

JOHN BRETT STUDY DAY

PROGRAMME

- 0930-1030 **Registration and coffee**
- 1030-1045 **Welcome and introduction** by Professor Ann Sumner, Director of the Barber Institute
- Rosa, Ruskin and Mary: Three Important Relationships in the Life and Art of John Brett**
Dr Christiana Payne, Reader in History of Art, Oxford Brookes University
- Objects of Affection* focuses on people who were important to John Brett: from parents and siblings in his youth, to friends and lovers in early adulthood, to his partner and children in his maturity. This talk looks at a figure from each of these phases of his life: firstly, his sister Rosa, who studied alongside him and became a highly skilled and original artist in her own right; secondly, the famous art critic John Ruskin, who has been regarded as his mentor; and thirdly, his common-law wife Mary, whose support gave him emotional security in his later years.
- 1130-1200 **John Brett and the Rossettis**
Dr Jan Marsh, Researcher, Later Victorian Catalogue, National Portrait Gallery
- John Brett exhibited with the Pre-Raphaelites in 1857 and, for a few years, was on friendly terms with the Brotherhood. This talk explores the relationships between John and Rosa Brett and the Rossetti brothers, Dante Gabriel and William Michael, and their sister, poet Christina Rossetti.
- 1200-1330 **Lunch and visit to the exhibition 'Objects of Affection: Pre-Raphaelite Portraits by John Brett'**
- 1330-1415 ***Lady with a Dove: the Mysterious Madame Loeser***
Charles Brett, great-grandson of John Brett
- This talk will consider the origins of John Brett's most enigmatic work, and investigate the identity of its exotic subject. The relationship between artist and sitter will be examined, and the work's evolution from a number of suggested sources explored. Finally, a conjectural interpretation will be offered, with the idea of stimulating further discussion.
- 1415-1500 **'Tho inland far we be, our souls have sight of that immortal sea': John Brett's relationship with land-locked Birmingham**
Professor Ann Sumner, Director, Barber Institute
- John Brett had contact throughout his life with the West Midlands. His teenage years were spent in the region and he made a long visit to Warwickshire in 1860. In this talk, Ann Sumner considers his relationship with Birmingham: his links with the RBSA, where he exhibited regularly; his circle of patrons in the city; the popularity of his seascapes, especially when exhibited in the Marine Painters show at the City Art Gallery in 1894; and the

reception of his famous lecture on Art and Education, given to the Birmingham Congress of the National Association for the Advancement of Arts and its Application to Industry in November 1890.

1500-1530 **Tea**

1530-1600 **Panel discussion** chaired by Christopher Gridley

1600 **Finish**