



Press release for immediate release

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## Art society launches *Art Produced During Lockdown* competition



*Clementines and jar* by Liz Balkwill

A Norfolk art society which successfully hosted one of the county's first virtual exhibitions earlier this year have launched a competition to support its members and the wider art community.

Since the first lockdown Norfolk and Norwich Art Circle has transferred its activity online to provide opportunities for new and existing members to try and ease the sense of isolation many artists have experienced.

And now, the region's oldest and most prestigious art society has launched a new competition, *Art Produced During Lockdown*, to encourage members to show work made during the pandemic.

The group, which is celebrating its 135<sup>th</sup> year in 2020, was established in 1885 and has included in its membership artists of international acclaim such as Alfred Munnings, Edward Seago and Bernard Reynolds.

With more than 200 artists in the organisation, the Art Circle has always championed its membership and the idea for the competition was developed from a suggestion made by a long-term member.

Chairman of the group Hazel Pidsley said: "It has been an honour to work with the Norfolk and Norwich Art Circle committee to support our members during this very difficult year, we are aware that the pandemic has caused feelings of loneliness, depression and a feeling of not being inspired.

"We know art is a wonderful therapy and we are determined to continue offering opportunities to our members. I am grateful to our member Richard Motley for suggesting this competition.

"We have developed a new website which is easy to access and showcases members artwork with four featured artists each month.

"Monthly art demonstrations from well-known artists continue via Zoom and these are free for members with a small charge of £5 for guests to attend.

"We're excited to be in the planning stages for three major exhibitions in 2021 in May, July and October."

A new programme of demonstrations and workshops are also being organised by the group and will be published on their website soon. In October 2021 artist Adebajji Alade, well known as The Addictive Sketcher and often seen on BBC1's The One Show, will be hosting a workshop in Norwich.

The competition is open to all members and any artwork produced since March until the closing date of 10th January 2021 can be submitted for a fee of £3.

*Art Produced During Lockdown* will be judged by John Allen, owner of Mandell's Gallery in Norwich, who will select a winner and a highly commended piece of work.

The winner will receive a cash prize and be featured on the Norfolk and Norwich Art Circle website.

Membership is £20 a year for individuals and £30 for two members living at the same address. This includes entry for selection to all exhibitions, participation in all demonstrations, reduced prices for workshops and regular newsletters.

Professional portrait painter Liz Balkwill, a member of Norfolk and Norwich Art Circle, said:

"Although I had worked hard at building a reputation for portraiture, I was keen to move away from working to commission only. It was with Norfolk and Norwich Art Circle that I showed my early still-life and figurative paintings.

"It was at one of the annual exhibitions that I got my first gallery representation. For that I will always be grateful."

For more information please visit [www.nnartcircle.com](http://www.nnartcircle.com)

## Notes for Editors

### **About Norfolk and Norwich Art Circle**

The Circle began as the Norwich Art Circle in 1885, following Crome & Cotman's famous Norwich Society of Artists.

It acquired its full title about forty years later when it merged with the Woodpeckers Art Club, presided over by Nugent Monck. After this, its members increased dramatically. The NNAC has included in its membership artists of national and international acclaim such as Arnesby Brown, Alfred Munnings, Jeffery Camp, Michael Andrews, Bernard Meadows, Edward Seago, Bernard Reynolds and Ian Houston.

The Circle is open to anyone over the age of 17, who is interested in the practice or appreciation of the visual arts and who has connections with East Anglia. Many members have had formal art training, others pursue drawing, painting, printmaking, or sculpture as a pastime. Others simply enjoy learning more about the subject they have always loved. This wide intake leads to a lively exchange of ideas and techniques, providing influences of mutual benefit.

The Circle is run by a Council democratically elected at its Annual General Meeting. The Council organises the yearly programme, and selects the work for the members' exhibitions. Each year, one third of the Council retires, and a new Chairman is elected. In this way, every member helps to steer the future of the group.

The NNAC is proud of its achievements and its democratic system which has served it well for over one hundred years.

### **Images included**



*Clementines and jar* by Liz Balkwill



*Portrait by Liz Balkwill*



*Cup of tea by Liz Balkwill*

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