



the flyer

Alexandra Loske launches The Friends Zoom programme

Alexandra is opening The Friends' new programme of Zoom events with a series of three talks.

The first, on Angelica Kauffman, with an audience of some fifty Friends was held on 20th November to great acclaim (*see Coreen Sears' report on p.2*).

The second on 18th December is shown below.

The third is scheduled for early in the new year when Alexandra will be joined by Patrick Conner to explore Chinese export ware and chinoiserie.

Talks are free and open only to members of The Friends



 FRIENDS OF
ST MICHAEL'S

The Moon in Literature

Alexandra Loske
Curator at The Royal Pavilion, Brighton

Friday 18th December
6.00 for 6.30 pm
Open only to Friends of St Michael's

Free when registered in advance with
zoomevents@friendsofsaintmichaels.co.uk

The Friends' first Zoom talk Coreen Sears

Last Friday, November 20th saw the first lecture given to the Friends of St. Michael's via Zoom with the title, 'Miss Angel Comes to England'. The speaker is a true friend of The Friends, Dr Alexandra Loske, Curator at the Royal Pavilion, Brighton and the angel in question was Angelica Kauffman, an Austrian/Swiss neoclassical artist who spent 15 years in England between 1766 and 1781.



Portrait of a woman Royal Pavilion and Museums Trust

Those of us who are familiar with Zoom accept its limitations, but also its great benefits during these difficult times. It gave us the opportunity to meet and greet old and new friends and to welcome guests who joined us from the United States and from Germany (in fact Alexandra's aunt, Renate). The format also gave us an opportunity to remind ourselves of the friendliness and sense of community that is a feature of Friends' gatherings.

Alexandra's choice of topic is very timely since this year there has been an upsurge of interest in notable, but possibly less lauded, women artists. Not only was there to have been an exhibition at the Royal Academy in June which sadly had to be cancelled, but there is at the moment a huge retrospective show of the work of Artemisia Gentileschi at the National Gallery which lasts until January.

Alexandra's interest in Angelica Kauffman is connected to the presence of three of the artist's paintings in the Brighton Museums' collection, an interest which she has built upon with research and the tracking down of further work in collections around the world. Those of you who have heard Alexandra speak before will know that she wears her considerable learning lightly. Her lectures are accessible and invariably include anecdotes and analogies that bring the period she is discussing to vivid life. Her enthusiasm and light touch are very compelling.

Angelica Kauffman was already a superstar, as Alexandra described her, when she arrived in London in 1766. Born in Switzerland, Angelica Kauffman was already established as an artist of international training and reputation by the age of 25. And this is the time that we meet her, a successful female artist in the neoclassical style and, apparently, a supreme builder of networks.

The main substance of Alexandra's lecture was to describe Angelica's progress to greater and greater success and recognition as a leading artist of the day. Her contacts made in Italy with English visitors passing through on the Grand Tour were put to good use. Her connection with Sir Joshua Reynolds (the source of rumours at the time it seems) gave her the entrée to the most influential artistic circles. To him, she was his 'Miss Angel'.

Whether there was truth to the rumours or not, he certainly ensured her appointment as one of two women founding members of the Royal Academy, his new project and she continued to exhibit there for the period of her time in London. Her ascent was not always smooth, of course, as perhaps it could not have been for a woman artist at the time. There were detractors among her fellow (male) artists and she became embroiled in an unfortunate marriage.



Self portrait *Hesitating between music and painting* Nostell Priory/National Trust

This narrative was illustrated by Alexandra with Kauffman's paintings and decorative work, some of which were photographed by Alexandra in Düsseldorf at the same exhibition of Kauffman's work which had been scheduled to open at the RA. The talk was followed by questions – the one that sticks in my mind is from a questioner who mentioned that the next woman to be appointed a Royal Academician was Dame Laura Knight in 1936!

We thank Alexandra for her continuing support of The Friends and based on the success of this event The Friends are going to take up her kind offer of two more lectures.