRAIT DEMONSTRATION

By Peter Keegan

2nd February 2022

Peter Keegan is a professional artist living and working in Buckinghamshire, specialising in portraiture. Trained at Cardiff School of Art and working in oils, Peter follows traditional techniques but uses them in a way to depict the people he meets in a modern and original style. His aim in portraiture is to always create a painting or drawing that reflects the subject's likeness and personality, as well as capturing those special elements which make the subject truly "them". Peter also paints and exhibits figure paintings, local landscape and still life paintings.

DEMONSTRATION IN ACRYLICS

By Hashim Akib

2nd March 2022

Be prepared for an exciting, vibrant and different approach to using acrylics. With infectious energy and enthusiasm, Hashim Akib shows how acrylics can be used in unusual, surprising ways to create beautiful paintings full of life, atmosphere and colour. Step-by-step demonstrations, exercises and expert advice illustrate his simple, yet effective techniques and there are many inspiring examples of what can be achieved.

LIFE DRAWING DATES

- 19 January
- 26 January
- 16 February
- 23 February
- 16 March
- 23 March

TUTORED WORKSHOPS

United Reformed Church, Watford Rd,
Chiswell Green, St Albans, AL2 3HG
10am - 4pm



VIBRANT STILL LIFE IN WATERCOLOUR & ACRYLIC INK

Tutor: Susan Chester

Saturday 29th January 2022

Create a simplified, abstract, vibrant still life using varied watercolours.

Susan is one of our talented SAAS artists, who lives and paints in Bovingdon, Hertfordshire. Susan often changes colours to create a 'sense of the moment'. Her paintings are influenced by The Impressionists and the vibrant colours and shapes in stained glass windows. Susan aims to take away the fear of working on a large sheet of white paper and to give confidence in drawing with a heavy black marker pen.

She will set up a simple still life and demonstrate how to draw with a marker, adding the skill of mixing watercolour paint on paper/wet in wet. With lots of splashing, aiming to achieve a vibrant semi-representational painting.

The participants will produce this vibrant, varied coloured painting without too much fuss taken over the drawing – letting the paint do the talking!

WHIMSICAL WILDLIFE ILLUSTRATION WITH PEN, INK, WATERCOLOUR AND COLLAGE

Tutor: Judit Matthews

Saturday 26th February 2022

Judit is a Hungarian born illustrative artist, working as a professional artist for about 10 years. Her work has appeared in several publications including The Artist and the Leisure Painter magazines. She has appeared on Channel 4's Watercolour Challenge and been named Landscape artist of the year by the Surrey Life magazine. She has exhibited around the country including annual open exhibitions of the Society of Women Artists and the Society of Graphic Fine Art.

Judit will begin with the importance of composition, followed by a short demo on composition and techniques. She will also demonstrate how to simplify shapes, create pattern while including humour and narrative. She will develop animals and figures through pattern and colour and will provide supporting photographs for inspiration. Judit wants to inspire people to achieve an illustrative painting with a mixture of design and quirky artwork.



EXPRESSIVE LANDSCAPES IN ACRYLICS

Tutor: Mark Warner

Saturday 19th March 2022

Experiment with line, colour and contrast within a seascape acrylic painting

He adores using colour while interpreting the light, weather conditions and a love for the materials. He makes sketches created outside as well as notes and photographs taken on location then worked back in the studio.

Sketching is at the heart of his work. This is integral to the development of a piece, many times forming part of the painting itself. His distinctive use of line and colour has aided his sweeping use of perspective and atmosphere.

Mark exhibits in both England and Wales and has many works in private collections.

Mark starts by explaining his approach to painting with examples of his distinctive style and an initial demonstration enabling participants to experiment with colour theory, use acrylics in a variety of ways and how a drawing can influence a painting.

WORKSHOP REVIEWS

After a difficult year, the Society is celebrating restarting its programme. **Sally Griffiths**, our workshops Programme Secretary, reports back on two very enjoyable and full workshops. The first, in October, was tutored by Dave Nelson and Susan Gray led the November day.



Boats and Harbours
Tutor Dave Nelson

Initially preparing their board with collage - everyone gets 'stuck in'!

A great start to our new programme of workshops began when **Dave Nelson** produced an excellent, well planned fantastic day. The full class was inspired to produce some marvellous large-scale paintings using mixed-media, acrylic inks and paint over collage. Dave clearly and calmly demonstrated the processes needed for all stages. Everyone was encouraged to work in a loose, expressive way, deliberately being de-skilled by resisting the brush but instead using collage, print and mark-making techniques.

Dave's great encouragement, constant visiting and support given to all participants, with

suggestions of ways to develop their ideas, were greatly appreciated.

He brought not only his knowledge and expertise but all the materials needed, which added to this amazing workshop. His aim being to encourage many people new to this method to attend and not be put off by not having the equipment. He certainly succeeded as participants described it as: 'A very interesting fascinating session totally immersive...' 'I learnt such a lot, having fun as well...' 'A wonderful day...' 'Excellent- really enjoyed the new process with everything provided - AMAZING'

The presentation at the end demonstrated high

quality examples with varied pictures. Everyone was full of praise for Dave's fabulous day.

A few participants also commented on how safe they felt as they were unsure and nervous about attending. They appreciated that a great deal of effort had gone into the safe organisation.



Dave gives a critique of the finished artwork

Acrylics Landscape Tutor Susan Gray

Starting the session with a detailed demonstration using only a sketch, bubbly, informative, tutor **Susan Gray** presented another great workshop for the Society.

During this, Susan delved into her reasoning for colour choices, how she was using them as well as all the many techniques. The variety of mark making was clearly demonstrated with different sized and shaped brushes, pallet knives, cotton buds, spray and kitchen roll. The

painting came to life by means of a restricted pallet and with full explanation for any decisions or changes made during the process.

Susan continually supported the artists with their own painting, highlighting the positive aspects of their work and giving helpful suggestions on how to proceed.

Her unrestrained technique was inspirational, enabling all artists, new or experienced users of acrylics, to feel relaxed and inspired. Feedback comments included: - an excellent session, inspirational for a beginner, Sue knows exactly what to do to help,



Susan begins her demo.

a fantastic workshop, loved it, wonderful day.

Everyone said what an inspirational, encouraging teacher Susan is and an informative, enjoyable day was had by all. This was born out by the high standard of paintings produced.



The group soon get painting

Surrealism in Sussex

Website manager, **Gordon Bridges**, writes about a visit to Farleys House - home of surrealist artist Roland Penrose and his wife photographer Lee Miller.

Antony Penrose knew little of his mother's creative talent until he discovered many boxes of film negatives in the attics at Farley Farm in Sussex, the home his mother, Lee Miller, lived in with her husband the Surrealist artist Roland Penrose after World War 2 (WW2). Her creative talent post WW2 was otherwise directed to gourmet cuisine, and Farleys House now bears testament to this by containing a kitchen which would have been considered state of the art. Antony knew little or nothing of her very productive earlier career. His mother was the American fashion model, photographer, and WW2 photo journalist Lee Miller. Today Lee Miller's ability as a photographer is fully recognised and covers the genres of Surrealism, fashion, journalism and what today would be called fine art photography. Lee Miller can be considered a major contributor to art both because of her early collaboration with the Surrealist photographer Man Ray in the 1920s and her own subsequent output including working for Vogue during WW2 which, on occasion, demonstrates distinct Surrealist influences on her photographic observations.

Roland Penrose was an artist and a founding member of the British Surrealist Group which included Paul Nash and Henry Moore. He is also remembered for being a co-founder of the Institute of Contemporary Arts, and organising the widely acclaimed first British major retrospective exhibition of the Modernist artist Pablo Picasso in 1960. Roland met Lee before WW2, and he

astounded military audiences during the war when lecturing on camouflage techniques by including a semi-nude colour slide of Lee covered by a camouflage net - a very Surrealist approach.

The Surrealist Movement developed in Europe after the First World War and reached its British zenith in the 1930s although traces and influences can still be seen in modern advertising. The idea of juxtaposing thoughts and images that do not naturally associate, as might be experienced in a dream, is how I like to summarise and make sense of it.

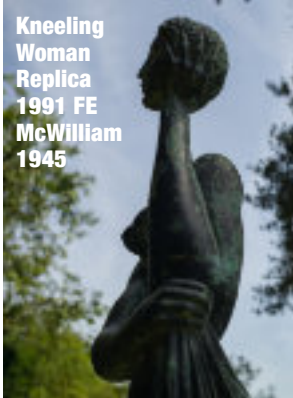
Farleys House itself is decorated in lively, brightly coloured, painted murals by Roland and the house also contains many of his own works as well as those that Lee and Roland collected. These, and other pieces on loan, show fine examples of 20th century modern art. The garden also contains contemporary sculpture.

I do not like to make the distinction between art and photography because both can make the viewer see things afresh and develop an idea. I think Lee and Roland did not make much of a distinction either because Surrealism embraced so many artistic forms.

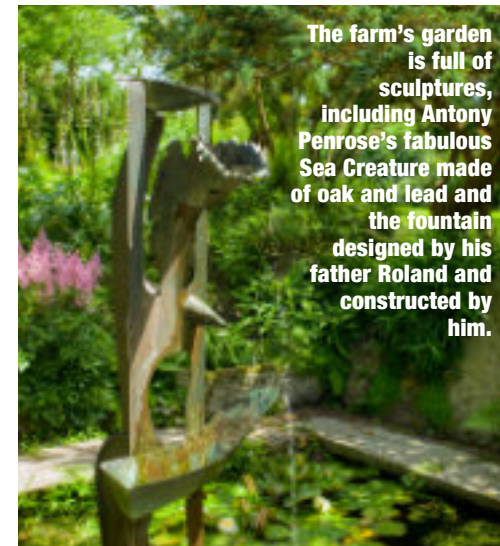
Today Farleys House is run as a museum, gallery, and archive. It is well worth a visit, it will give you some fresh vision to survey the world around you whether you are an artist, photographer, or both.

www.farleyshouseandgallery.co.uk/farleys-house/

**Kneeling Woman Replica
1991 FE McWilliam
1945**



**Sea Creature 2000
by Antony Penrose**



The farm's garden is full of sculptures, including Antony Penrose's fabulous Sea Creature made of oak and lead and the fountain designed by his father Roland and constructed by him.

YOUR COMMITTEE

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membership.saas@gmail.com

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newsletter.saas@gmail.com

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PROGRAMME SECRETARIES

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LECTURES Iris Green

FOR ALL GENERAL ENQUIRIES

enquiries.saas@gmail.com

VENUE for MEETINGS

Marshalswick Community Centre, The Ridgeway, St Albans, AL4 9TU.

VENUE for WORKSHOPS

United Reformed Church, Watford Rd, Chiswell Green, St Albans, AL2 3HG

www.stalbans-artsociety.org.uk

Visit the website or our facebook page for regularly updated news of what's on at the Society.





Fibre and Form

Until 17 April 2022

St Albans Museum + Gallery, Town Hall,
St Peter's Street, St Albans, AL1 3DH

'Fibre and Form' will focus on large-scale sculptural pieces created over the past 20 years by acclaimed artist Anna Ray.

www.stalbansmuseums.org.uk/

Laura Knight: A Panoramic View

Until 20 Feb 2022

MK Gallery, 900 Midsummer Blvd,
Milton Keynes MK9 3QA

Member, Vivien Bailey, has sent me information of an exhibition at Milton Keynes Art Gallery, which she recommends. This major retrospective exhibition celebrates one of the most popular English artists of the twentieth century, with a long and successful career that saw her break conventions and achieve many firsts for female artists.



www.mkgallery.org/whats-on

We are pleased to welcome the following new members

Wendy Cawthorne	St Albans
Laura Brady-Locke	St Albans
Russell Hogg	St Albans
Denise Abery	St Albans
Gill Lambert	St Albans
Heidi Ward	St Albans
Sheila Anstey	St Albans
Maureen Hedges	Radlett
Julie Oakley	St Albans
Justine Cropper	St Albans
Lauren Cropper	St Albans

Enfield Crafters Market

Member **Susan Dickinson** will be showing her work on a monthly basis at Enfield Crafters Market on the third Sunday each month. The event is held in Market Place, Church Street, Enfield EN2 6LN (11am - 4pm). There is also a Saturday crafters corner which is also held on the first Saturday of each month.

2022 EXHIBITION UPDATE

Here are the key dates for your diary:

SUNDAY 26th JUNE

Final date for entries

MONDAY 25th JULY

Setting up and HANDING IN
2pm-4pm and 5.30pm-7.30pm

TUESDAY 26th JULY

PRIVATE VIEW 7.30 - 9.30

WED 27th JULY - SAT 30th JULY

The exhibition will be open to the public daily 10am to 6pm

SUNDAY 31st July

COLLECTION OF ARTWORK will be from 2pm - 4pm

Please note that the hall will be CLOSED on Sunday morning

VENUE: Upper Dagnall Street Church Hall. (Same as 2021)

Please note that the hall will be CLOSED on Sunday morning



St Michael's Church,
Fishpool Street

The Waffle House,
Fishpool Street



2021-2022 Membership card illustrations by Susan Chester

Last March the Society asked if I would create two simple images of St Albans for the 2022 Membership Card.

On a sunny Tuesday morning I drove to St Michaels with every intention of parking and going for a walk – unfortunately the world, his wife, children, and dogs decided to take advantage of the beautiful day too. Being on the Vulnerable List I drove up and down Fishpool Street, the rear of the Waffle House and around the Church taking photos and soaking in the vibrant colours of early spring.

Once back in my studio I doubled up the finished dimensions and pencilled in my boundaries, then I took out a thick

black marker pen and with the aid of my photos I drew my outlines. With marker there are no "mistakes" just deliberately wonky lines and by incorporating some of the houses of Fishpool Street and a view of St Michael's I just had to colour in with vibrant watercolour paint for the first painting. I even managed to incorporate St Albans football colours!! I then tackled my view of the mill race at the Waffle House in the same way.

Susan is tutoring a workshop for SAAS on 29th January 2022 - see page 6 for more details

***Footnote from Edward Bevin:** These type of paintings are known in the world of art as 'naive.' This sounds but is not a derogatory description. They are normally painted by someone who is untrained, but for many years professional artists have also used this method, including Henri Rousseau and Pablo Picasso and naive art work is currently very much in fashion.



A less grotesque detail from *The Frogs who ask for a King*

The master of turning fables into visual art Gustave Moreau

Symbolism in art has been around since the late 19th century, but ever since it was used by French, Belgian and Russian artists it has never received the accolades that, for example, Impressionism has and I have always been puzzled by this. However, thanks to that wonderful Rothschild family and an extraordinary and unique exhibition at the truly magnificent family home of Waddesdon in leafy Buckinghamshire, my knowledge of symbolism has been greatly enhanced.

Arguably the greatest exponent of symbolism was Gustave Moreau (1826-98), born into (plenty of) money in Paris and, by all accounts, indulged by his parents, Moreau was the bon viveur of the French capital, wining and dining with the elite. But behind all this was a serious and

highly talented water colourist, clearly depicted in the Waddesdon narrative. This was by far the smallest major exhibition I have ever seen, with just 34 watercolours on view created by Moreau over six years from 1879 and not seen by the public for well over a century and are part of a series commissioned by the art collector Jean de La Fontaine. All are owned by the Rothschild family.

Much loved fables

La Fontaine's fables are famous and much loved by (often) frightened and inquisitive children who are taken on a magic carpet ride where the One Thousand Nights are set, with vivid colours and delicate brush strokes making frogs, for example, looking robust and alive. In fact, Moreau's translation of La Fontaine's deeply weird

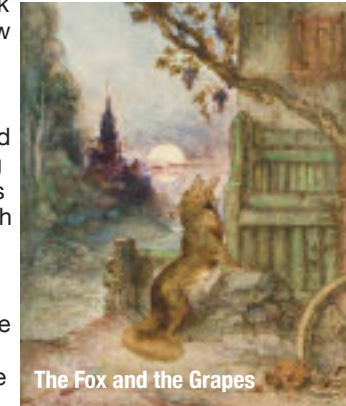
and strange works into his own wonderfully visual language on art paper, demonstrate just how much he was influenced by classical mythology, and are a joy to the beholder.

Here's an excellent example of a fable that finds its way into a painting: in *The Frogs Who Ask for a King* the frogs were utterly fed up with their democratic system and decided to ask Jupiter for a king. He threw them a log which floats gently in the water and that's all! The frogs then asked for another King and Jupiter obliges by sending them a heron who delights in chewing his way through the remains of a tasty amphibian and after yet another request, Jupiter told them that he had done what they asked and they should have stuck with the government they had before. In the water colour Moreau placed the front legs of several of the frogs in the foreground to act like arms, making human gestures as though a full discussion was taking place. The whole scene made me gulp as it seems to come across as grotesquery but after a close study of its creation, colour and format one quickly recognises the hand of a master at work.

The Fox and the Grapes is painted in red chalk, graphite, pen and violet ink, water colour and gouache. We see the fully grown animal with the familiar bushy tale attempting to reach some rather juicy grapes and as an excuse for wanting to give up, the fox says they are still green and sour. There is a full moon far below the grapes that makes the distance that the fox is trying to

breach seem all the greater. With a distant church, an old fence and a broken cart wheel in the foreground the scene is reminiscent of medieval France.

A remarkable work, which some parents might consider to be improper for most children is *The Cat transformed into a Woman*. Here is the tale of a man who is totally infatuated with his cat and



The Fox and the Grapes

manages 'by dint of prayer and charm and spell' to turn her into a beautiful woman. A long session of serious love-making takes place but during one act, the woman jumps up to chase some mice scampering around the bedroom floor. Her lover looks as though he might be hiding behind a pillow. The whole scene is atmospheric and creepy.



The Cat transformed into a Woman

One can so easily get carried away by these fables turned into paintings. Certainly Moreau does not simply invite us into the scenes but positively forces us in, so that we get mixed up with a screaming monkey, a giant elephant scared to death by a minute mouse and rats, rats and more rats! One is left in a state of exhaustiveness at the end, but far more importantly we are left in full admiration of a

symbolist artist whose impact on the world of art places Gustave Moreau at the top of the tree.

• Footnote: If any members of the society missed the Waddesdon show, they will be interested to learn that a version of this exhibition opens at the Musee National Gustave Moreau, Paris, in February 2022.

'A picture without a frame is like a soul without a body'.

Van Gogh

Earlier this month, the Society enjoyed a talk by Chris Christoforou about the importance of good framing of artwork. You rarely get one without the other but frames don't often receive the fame and recognition that their contents do. Here are 8 fascinating facts about picture frames...

1 There's no copyright on frames, one frame can look like another which has resulted in many frames looking exactly like earlier frame designs.

2 Frames aren't just for hanging and complementing your favourite art or photo, they also are key to protecting works with many frames offering not only protection from dirt and dust but glazings offering UV protection from the sun.

3 Among the first picture frames known to exist, is a frame made of wood from the 50s to 70s AD found in an Egyptian grave featuring a portrait of a woman. During these times, Egyptians carved frames into the same pieces of wood as their paintings.

4 Renaissance Italy marked the establishment of frames themselves as works of art as they featured elaborately within altars and other icons to house religious figures, commissioned by the Church.

5 As wealthy estates began to commission art works for their homes this brought about the need to create frames as functional portable pieces such as those we see in the modern day, produced by furniture builders rather than artists and architects.

6 The Fine Art Trade Guild was established to promote, develop and

inform the picture industry, it now continues to set standards & guidelines for the prints and picture framing industry.

7 The largest collection of picture frames is owned by Lara Khoury from the United Arab Emirates, she has collected 2,214 empty frames since 1992.

8 The world's largest 'photo frame' has now finished construction in Dubai, at 150 x 93 metres you can look through and see the old/new Dubai.



Nasirnebagdir. CC BY-SA 4.0