



ARTSNATIONAL

Northern Rivers

Newsletter 29 ♦ November 2025



The Cottage in a Cornfield, John Constable, 1833

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CONNECT ENRICH INSPIRE

From the Chair with Dianne Stuart

After five years at the helm and eight years on the committee, it is time to stand aside. Looking back, they were turbulent years, with the challenge of COVID, membership decline, a name change and new ways of doing business. However, with member loyalty and a dedicated committee, ArtsNational Northern Rivers is in a strong position to continue thriving.

Diana Harden and Peter Harden (Secretary and Treasurer) are also stepping down as are Catherine White, Wendy Edwards and Tom Trembath. To them and those continuing, my gratitude and thanks.

It is my pleasure to welcome new Chair – Cas Veriga, Secretary Jane Butler, Treasurer Katharine Myers and new committee member – Christine Bacon. Between them, a mix of new and long-standing membership. I am sure you will agree we are in excellent hands going forward into 2026, with continuing committee members – Vice Chair Craig Snyder, Marion Pescud, Erica Light, Susan Anderson and Chris Chaseling.

“Our mission is to serve as a beacon of inclusivity and influence as we educate, support, and advocate for the arts across



Dianne Stuart



Australia, fostering a vibrant and diverse cultural landscape”.

We provide this within our signature welcoming atmosphere.

Thank you for your loyalty, support and friendship. It has been a privilege to follow in the footsteps of former chairs and I look forward to enjoying an exciting 2026 series with you.

On behalf of your committee, best wishes for an enjoyable Christmas with family and friends and a safe and rewarding 2026.

 Dianne Stuart



ARTSNATIONAL
Northern Rivers

ArtsNational is
the place to be!

You never know who
you'll see or what
you will discover.

Join our membership now

Call for Northern Rivers Committee Volunteers

With several committee members resigning after years of valued service, we are seeking bright new talent to join our team. We guarantee you fun in a very supportive environment, but more importantly, you'll be providing assistance to create an arts/cultural base which brings likeminded people together and enriches our community.

Our society organises nine presentations a year, plus other separate events. Usually, we attend about nine daytime meetings and an assortment of social gatherings. There is no demand to attend everything, absences are respected and other committee members cover your allocated tasks. It is for this reason we hope to attract more committee members – so no matter who is away, the show will go on.

If you would like to join this friendly group, please talk to a current committee member or email: northernrivers@artsnational.au for more information.

Ken Done: No Rules Exhibition at HOTA

Last month I visited the Ken Done exhibition at Surfers Paradise's Home of the Arts – a colourful explosion of work depicting Australia as Done sees it. His spontaneous but precision brush strokes give his work an exuberance, and his bold colours impart an atmosphere of joy and optimism.



Ken Done

Done began his career in advertising before staging his first solo exhibition in 1980. Since then, he has been a household name with his vibrant paintings and merchandising empire. He has been a finalist in all major art awards, including the Archibald, Sulman, and Wynne prizes. In 1989, he also won 'Australian father of the Year'!



Marion Pescud

Ignoring traditional art rules, Done created his own. His images are painted via a series of flat brush strokes and squiggles. He reduces complex scenes with minimal rendering, producing easily recognisable subjects. His work has been described as the most original style to come out of Australia, and his paintings are in collections throughout the world.

The exhibition runs until 15 February, 2026, and ticket can be purchased on-line.
Adult: \$21 Concession: \$18.

 Marion Pescud

October Presentation:

My Scrambling Affair – How Constable's Late Paintings Changed the Face of Modern Art

An accredited paintings conservator-restorer and technical art historian Sarah is also the world expert on John Constable. Trained at the Courtauld Gallery in London, she founded the Constable Research Centre in 1986, where for almost 40 years she has forensically examined the artist's materials and techniques. She has appeared in several TV programmes, including twice on *Fake or Fortune?* where she was instrumental in the discovery of three 'lost' Constables. She impressed the audience with her enthusiasm and vast knowledge, and those present will certainly look at Constable with a new appreciation in future.



Sarah Cove



John Constable,
Ramsay Richard Reinagle, c. 1799

John Constable was born in 1776 in Suffolk, and begin his artistic life painting romantic landscapes near his home. His father was a wealthy corn merchant, owner of Flatford Mill (one of his most famous works) and Dedham Mill in Essex. As his older brother was intellectually disabled, he was expected to take over the business, however in 1799, he persuaded his father to let him embark on a career in art. His younger brother became manager of the mills, while he was granted a small allowance to pursue his dream.

Constable entered the Royal Academy School as a probationer, attending life classes and copying the works of old masters. In 1802 he refused the position of drawing master at Great Marlow Military College (now Sandhurst), a decision which threatened his career advancement however he was determined to become a professional landscape painter, claiming: 'There is room enough for a natural painter. The great vice of the present day is to attempt to do something beyond the truth.'

By 1803, he was exhibiting paintings at the Royal Academy. To make ends meet, he took up painting scenes of country houses and portraiture, both at which he was proficient, but he found dull. He fell in love with childhood friend Maria Bicknell however, her wealthy grandfather and father considered him a social inferior. Determined to marry, Maria forfeited her inheritance. Later, after the deaths of Constable's parents, he inherited one fifth of the family business.

The couple married in 1816 and honeymooned by the sea in Weymouth and Brighton where Constable experimented with new techniques and a brighter colour palette. He gained a new appreciation of nature, particularly cloud formations of which he produced over 200 studies.

Constable was determined to paint on a larger scale, not only to be more prominent at the Royal Academy exhibitions, but because bigger works commanded a larger price. He sold his

first important canvas, *The White Horse*, in 1819, which in turn saw him elected as an associate of the Royal Academy. Six monumental works (known as the 'six-footers') followed.

His most famous painting, *The Hay Wain*, was exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1821 where it failed to sell, but in 1824 it and a smaller work, *Yarmouth Jetty*, was acquired by Anglo-French dealer John Arrowsmith who displayed it in his Paris salon. Both paintings caused a sensation, and *The Hay Wain* was awarded a gold medal by French King Charles X.



The Hay Wain, John Constable, 1821

Sarah used detailed images to support her technical and scientific findings on Constable's work – his methods, inspiration and personal hardships. He was not lauded by British contemporaries having sold only 20 paintings in England, but the French embraced his work and he inspired such luminaries as Géricault and Delacroix, and greatly influenced artists of the Barbizon School. He was the first to use a palette knife directly onto the canvas – 50 years before the era of Impressionism.

Constable died unexpectedly of heart failure in 1837 at the age of 60. He left a wonderful legacy of a fresh perspective and innovative techniques, and has well-earned the impressive title of 'the Father of Modern Painting'.

QR Marion Pescud



Osmington Bay, John Constable, 1816

Less than a year after the birth of their seventh child in 1828, Maria died of tuberculosis, aged just 41. Constable was inconsolable, dressing in black as he raised his children alone. His art deviated from the serenity of his earlier work – its broken style an indicator of his mental stress and turmoil. He allowed himself more freedom of expression. He painted many full-scale preliminary sketches with free and vigorous brushwork, and his oil sketches demonstrate that approaching landscapes in a new and abstract direction. His water-colours too, were remarkably free and almost mystical.



Stonehenge, John Constable, 1835



October Raffle

Winners of the October raffle were Helen Arnot who received the hard cover book, *Late Constable*, which directly related to the evening's presentation, and Stephen Stocker who won an ArtsNational canvas tote bag.

Left: Helen Arnot

Right: Jane Butler with winner, Stephen Stocker



October-Home Host

Committee Member Wendy Edwards graciously hosted presenter Sarah Cove, and her travelling companion, childhood friend Lindsay.

The duo made the most of their stay with a spot of local sightseeing at the Byron Bay lighthouse and wandering around the beautiful old buildings of Bangalow. They also spent happy hours relaxing by Wendy's pool, and enjoyed brunch at a Lennox Head café before they continued their journey.



Presenter Sarah Cove with home host, Wendy Edwards

October Post-Presentation Supper



Post-Presentation Supper



As always, members and guest enjoyed light refreshments and a chat after the presentation



Paul Gauguin: Master and Monster!

Paul Gauguin, the French painter, sculptor, printmaker, ceramicist and writer, is surrounded in escalating controversy. Can one ignore the man and admire the art, or does a man of such low moral fibre still deserve accolades? This is causing a dilemma for exhibition curators around the world – with divided opinions from gallery staff to the viewing public.

Gauguin was an arrogant and violent man – a serial rapist, paedophile and exploiter of colonialism and its colonised people. He has been labelled a 'sex tourist' and indeed



Paul Gauguin

was responsible for spreading syphilis and illegitimate children throughout the South Pacific. His predatory behaviour and amoral lifestyle dictated the core of his art.



Vairaumati tei oa, Gauguin, 1982

Gauguin was born in Paris in June, 1848. In 1850, the Gauguin family fled France for Peru when the newspaper for which his father wrote was suppressed by authorities. Sadly, his father died of a heart attack en route, so his mother arrived in Peru as a widow with 18-month-old Paul and his 2½-year-old sister, Marie.

Gauguin enjoyed an idyllic childhood with his father's aristocratic family in Peru,

His distinct style, was characterised by a bolder use of colour and less traditional subject matter. A brilliant colourist and exceptional draughtsman, Gauguin was able to reimagine his subjects. His late, colour-saturated, sun-drenched images of French Polynesia were constructs of a fantasy 'primitive' world with scantily-clad young girls posing erotically to satisfy the European viewer's delectation. He invented a version of Tahiti that catered to his sexual fantasies, which critics have labelled 'an embodiment of his own desire'. His work, bound in neo-primitivism, post-impressionism and symbolism movements influenced artists like Matisse and Picasso. His paintings sell for staggering sums of money, with one in 2014 fetching more than US \$210million.



The Birth, Gauguin, 1896



however it ended abruptly in 1854 when they lost political power during the Peruvian civil conflicts. His mother returned to France, and he was educated in Paris and Orléans before joining the merchant marines, then the French navy. He worked as a successful stockbroker for 11 years, but when the market collapsed in 1882, he decided to pursue full-time painting.

Money was scarce so Gauguin moved to Copenhagen with his Danish-born wife and five children. His failure as a tarp salesman saw him leave his family in poverty and aged 43, sailed to Tahiti in search of more exotic surroundings such as he had known in Peru. He sought a 'primitive' existence and was disappointed to find that missionaries had beaten him to paradise, and rather than bare-chested, the ladies were covered up to their necks! Nevertheless, he cohabited with adolescent girls and was a regular domestic violence offender. He married three native girls – the youngest 13, the others 14 – and fathered several more children.

In 1893, Gauguin returned to France, where he dressed in Polynesian costume to affect an exotic persona while he continued to paint Tahitian subjects. He conducted a very public affair with a teenage Indonesian/Malay girl. Despite a 13,000-franc inheritance from his uncle, by mid-1895 Gauguin was again penniless and began accepting charity from friends. His attempts to raise funds for his return to Tahiti failed, however fellow artist Eugène Carrière arranged a cheap passage.

He was able to support himself through the sale of his paintings and donations from friends, and built a reed and thatch house with a studio near Papeete. He became increasingly interested in local politics, contributing abrasive articles to a local journal, then edited his own monthly publication. During this time, he had relationships with two 14-year-old girls and bore three more children.

By 1902, Gauguin was living in the Marquesas where he thought he would find new motifs to paint. He chose to paint landscapes, still lifes, and figure studies, avoiding the primitive and lost paradise themes of his Tahiti work. His health began to deteriorate and his sight fail. He was in excruciating pain from an old injury acquired during a brawl, and was taking injections of morphine and laudanum. He died suddenly on the morning of 8 May, 1903. He was 54 years old. An empty bottle of laudanum was found by his bedside, which raised suspicions of suicide.

Gauguin has caused a quandary for galleries and museums around the world. They are reassessing his legacy in light of the heightened public sensitivity to issues of gender, race and colonialism.



Tahitian Woman, Paul Gauguin, 1899

According to Christopher Riopelle, a curator at London's National Gallery, everything now must be viewed in a much more nuanced context, while Vicente Todoli, director of the Pirelli Hangar Bicocca art foundation in Milan claims that 'once an artist creates something, it doesn't belong to the artist anymore: it belongs to the world'. New Zealand born American curator and art historian Ashley Remer, has written that 'to showcase men like Gauguin does, in its own way, support rape culture'. He believes that the artist's actions were so egregious that they overshadow the work.

Gauguin left a mixed legacy. The vogue for his work started soon after his death, however as his fame rose, his personal reputation plummeted. The dilemma will remain – can we still applaud the work while deploring the man?

✉ Marion Pescud

Thank You and Farewell

Leaving the committee after several years of dedicated service, efficiency, humour and comradery are Dianne, Peter, Diana, Wendy, Tom, and Catherine. They have our deep thanks, and we are delighted that they will remain as members.



Dianne Stuart



Peter Harden



Diana Harden



Wendy Edwards



Tom Trembath



Catherine White

Dianne has served as Chair of Northern Rivers for five years and held the role of Vice Chair and Secretary before that. She has also spent the two years as the National Secretary of the Association. Her dedication and work ethic has been outstanding. Always pleasant, it has been a joy to volunteer under her leadership.

Peter has been our Treasurer for the past five years. He has had to make some difficult decisions, but always retained his energy and humour. He worked hard for the Northern Rivers to remain a viable society, particularly under the decimating circumstances of Covid.

Diana is no-nonsense and most efficient, and we could always rely on her to get the job done. She has been our secretary for the past six years, and in 2024 also organised the Australian Lecturer tours for the ArtsNational Mini Cook circuit (Northern Rivers, Brisbane, Rockhampton and Cairns societies). Her logic has been a valuable asset.

Hospitality queen Wendy has hosted several lecturers over the four years that she has been a committee member. She is extremely knowledgeable in the arts, and has provided us with welcome assessments, as well as pitching in on a number of duties. She also writes articles for our Northern Rivers newsletter, which she will continue to do.

Tom has been on the committee for two years as our smiling boss of the bar, but has helped serve our drinks for much longer than that.

Catherine joined the committee in 2024 and has been a stalwart taking on many tasks. Her roles have included Deputy Treasurer and was our representative for the 2026 Mini Cook Tour. Catherine leaves us to devote her time as President of Friends of Libraries Byron Shire.

November Presentation: The Art of Forgery

Dr Lorraine Kypiotis was channeling Marilyn Monroe as she sashayed to present *The Art of Forgery*, a humorous and informative talk about art fraud through the centuries. Art crime including forgery, fraud, theft, archaeological and war looting, and ransom yields criminals an annual profit of over \$6 billion. The fine Art Expert Institute in Switzerland estimates the percentage of fraudulent artworks as high as 50%.



Dr Lorraine Kypiotis

While Lorraine explained the world of art forgery, she mainly focused on paintings – selecting a few artists and a couple of very talented fraudsters.

One of the first documented case of art fraud was recorded in 1496, when a marble carving of a sleeping cupid was buried for some time to acquire an aged patina, then sold as antiquity to Cardinal Riario of San Giorgio. The ruse was discovered with the culprit being a young and unknown Michelangelo! The Cardinal was so impressed by the workmanship, he became Michelangelo's patron and commissioned many sculptures, including the *Pieta*, which resides in the Vatican in Rome. *The Sleeping Cupid* is lost, thought to be destroyed in a fire in the Palace of Whitehall, London, in about 1698 after being purchased by Charles I.



French painter Jean-Baptiste Camille Carot (1798 -1875) is thought to have produced about 2,500 artworks, however it is claimed that there are over 7,000 in collections around the world.

An Albrecht Dürer portrait (undated but before 1785) was purchased by the Directorate of the Elector's Art Gallery in Munich in 1805, believing it to be a copy by Abraham Kűfner. In a rare twist, it is now thought to be an original Dürer self-portrait. It seems Kűfner had borrowed the work from Durer to copy it, but returned the copy and kept the original for himself!

Most forgers are trained artists, very knowledgeable about the subject and the history of the works they forge. They ensure they use the correct pigments of the time, install the painting in a frame to suit the period, and often make up a provenance. Currently there are scientific methods to check these elements, but even just decades ago, a skilled practitioner could master the deception.



Forgers Wolfgang and Helene Beltracchi sold *Red Picture with Horses*, supposedly signed by expressionist artist Heinrich Campendonk in 1914, however, the game was up when titanium white (only available after 1929) instead of zinc white paint was discovered. Not because the Beltracchi's were careless, but because the supplier they had carefully sourced had not cleaned their storage vessels properly. The Beltracchis' made millions by producing around 300 fakes, but they were ordered to pay 35 million euros in damages and serve time in jail. Helene claimed to have

Left: Wolfgang Beltracchi with his Van Gogh pastiche



inherited the art collection from her grandfather, and even produced a blurred photo of herself dressed up as her grandmother, as part of their paintings' provenance.

Another of Lorraine's amusing tales concerned forger Han Van Meegeren who sold Dutch 'treasures' to the Gestapo during WWII. He was jailed for treason, but after he painted a canvas in jail to prove he was indeed selling forgeries, he was lauded as a hero for duping the Nazis. (You can watch the 2019 film *The Last Vermeer* starring Guy Pearce, about the Van Meegeren trial on YouTube.)

Left: Van Meegeren's fake Vermeer purchased by Reichmarschell, Hermann Goering

Paintings by such Australian artists Sidney Nolan, Russell Drysdale, William Dobell and Brett Whitely have been forged. This does not just affect the artists, but also has a significant impact on the art market by instilling a lack of confidence in investors. Fraud and cultural appropriation are particularly rife with Aboriginal artworks, and in turn a threat to their economic livelihood.



Whitely forgery sold for \$2.5 million in 2007

The victim of the most fraudulent knockoffs in history is American pop artist Andy Warhol. His prints are the most frequently forged body of works followed by his paintings and drawings. The latter is due, in part, to Warhol's use of mechanical photo-silkscreen technique previously used for commercial purposes. To date, it has cost the Andy Warhol Foundation over \$100 million, and one New York family alone, more than \$6 million.

The most forged of Warhol's prints were from his *Marilyn* series, which became doubly famous after four of the five silk screen prints were shot. Performance artist Dorothy Podber asked Warhol if she could shoot them, which he interpreted as photographing them. But no! She used a small revolver, to shoot the stacked Marylins' right between the eyes. Despite Warhol's repair efforts, bullet marks are still visible. *Shot Sage Blue Marilyn* was sold at auction by Christie's in New York City in 2022 for \$195 million.

And so, to prove the enormous sums associated with art world, the evening's presenter Lorraine Kypiotis, the resident art historian on ABC *Nightlife*, and Undergraduate Coordinator at the National Art School in Sydney, channeled Marilyn.

Her knowledge and passion for the topic were evident, however her breathless rendering of bars from 'Diamonds are a Girl's Best Friend', came as a very pleasant surprise.

QR Marion Pescud



Publicity photo of Marilyn Monroe on the 'Niagara' film set, and Warhol's 'Shot Sage Blue Marilyn'

Northern Rivers Annual General Meeting

Just prior to the evening's presentation, Dianne Stuart delivered the Annual General Report. After five years as Chair, she had much to reflect on. She detailed the national body's operations, its aims and priorities.

Dianne thanked the committee for their hard work, and spoke of the dedicated service given by the resigning members. She introduced those who were joining the committee next year, and assured the audience that the Northern Rivers Society would continue in stable, competent hands.

Dianne also applauded the membership for their on-going support and the friendly atmosphere which we hold with pride.

Peter Harden, the treasurer for the past five years also presented his financial report, highlighting how the membership had grown despite the fraught COVID pandemic.



Retiring Chair, Dianne Stuart

November Super Raffle



Winners of our bumper November raffle were Wendy Edwards who received a beautiful Christmas hamper filled with goodies, and Jane Bulter who won *Art and Crime: Exploring the Dark Side of the Art World*, an illustrated hardcover book on the study of art crime edited by Noah Charney.

Wendy Edwards



Jane Butler

November Home-Host

Wendy Edwards again generously home-hosted the evening's presenter, Lorraine Kypiotis. They have been friends for some years as Lorraine was one of Wendy's lecturers while studying for her Fine Arts degree at the National Art School in Sydney.

The pair enjoyed a lovely catch up, and Lorraine found time to visit a couple of her favourite Bangalow shops, before heading to Sydney to deliver more lectures.



Wendy with Dr Lorraine Kypiotis

Celebratory Supper



Members and guests mingled to enjoy a celebratory supper following our final presentation for the year.

The Christmas spirit was present as we toasted another successful year and enthused about forthcoming holiday plans.





Vale William Robinson

William Robinson AO, widely regarded as one of Australia's most distinguished contemporary artists, died aged 89 in August this year. He passed away at the Wesley Hospital in Auchenflower following a brief illness. His critically acclaimed work is recognised for his unique interpretation of the Australian landscape as well as his witty whimsical portraits and narrative scenes. His paintings routinely sell for six-figure sums.

Born in Brisbane in 1936, Robinson spoke of a 'quiet childhood where he saw the world with a certain sense of absurdity and wonder'. By the time the young Bill started school, he was proficient with pastels (a love of which endured throughout his career).

Robinson studied at the Queensland Teachers College and taught at several institutions until he became a full-time painter in 1989. His art includes drawings, lithographs and etchings, oil painting, pastel, watercolour, and bronze sculptures.

He married Shirley Rees in 1958, giving her credit for his inspiration. Until her death in 2022, she was his greatest supporter and critic. They had six children, but tragically their eldest daughter Jane, passed away from malignant lymphoma in 1991, and their youngest daughter Sophie was killed in a car accident the following year. Robinson turned to nature for solace, imparting his paintings with messages about the preciousness of the natural world. He said, "I was in a realm where laughter had gone and was replaced by a certain spirituality."



William Robinson



Fern trees and gums in sunlight, William Robinson, 2000

eyes. At first, they didn't quite recognise the wit and wonder of the landscapes through his skewed and ever-shifting perspective. His farmyard paintings are enlivened with a whimsical sense of play, set within a masterful perspective. He painted only seven portraits – all imaginative and humorous, and of himself!

The Robinson's travelled extensively around Europe and over several years Bill created lithographs in Paris with artists Franck Bordas. As his recognition grew, he exhibited his work in France, Italy, and Japan.

In 1984, with his fame and awards growing, the family moved to an 80-hectare farm on the Beechmont Range. "I don't want to say we knew nothing about farming," Robinson said, "but Shirley became extremely knowledgeable about goats." Ten years later the family relocated to Kingscliff and acquired the Springbrook studio.

Robinson's art confounded many as he made people look at the Australian landscape through his

During his career, Robinson had 83 solo exhibitions and participated in 92 group exhibitions. In 2001, *Darkness and Light – The Art of William Robinson* was published to accompany the large-scale retrospective of 90 works for a touring exhibition which opened at the Queensland Art Gallery.

He was the winner of 13 major awards including two Archibald Prizes, (*Equestrian self-portrait* in 1987 and *Self-portrait with Stunned Mullet*, 1995) and two Wynne Prizes (*The Rainforest*, 1990 and *Creation landscape: earth and sea*, 1996).



Equestrian self-portrait, 1987



Self-portrait with Stunned Mullet, 1995

Robinson has left a wonderful legacy. His work is represented in all major Australian public art museums, plus the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Vatican Museums, Vatican City; and the British Museum, London. He was appointed an Officer of the Order of Australia in 2007 for outstanding achievement and service to the arts, and was awarded Honorary Doctorates by three Universities – the University of Southern Queensland, Toowoomba; Griffith University, Brisbane; and Queensland University of Technology, Brisbane. In 2007, he received the Officer of the Order of Australia (AO) for his outstanding achievement and service to the arts.



In 2009 the William Robinson Gallery was founded at Old Government House in QUT's Garden's Point Campus to honour the life and work of the distinguished contemporary Australian artist.

 Marion Pescud

Left: William Robinson, with *The Rainforest*, 1990

The 'Night Watch' Dog

It may be difficult to recognise a dog skulking in the shadows in the lower right-hand corner of Rembrandt's grand painting *The Night Watch*.

A researcher at the Rijksmuseum announced in September that after more than 350 years, she had discovered the artist's inspiration for the dog which she discovered while visiting a museum in the Dutch city of Middelburg. She found the drawing sketched by Adriaen van de Venne as design for the title page of a 1619 book by Jacob Cats. She recognised the dog by the turn of its head.



Detail from 'The Night Watch', Rembrandt, 1642.

It was obvious that Rembrandt had studied van de Venne's work for inspiration, although he gave it a slightly more alert pose. The dog suffered severe damage when a mentally-ill person vandalised it with a knife. The Rijksmuseum's director, Taco Dibbits explained that attack "cut so deep into the Dutch identity that they wanted it restored as fast as possible. The retouching was done with broad strokes, and some of the dog's anatomy was misinterpreted."

Since 2019, the painting has been undergoing a multimillion-dollar restoration. Conservators discovered that he had sketched the dog as part of an under-drawing on the canvas, and the smudgy, faded figure was mostly just chalk.

Canine specialists were unable to identify the specific breed of dog, because the idea of a dog pedigree didn't exist in the 17th century however, some Rembrandt experts think that it may be what is now called a Dutch Smoushond a family dog (a precursor to the Basset Fauve de Bretagne).

QR Marion Pescud



Above:
Rembrandt's dog, 1642



Left: Detail from the
Adriaen van de Venne
sketch, 1619

Save the Date!

First Presentation 2026 – Monday 9 March

Johannes Vermeer and the Absent Subject, presented by Albert Godetzky

No grand scenes or powerful portraits, instead the domestic lives of 17th century women and children. These are the main subjects of Johannes Vermeer's only remaining 65 paintings, including perhaps the most famous of which is the enigmatic *Girl with the Pearl Earring* (c1665).

These paintings enable the viewers to contemplate luminous scenes of ordinary 17th century interiors that show women and children reading, writing letters, playing musical instruments or adorning themselves with jewellery. Vermeer, through his highly skilled use of light and perspective, is able to portray calm, almost timeless atmospheric pictures with fascinating psychological intensity.

Fame evaded Vermeer during his lifetime, and little is known of his artistic influences. His output was small since he relied on local patrons and it wasn't until 20th century exhibitions in Washington and the Hague that Vermeer achieved recognition as one of the greatest painters of the Dutch Golden Age.

Dr Albert Godetzky teaches on topics related to 16-18th century art and is an Associated Lecturer at the Courtauld and Visiting Lecturer at the Victoria and Albert Museum in London.



Girl Reading a Letter at an Open Window
Vermeer, 1657-1659

Wendy Edwards

Northern Rivers has enjoyed another successful year, and we thank you for your support.

We wish you a happy and safe holiday season, and look forward to seeing everyone refreshed and ready to go in the new year.