

# ART CLUB SPOTLIGHT: *Odiham Art Group*



Visitors to the Odiham Art Group (OAG) Annual Exhibition, 2023.

**T**he Odiham Art Group, based in Odiham near Basingstoke in Hampshire, is both a successful and diverse art group. Its success is proven by its longevity, having started over 30 years ago, and membership currently stands at 140 members who regularly attend our annual programme of demonstrations and workshops, culminating in an annual exhibition of members paintings in August. The current membership is a mix of amateur and professional artists, reflecting the fact that membership is open to anyone with an interest in art, whether as a professional or just starting a new hobby. Our website spells out that its members... “have a passion for creative art and can meet like-minded friends to discuss and share ideas, to learn from each other and most of all to enjoy their art.” New members are made very welcome, and we welcome visitors to the demonstrations who pay a nominal fee – many join the group having enjoyed their visit.

Our art group year currently runs from September through to August, with eight half-day face to face demonstrations



**‘Taking Risks’.** Joan Crawford, acrylic. The Peoples Choice Award at the OAG Exhibition, 2023.



**'Silhouettes'. Hilary Dancer, acrylic.**

on Saturday afternoons, two evening Zoom demonstrations during the winter months, and two or three full-day Saturday workshops. Each demonstration is led by a popular and well-known professional artist, booked well in advance, including normally two of the professional artists from within our own membership to encourage professional members – and because they are excellent painters and demonstrators anyway. The mediums covered in the demonstrations are spread through the programme to ensure that we get two each using watercolour, acrylics and oils, plus demonstrations chosen from other mediums such as pastel, drawing, pen and wash or charcoal. We currently get around 60 members attending



**'The Tiger'. Ann Grigg, pastel pencil.**

each of these demonstrations, which shows their popularity and success. The demonstrations are videoed as they occur and are projected onto a large screen at the front of the meeting hall to ensure members see the details of each stage of the painting as it progresses, along with the use of a microphone and



**'The Way Home (Pen-Y-Ghent)'. Christine Sharp, acrylic.**

sound system so the members can hear the artist clearly as they explain their techniques as they paint.

The two or three workshops we hold each year are open to around 15 members for each one, and we tend to choose a popular medium and a professional artist who has run a successful demonstration for our group in the past. Our art group year finishes in August with the Annual Exhibition, which for many years has been held at Robert May's School in Odiham The exhibition, which takes around a year to plan and organise, attracts 80 or more exhibiting members and over 180 hung paintings, plus 50 to 60 mounted folios. The exhibition is also part of Hampshire Open Studios and visitor numbers have grown over the past few years, reaching over 500 in 2023. Paintings are sold 'off the wall', allowing a constant refresh of the display as 'reserve' paintings are put out for display.

Of course, every group as successful as Odiham Art Group relies on its committee, who are committed to giving their own time and organisational skills throughout the year. The committee makes sure the programme runs successfully and the number of members attending the demonstrations, workshops and taking part in the annual exhibition is an illustration of their dedication to the task. This success having been achieved over many years and culminated in a well-established, long running art group with a proven programme and annual exhibition that attracts and retains so many members over the years.



**Odiham Art Group (OAG) Workshop.**

To find out more, visit: [odihamartgroup.org.uk](http://odihamartgroup.org.uk)