**A SHORT VISUAL HISTORY OF THE ROYAL CAMBRIAN ACADEMY OF ART, 1881-2025**

This small exhibition is based primarily upon the RCA Archive. It is arranged clockwise and chronologically around the four walls of the **Lower Gallery**, starting on the left hand wall as you enter the space and ending on the right hand wall.

It focuses primarily upon two phases in the RCA’s history: the early years of the Academy (starting in the Victorian period); and those from Sir Kyffin Williams’s times as President of the RCA right up to the present day (including the years 2020-24 when the RCA had its first female President, Ann Lewis).

The display was created in September 2025 by Dr Ceri Thomas, PRCA, assisted by Jeremy Yates, VPRCA, and Vicky Macdonald, Hon RCA

**Wall A: Introduction**

1) **Bilingual information panel about the Royal Cambrian Academy of Art (RCA)** — including a b&w photograph of RCA founder members outside Plas Mawr, Conwy, *c*. 1897 and a colour photograph of contemporary RCA members outside the RCA in Crown Lane, Conwy in 2012.

This metal panel, produced *c*. 2012, was originally displayed on the facade of the gallery.

The Victorian photograph includes the English-born **Henry Clarence Whaite** (centre, with white beard) and **George Harrison** (centre, with darker beard). The clean-shaven **George Cockram** stands between them.

The contemporary photograph includes the Welsh-born **Ivor Davies** (b 1935), PRCA 2010-14 (centre front) and three future RCA Presidents: **Ann Lewis** (in blue skirt), and (to right and rear) **Jeremy Yates** and **Ceri Thomas**

2) **J. A. A. Berrie** (dates unknown) RCA — a posthumous portrait painting of **H. Clarence Whaite** (1828 - 1912)PRCA 1885-1912 (n.d. / early 20th century) oil on canvas

The Manchester-born Clarence Whaite was a long-serving President and a key figure in the early development of the Royal Cambrian Academy.

For more information, see: Peter Lord, *Clarence Whaite and the Welsh Art World: The Bettws-y-Coed Artists’ Colony 1844-1914* (NLW 1998) and — https://artuk.org/discover/artists/whaite-henry-clarence-18281912

3) **H. Clarence Whaite** —  **‘**Welsh Mountain Landscape with Harvesters and Rainbow’ (1883) oil on canvas, private collection

**Wall B: The 19th Century**

4) **George Harrison** (1839/40 - 1910) RCA — subsequently titled ‘Cottage Landscape with Cattle, North Wales’ (n.d.) oil on canvas

For more information on the Canterbury-born artist who married Catherine Hughes of Llanrwst, visit — https://artuk.org/discover/artists/harrison-george-183918401910

5) **George Harrison** (attributed to)— ‘Portrait of an African’ (n.d. / *c*. 1861) oil on canvas

Jeremy Yates did some research on this fascinating picture of a black man who possibly was a life model at the Royal Academy Schools, London. Yates contacted the Art Detective section of Art UK which resulted in an online correspondence in 2018-19

For more information, visit — https://artuk.org/discover/artworks/portrait-of-an-african-181466 — and — https://www.artuk.org/artdetective/discussions/discussions/can-anyone-identify-the-sitter-or-the-artist-in-this-portrait-of-a-bearded-man-wearing-a-red-cloak

6) **Mary Griffith** (dates unknown) — ‘Plas Min-y-Don’ (1858) oil paint and straw

This picture is possibly of the Clough family estate at Old Colwyn. The female artist is currently unknown and may well have been self taught

7) **Ceremonial Robes and Hat** of the **President of the RCA** (n.d.)

These have been worn by numerous, but not all, PRCAs down the generations

**Wall C: The 20th Century**

8) **Harry Hughes Williams** (1892 - 1953) RCA — ‘Lake in Snowdonia’ (n.d.) oil on canvas

For more information on the Pentraeth-born artist, visit — https://artuk.org/discover/artists/williams-harry-hughes-18921953

9) **Sir Kyffin Williams** (1918-2006) PRCA 1969-76 and 1992-2006 — ‘Farmers on a Ridge’ (n.d.) signed and numbered print

10) **Sir Kyffin Williams** — ‘Sunset Moel y Don’ (n.d.) signed and numbered lithographic print

For more information on the Llangefni-born artist, visit — https://artuk.org/discover/artists/williams-kyffin-19182006 and — http://rcaconwy.org/uploads/downloads/Kyffin.PRCA1992-2006.Ceri-Thomas.pdf

11) **Sir Kyffin Williams** — ‘Farmer and Sheep Dog’ (n.d.), signed artist proof print

12) **Bilingual RCA 1993 exhibitions poster** — featuring a linocut of a waterfall by Kyffin Williams (n. d.) print on paper

This features the inaugural exhibition programme at the new RCA premises in Crown Lane, following the move out of the adjoining 16th-century Elizabethan town house known as Plas Mawr

**Wall D: The 21st Century**

13) **Maurice Cockrill** (1936-2013) PRCA 2006-10 — ‘Heart’ (1998) limited edition etching and aquatint print

For more information on the Hartlepool-born artist, visit — https://www.royalacademy.org.uk/art-artists/name/maurice-cockrill-ra-1936-2013

14) **Ann Lewis** (b 1962) PRCA 2020-4 **—**  ‘Old Red Rock at the Water’s Edge Freshwater West’ (n.d.) limited edition linocut print

For more information on the St.Asaph-born artist, visit — https://rcaconwy.org/members/ann-lewis

15) **Diane Lawrenson** (b 1946) RCA — ‘Mavis Blackburn (1923-2005), RCA’ (n.d.) resin bronze

For more information on the Liverpool-born Lawrenson, visit — https://rcaconwy.org/members/diane-lawrenson — and for more information on the Wallasey-born Blackburn, visit — https://artuk.org/discover/artists/blackburn-mavis-19232005

16) **Jeremy Yates** (b 1947) PRCA 2014-20 — ‘Conwy Castle’ (1980s) watercolour, private collection

For more information on the Wolverhampton-born artist who has lived in north Wales since 1977, visit — https://rcaconwy.org/members/jeremy-yates-vprca

17) **Ceri Thomas** (b 1958) PRCA 2024-5 — ‘Women Artists in Tuscany: Sara Fanelli’ (1990) oil on canvas-lined board

For more information on the London-born artist, visit — https://artuk.org/discover/artists/thomas-ceri-b-1958

Thomas met Fanelli in Florence where she was born and raised. She moved to London and became an illustrator, creating the Tate Artist Timeline for Tate Modern in 2010 and producing a series of books including *Sometimes I think, Sometimes I am* (Tate 2007) and *The Onion’s Great Escape* (Phaidon 2012).

For more information on Sara Fanelli, visit — https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sara\_Fanelli

**Centre of Lower Gallery**

18) **RCA display cabinet**

RCA ledgers referring to H. Clarence Whaite and Augustus John;

Manuscript by Kyffin Williams;

Photographs of these three former RCA Presidents;

Books by Kyffin Williams, *Across the Straits: An Autobiography* (Gomer 2009, first published 1974), Peter Lord, *Richard Wilson: Life & Legacy* (RCA 2009) and Ceri Thomas, *Shaping Art in Wales: David Bell, Kathleen Armistead and the Modern Artist* (Hmm Foundation 2023);

Cards of images by Ann Lewis and Ceri Thomas;

Other items