

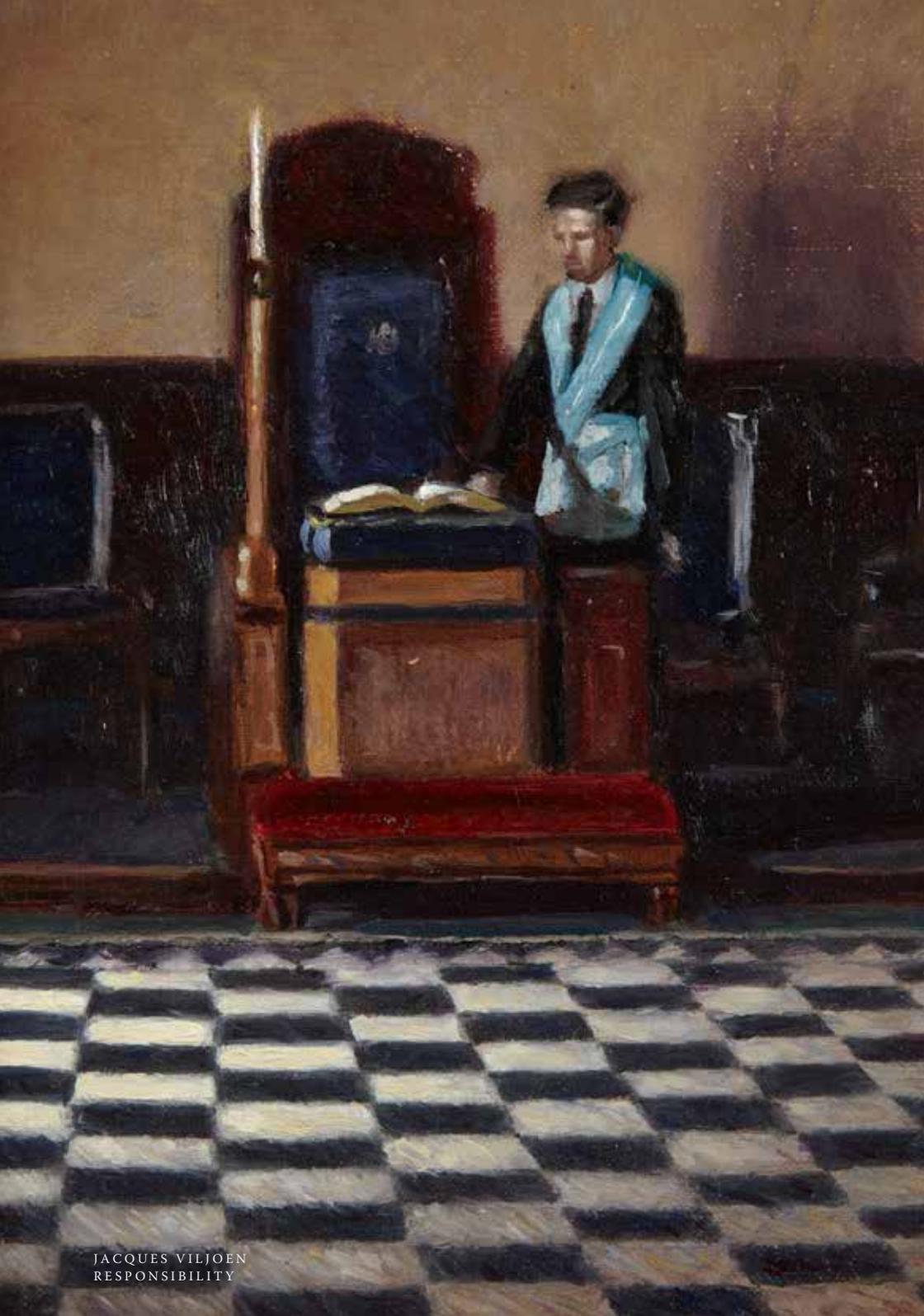


ROUGH TO SMOOTH

ART INSPIRED BY
FREEMASONRY –
PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE

24 JUNE – 1 JULY 2017





ROUGH TO SMOOTH
ART INSPIRED BY
FREEMASONRY –
PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE

from
JACQUES VILJOEN
ARTIST IN
RESIDENCE
and guest artists

FOREWORD

ANTHONY WILSON

President of the Board of General Purposes,
United Grand Lodge of England

Welcome to Freemasons' Hall, one of the finest examples of an Art Deco building in London and built as a Memorial to the fallen Freemasons of World War One. As we celebrate our Tercentenary, it is important that we not only commemorate our wonderful history but also inspire new audiences about the values of Freemasonry.

One such initiative to encourage this has been the appointment of our first ever Artist in Residence, Jacques Viljoen. A classically trained young artist, he has been working inside Freemasons' Hall for the past few months, with unprecedented access to objects, spaces and people within the building. His aim has been to explore what Freemasonry is all about through the medium of paint, using traditional techniques and to highlight that we are just as relevant today as we have been for the last 300 years.

We have also been delighted to welcome nine additional guest artists as part of this project. They come using a diverse array of skills from the traditional oils to visual art and photography, and have all created works to convey how they see Freemasonry in today's society.

Freemasonry has a long tradition of craft and art, as evidenced by this magnificent building and our fine Museum collection, and we hope that the artworks created for this exhibition will allow a wider audience to better understand our underlying values of integrity, respect, caring and concern for others, co-operation and charity.





VISIBILITY OF THE CONCEALED

ROBERTO EKHOLM

Curator

Freemasonry has a history of being seen as a mysterious organisation. On the occasion of its tercentenary, the United Grand Lodge of England invited Jacques Viljoen to be their first artist in residence.

Viljoen has spent four months at Freemasons' Hall, the headquarters of the United Grand Lodge researching many different aspects of Freemasonry. He has been given unprecedented access to objects and spaces in the building. To become a Freemason is to start a process of a personal journey, a rite of passage. Through initiation ceremonies, Freemasons experience various states of enlightenment. Viljoen has made a series of paintings capturing parts of the masonic journey: a portrait of a father and son tells us about brotherhood, a set-up of a lodge room, and a masonic still life.

His still life titled *The Craft* is composed of objects which have a direct relation to Freemasonry: the processional sword of the Supreme Grand Chapter, the candlestick used in the Grand Temple, a master's collar with enamelled badge to commemorate the 250th anniversary of English Freemasonry, the maul (stone mason's mallet) that was used to carve the arms on the tower of Freemasons' Hall London, and the perfect

ashlar (cubic stone) that represents the complete Freemason. Many of the historic masonic artists in their collection, and some of the young invited artists for the exhibition, use the sight-size painting technique which is to paint exactly what you see. Looking at the still life and the other paintings it is not their mimetic quality that intrigues us, but the selection of objects or the room that is being captured. It is what we do not see that draws us in; it both intrigues us to explore the hidden parts of Freemasonry and makes us aware we cannot find all the answers.

Here symbols and objects are not just used in a classical way of reading a still life, but they tell of a journey filled with ritual, ceremonies and codes only Freemasons can decipher. Looking at these paintings we get a glimpse of the world behind the closed doors, but it also tells of a multi-layered narrative of Freemasons. The works in the exhibition are placed around the building and some of Viljoen's works are displayed in the Library and Museum amongst the historic collection.

On a selection of books used for Masonic ceremonies, Viljoen has painted objects on the covers.

At first look, they seem to be the original book covers but, on a closer inspection, we realise they have been painted on. Here the book becomes a painting and the painting becomes an object. As we look at these books, the painted cover acts as a key to both the meaning of the book and the object itself. The objects refer to the books and specific parts of Freemasonry. In a display cabinet, on the cover of one book *Rules and Regulations*, there is a ballot box painted; on the shelf underneath on *The Master Mason* a Master apron has been painted, and at the bottom on *The Past Master*, a Past Master's collar for Composite Lodge. The books are placed next to the objects, not to display their likeness in reproduction, but to suggest a dialogue between the history of the objects, the significance of the book, and their contemporary relevance.

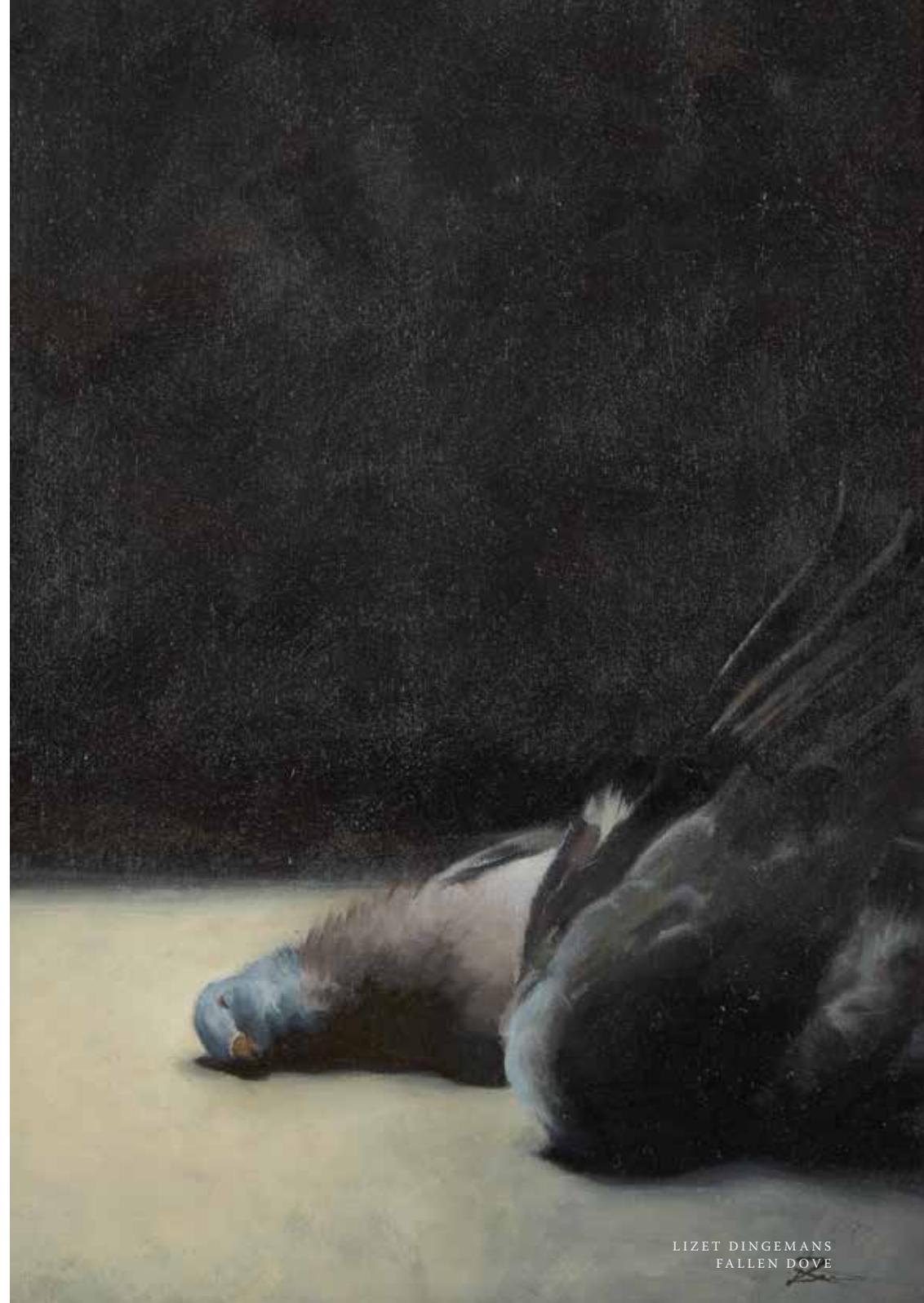
The display tells us of a passing of time and process to become a Mason. Some of the books presented throughout the library and museum are opened on specific pages, and some are closed. There is a play between enclosed and disclosed, to invite you to engage but to remind you of the complexities of the Freemason's journey.

Viljoen invited nine other artists to take part in the exhibition. The artists have taken it upon themselves to portray or capture Masonic elements. Alexander Debenham's *Room 6 at Freemasons' Hall*, painted from life, presents a room set up for a Royal Arch chapter meeting. Ensigns, objects and plinths are organised in a ritualistic and symbolical structure. Debenham has painted the scene exactly

as a Freemason set it up for him. We are again given a peek into the order; the room is filled with pageantry and symbolism. Here the artist's painting becomes the window to look in, but he leaves us with no clues, suggestions, or answers to what it means or what the meetings entail. Sofia Welch's *Eye of Providence* is open and looks out at us from a void. The reflective pupil suggests both an inquisitive and a self-reflective gaze, much as Freemasonry has opened up as it moves into its next 300 years. Many layers of meaning and journeys are gesticulated throughout the exhibition. The rough to perfect ashlar is the source of knowledge in Jack Ford's *The Creation of Brotherhood*. Painted from his imagination, Ford presents a symbol of transition from a rough stone to a perfectly smooth polished one. This is the moral and spiritual life to be achieved by living according to Masonic principles.

From the time Freemasonry began, to the present, our ways of seeing have changed. What was once relevant, as in the search for purity and the divine, has different meanings for today's younger generation. In Lizet Dingemans' *Fallen Dove*, the dove has become a pigeon; it lies on the ground, it looks partly fallen or rested. Playing on the symbolism of "the dove and olive branch" *Fallen Dove* speaks of changes in time. History is very present at the United Grand Lodge but as time changes so are the messages.

Michael Harrison, one of the Masonic artists in the exhibition, depicts both the Masonic process, and the honouring of time.



LIZET DINGEMANS
FALLEN DOVE



In *Do Hereby and Hereon* and *Quarterly Communication*, he alludes to the underlying theme of the journey to become a Mason. The paintings *In Glad Thanksgiving* and *The Calling Up* depicts a small group of brethren, one at present time facing the memorial window, the other “the fallen”. To be a Mason is to understand and honour the passing of time. Similar themes are alluded to in Nicholas Chaundy’s *In memoriâ*, a response to the memory of the 3,225 Freemasons who died in the First World War. Freemasons’ Hall was built in memory of the English Freemasons who died in that war. Buildings are part of the ideology of Freemasons; as an allegory or a metaphor of how we build our lives. Martin Taylor, the second Masonic artist in the exhibition, painted *Freemasons’ Hall. 60 Great Queen St, London. WC2B 5AZ*. It depicts the building as a powerful and stoic memory of the many craftsmen who built it, but also the present, with a blue hoarding in front of the building, tying it to a specific moment and continuous change around it.

Looking through the art collection in Freemasons’ Hall you can see how the material culture of Freemasonry adheres to traditional designs but are also works that use old symbolism in new ways. They reflect the changes of time and the Masonic artistic expressions in different periods. Erika Bo spent a month looking through Masonic archival materials. Through a process of scanning, painting on glass, and layering of imagery she creates abstracted painterly photographs. Her large-scale photographs, filled with textured layers of imagery and symbols, are both intriguing and mesmerising.

To be invited to make art inspired by Freemasonry and to reflect on modern times, thinking and relevance is a challenge. Through concepts and process Bo’s work confronts this challenge to decipher the many hidden meanings and at the same time speak to a contemporary audience. Looking at these photographs we are immersed in the richness of symbolism of the Masons as well as intrigued by her artistic language. Her use of today’s technology, and contemporary gestures encourages us to explore the Freemason’s history, even if viewers are left without all the answers.

The exhibition *Rough to smooth: Art inspired by Freemasonry – past, present and future*, invites the public to explore the rich history of the Freemasons through the works of these artists. We are in new times and Freemasons are evolving. In Henrik Uldalen’s *Placid*, he uses classic figurative painting within contemporary language. On the one hand, it is figurative, but with patches of thick textured paint, and the viewer becomes aware of the materiality of the painting. It suggests a journey and a transformation, from brush strokes of pigments to shades of light and colour. As the title *Placid* suggest it is about letting go, surrendering to find serenity.

These works speak of many challenges ahead for future generations and aim to capture the relevance of Freemasonry today. We might not get all the answers we as outsiders seek, but we have been invited to peek in and to ponder on new ways to be contemporary, while continuing the long story of the brethren.

WAYS OF SEEING AND OF BEING SEEN

DR. MICHAEL PETRY

Curator

When an artist makes a work, in most cases, they want others to *see* that work. It seems like a simple statement but it is rather more complex than that. If you view a work of art in a contemporary museum, like Tate Modern, you will see it in a different light than if you view it in an historic museum like the National Gallery. The context alters your perception of how important that work is, and if a painting is shown on the railings of a park, you will see it in a very different light.

The American artist David Hammons sold snow balls of various sizes on the streets of New York in 1983 as a performative work called *Bliz-aard* for a few dollars each. Very few people thought to purchase work from the world famous artist of colour who looked rather like all the other street vendors (regardless of race) wrapped up in a scarf, overcoat and hat against the cold. His works sells for millions of dollars in the galleries and at auction houses, yet seeing work on the street distances most viewers from the possibility of *seeing* art.

Context is so often tantamount in our reaction to a work of art. If we see a painting in a white cube space we will immediately know that it is contemporary art. So what is a work of art in a Masonic building? That is the core question facing viewers as for many it will be the first time they have ever entered such a space. Historically, membership of Freemasonry has remained private, and masonic rituals remain closed to the public. In recent years Freemasons have become more open about their membership, discussing the meaning of the ritual and what it represents. This year they have opened their doors to an artist in residence who, for the past few months, has had unique access to many spaces. The result of Jacques Viljoen's efforts, along with works by other artists most of whom have made specific work for this show, will be seen alongside work by two artists who themselves are Freemasons. They have access to certain rituals that no one who is not a Freemason has, and one of them has made work about it.





How we see is also a context of what we are allowed to see. It is not only Freemasons who have chosen what level of public engagement they seek, but most institutions do so, and many artists also choose what is put out in galleries for an audience to see. The British Museum is well known for housing parts of erotic Egyptian and Classical sculptures that once so offended Victorian tastes. Ever the conservators, the British Museum has kept them, and if you are a scholar, you can write in to have access to them, but they are not on public display even to this day. The Vatican has one of the largest collections of what is termed *pornography* and that too is only for the Pope's viewing and those with the right credentials. Art is a powerful force in the world, and has the possibility to disrupt. Even today, in the more liberal West, art can still shock, and it is often those who are never seen, who decide what the viewer is allowed to see.

Then there are many ways that an artist might see and then make their work. There is no real hierarchy of how to make, or which method is best, as each has its own plusses and minuses. There is Conceptual art, Expressionism, Arte Povera, and also the Academic tradition, amongst the many ways a contemporary artist might chose to see the world and then translate it into their own work. My book *The Art of Not Making*

(Thames & Hudson) looks at the long history of artists handing over their work to fabricators and assistants to physically 'make' the work but points out that the finished objects are the work of the original artist. This is a way of making art with a long distinguished history.

Many paintings by Rembrandt (1606 – 1669), bought from him in his studio are now considered 'School of' as they were either completely or partially painted by his assistants. But do not be in any doubt, Rembrandt *signed* those works as he saw them as his own. He oversaw and designed them and usually painted at least part of them. They are now virtually discarded by the art world and their value decreased by millions, yet were he alive today Rembrandt would soundly defend them as his – as he sold them as his. Gian Lorenzo Bernini (1598-1680) the man many consider the father of the Baroque, famously only made small models that he gave to his assistant Giuliano Finelli to carve full size in marble. Eventually they fell out and Finelli, who was said to be the best stone carver in Italy, set up his own studio, but it was not a success because he had no ideas of his own. He could carve anything he was given perfectly but he had only a small artistic vision. He could see how to carve what others wanted, but could not see what he should make as his own.

There is an endless list of artists working in this way both in the past and present. The major minus of this method of production is that it is harder for the artists to push the material further if they have little understanding of the physical making process. That said it does not take away from their accomplishments and the same is true for the exact opposite way of making, Sight Size painting. This is a method taught in many classical art academies and requires the artist to set up their canvas so that they can copy exactly what they see. It produces realistic artworks that should also be accurate to the original, be it a portrait, landscape or still life. The system requires the artist to set up their canvas so that when they look at the subject it is the exact same size as they sketch or paint it on the canvas, making it easy to measure the accuracy of the mark making. The artist can make

the size of their work bigger or smaller by moving their canvas closer or further away from their subject. Many of the artists in the exhibition use this method of art making and it gives the exhibition its unity. One obvious drawback with this method is it only allows for certain types of views as canvases are not particularly portable and artists are only rarely allowed to view places like the inside of the Freemasons' Hall.

Equally Freemasons are in the process of seeing themselves anew and this openness is to be commended and it is hoped other closed institutions will learn by their example. Being seen is as important as seeing, ask any minority group who now demand to see their own faces on film and television. The veil has a long history in many cultures, but in the end, it is always the desire to lift it that wins the day.



JACQUES VILJOEN

Artist in Residence

Jacques Viljoen was born in South Africa and studied fine art at The University of Cape Town, majoring in painting.

In 2015, Viljoen left his full time job to pursue a career as an artist, seeking further technical training everywhere possible. Over the course of the next two years, he studied painting and drawing at London Fine Arts Studios, The Florence Academy and alongside a number of classically trained artists.



“Strangers”, his first solo show in London, introduced a core theme in his work: approaching representational art as a way of making sense of the outside world and others.

This exhibition included a number of paintings completed while travelling around South Africa, a selection of small portraits of strangers and a series of paintings on books which collectively told the story of a fictional character.

Viljoen’s work is created from life, rather than photography. Integral to his ethos is the importance of being present and focused on the moment, giving the act of creating art equal importance as the final artwork itself.

Accepting the history and tradition that come with painting is very much part of Viljoen’s work; he believes that one does not have to break with history, or appropriate it, in order to move art forward. The idea that no artist can escape their time, or escape the past, are the core concepts which he now works with.



JACQUES VILJOEN
THE TYLER KEEPING WATCH

ROUGH TO SMOOTH

To me, it seems that painting - an ever evolving language, steeped in history, tradition and ritual - is the perfect medium to use when talking about Freemasonry. The many impressive portraits which adorn the walls of Freemasons’ Hall provided endless inspiration for this exhibition, however during the four months I spent at Freemasons’ Hall, I also tried my best to represent the side of Freemasonry which I thought was vital and often overlooked. The quiet moments shared

between a father and son discussing their Freemasonry, a Master Mason diligently preparing for a meeting, or a Tyler dutifully keeping watch outside a lodge meeting. To me, it seemed that all of the grandeur that people often associate with Freemasonry was actually of less importance than the experience of partaking in The Craft.

This affirmed my view of my own art practice; that the act of painting is just as important as the final object.



THE SUN
2017
GICLÉE PRINT
76 X 51CM

ELIKA BO

Elika Bo is an experimental visual artist who explores identity and works on real stories or borrowed items to create an abstract image by using a scanner, layering techniques and painting directly onto glass.

Elika studied Experimental Abstract Photography at the University of East London and has exhibited paintings around the UK, including at the Truman's Brewery in London.

For this exhibition, she focused on the symbolism of Freemasons' Hall, researching examples and scanning and layering items found in the Library and Museum and its archives.

The completed work depicts the importance of symbolism within Freemasonry on a deeply personal level.

ALEXANDER DEBENHAM

Alexander Debenham studied painting under Charles H. Cecil in Florence. He currently specialises in sight-size portraiture and still life works painted directly from life, influenced by 17th Century Dutch and 18th Century British artists. In addition to holding solo exhibitions in London, Alexander has contributed to many exhibitions around the UK.

After exploring Freemasons' Hall at some length, the artist was most taken by this Royal Arch Chapter room, so rich in pageantry and symbolism. His piece was painted from life and captures the afternoon light spilling into the room in the moments prior to a Chapter meeting.



ROOM 6 AT
FREEMASONS' HALL
2017
OIL ON LINEN
56 X 46CM



IN MEMORIÀ
2017
OIL ON LINEN
98 X 72CM

NICHOLAS CHAUNDY

Nicholas Chaundy is a graduate of the Florence Academy of Art, Falmouth University and Central St Martins and now works as a contemporary portrait artist and figurative painter. He has exhibited in Italy and across the UK, whilst also working as a commissioned portrait painter from his studio in the Cotswolds.

His work for 'Rough to smooth' was inspired by the experiences of many Freemasons in World War 1 and is a compassionate response to the current Freemasons' Hall, built in memory to the over 3,000 Freemasons who died in action.

Nicholas' works are a visual interpretation of the emotions undoubtedly encountered by so many during The Great War and at the building's completion 85 years ago.

LIZET DINGEMANS

Lizet Dingemans was born in Helmond, the Netherlands. She studied Fine Art at Angel Academy in Florence and continued her studies at the London Atelier of Representational Art (LARA).

Lizet's work has been exhibited throughout the UK, Germany, the Netherlands and the USA and in 2016 her work was acquired for the MEAM Museum in Barcelona, Spain.

For this project, the artist has been inspired by the dove, a recurring symbol within Freemasonry. In her interpretation the dove is depicted as an ordinary pigeon fallen to earth, symbolic of the challenges of the changing times and the merging of the past and the future.



FALLEN DOVE
2017
OIL ON BOARD
60 X 30CM



THE CREATION OF
BROTHERHOOD
2017
OIL ON CANVAS
110 X 75CM

JACK FORD

Jack Ford is a classically trained artist who studied first at the Arts University Bournemouth before living in Florence for four years studying and teaching with Charles H Cecil.

Jack specialises in portraiture painted from life and also creates works solely using his imagination, endeavouring to combine the elements of design and realism, whilst reinforcing and challenging his knowledge of subject matter such as the human form.

The artist has explored multiple elements of Freemasonry, such as the transition of the rough to smooth ashlar stone mirrored with the creation of a human form, and has depicted these various themes in his work. The painting is inspired by the origins of the Freemasons and the sense of creation.



QUARTERLY
COMMUNICATION
2017
OIL ON PANEL
30 X 25CM

MICHAEL HARRISON

Michael Harrison attended the Academie Julien in the early 1960s and has regularly included works in exhibitions around the UK, including the Royal Society of British Artists. In 2015 Michael was selected as Artist in Residence at Leicester Cathedral to record the events of the re-interment of King Richard III.

A Freemason himself, Michael was initiated into Old Uppinghamian Lodge 4227 in 1973. WM in 1981. He is also a member of Rose Croix (Mercia Chapter 658) and Order of The Secret Monitor (Caritas 480).

His work for this exhibition explores the themes of ceremony and rites of passage. Whilst Freemasonry does not purport to be sacramental, the ceremonies which mark the journey that a Mason experiences have much in common with the rites of passage of life. For Michael, becoming a Freemason confers both a right and a privilege to begin and progress on such a personal journey.

MARTIN TAYLOR

Martin Taylor studied at the Ealing School of Art, Wimbledon School of Art and Goldsmiths College. He has exhibited widely in the UK having had numerous one man shows with leading galleries and is now represented by Gladwell & Patterson Fine Art in London. He has exhibited at the Royal Academy, and won two Royal Watercolour Society awards. A full time practicing artist, he works mainly in oil.

Painting in great detail 'en plein air', Martin focused on Freemasons' Hall itself, as much of Freemasonry's ideology is based around buildings and their construction as an allegory or metaphor for how we live our lives. He chose to accurately depict the scene, incorporating the blue hoarding protecting the VC Memorial stones prior to the unveiling on 25 April 2017, which places the painting in a particular timeframe.

Martin is DC of Spelhoe Lodge No.8576 and is also a member of Rose Croix, Thomas a Beckett Chapter 155.



FREEMASONS' HALL.
60 GREAT QUEEN ST,
LONDON. WC2B 5AZ
2017
OIL ON BOARD
35 X 25CM

HENRIK AARRESTAD ULDALEN

Henrik Aarrestad Uldalen is a self-taught artist who has exhibited internationally including solo exhibitions at Last Rites, New York, Thinkspace, Los Angeles and Galleri Ramfjord in Oslo, Norway. Henrik's work focuses on classic figurative painting, presented in a contemporary manner. Henrik explores the dark sides of life, nihilism, existentialism, longing and loneliness, juxtaposed with fragile beauty.

Inspired by mysticism, the atmosphere in his subject matter is presented in a dream or limbo-like state, with elements of surrealism. Henrik's focus on atmospheres rather than narratives and realism leave his painting open to many interpretations.

For this exhibition his work explores the idea of light transcending physical boundaries which ties into Freemasonry and its main metaphors and teachings around light and dark and life itself.



PLACID
2017
OIL ON WOOD
100 X 80CM

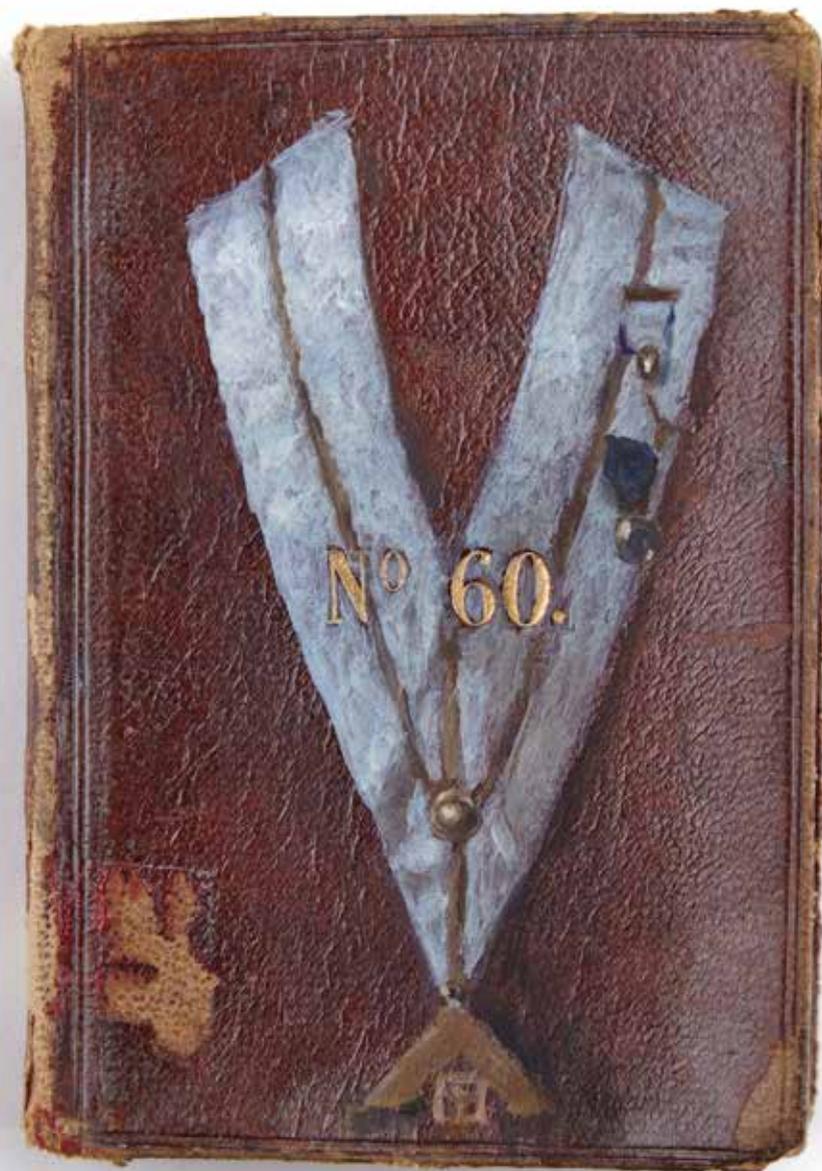


EYE OF PROVIDENCE
2017
OIL ON WOOD
21 X 18CM

SOFIA WELCH

Sofia studied the classical methods of drawing and painting in Florence and for four years at the London Atelier of Representational Art, where she is now Director of Studies. She exhibits regularly in London and has received many awards for her work, including the Michael Harding Painting Prize and most recently the Young Artist Award at the Mall Galleries Pastel Society Exhibition. Her paintings and drawings combine the techniques of the past with a contemporary aesthetic of modern gothic.

For this exhibition, the artist was drawn to the symbolism of The Eye of Providence and the power and beauty of it as an image. Her depiction is intended to take the onlooker by surprise, to emphasise its purpose as a symbol of self-reflection and to remember how actions affect others.



MAP

FIRST FLOOR



PROCESSIONAL CORRIDOR

- JACQUES VILJOEN - THE TYLER KEEPING WATCH
- JACQUES VILJOEN - RESPONSIBILITY
- ALEXANDER DEBENHAM - ROOM 6 AT FREEMASONS' HALL
- LIZET DINGEMANS - FALLEN DOVE
- LIZET DINGEMANS - HANDS
- JACQUES VILJOEN - THE CRAFT
- JACQUES VILJOEN - ROLL OF HONOUR

GRAND OFFICERS' ROBING ROOM

- ELIKA BO - DEEDS
- ELIKA BO - SUN, STAR AND MOON

LIBRARY & MUSEUM

- JACQUES VILJOEN - THE CRAFT ORIGINAL SET UP
- JACQUES VILJOEN - ROYAL ARCH MASONS
- JACQUES VILJOEN - THE RELIGIOUS AND MILITARY ORDER OF THE TEMPLE
- JACQUES VILJOEN - RULES AND REGULATIONS
- JACQUES VILJOEN - THE MASTER MASON
- JACQUES VILJOEN - THE PAST MASTER
- JACQUES VILJOEN - INSTALLATION
- JACQUES VILJOEN - SPECIAL PRESENTATION PAST MASTER'S JEWEL
- JACQUES VILJOEN - PROVINCIAL GRAND LODGE OF WEST YORKSHIRE
- JACQUES VILJOEN - THE LODGE IN THE EAST

CORRIDOR

- JACQUES VILJOEN - THE DRAWING ROOM
- JACQUES VILJOEN - THE MENTOR
- MARTIN TAYLOR - FREEMASONS' HALL, 60 GREAT QUEEN ST, LONDON. WC2B 5AZ
- MICHAEL HARRISON - QUARTERLY COMMUNICATION
- MICHAEL HARRISON - DO HEREBY AND HEREON
- ELIKA BO - THE SUN

EXHIBITION CORRIDOR

- SOFIA WELCH - EYE OF PROVIDENCE
- MICHAEL HARRISON - THE CALLING UP
- MICHAEL HARRISON - IN GLAD THANKSGIVING
- HENRIK AARRESTAD ULDALEN - PLACID
- NICHOLAS CHAUDY - IN MEMORIA
- JACK FORD - THE CREATION OF BROTHERHOOD



FREEMASONS' HALL
GREAT QUEEN STREET, LONDON WC2B 5AZ
www.ugle.org.uk

