



THE WIT COLLECTION: ART HISTORY JOKES 4

Posted on December 1, 2020 by Mark Stocker



"I have nothing to declare but my jokes!" (Dr Mark Stocker, shortly before being beaten up by customs officials)

In this latest episode, before you crack(er) up, I may need to provide a few hints to my many fans. One of the jokes will particularly amuse Elvis fans. Len Lye remains a bit of a cult figure but was an extraordinary film and kinetic sculpture maker - a bit of a pseud, maybe. The Prince Albert one is a variant on quite a famous joke, so bear with me there. Another avails itself of Cockney rhyming slang, and once they comprehend it, a few chaste maidens may blush...



Mrs. Baring is somewhat exasperated with Dr. Stocker's jokes. [*The Honourable Mrs Cecil Baring*, by Ambrose McEvoy, painted in 1916].

What was Oliver Cromwell's insouciant reaction to Puritan iconoclasm in one of Britain's most beautiful cathedrals?

"Well, well, Wells!"

What was the *Herts Advertiser's* response to Edmund Beckett (Lord Grimthorpe)'s drastic Gothic Revival restoration of St Albans Abbey?

"Murder in the Cathedral."

Caption for Norman Rockwell's *Girl with a Black Eye*:

Art history student who was involved in a heated argument about the Assisi problem and knows she's right.

A famous but sensitive Trecento painter had a studio accident, resulting in an altarpiece panel being irreparably ruined.

His sweet little daughter comforted him:

"You may have lost your tempera but don't cry, Daddi!"

Alternative title to Herbert Draper's *Ulysses and the Sirens*:

Allegory of the patriarchy and the women's art movement.

What did Roger Fry call his watch repair business?

The Omega Workshops.

How did the Victorian painter/engraver W.P. Frith describe the threatening new medium?

"Foe to graphic art!" (not original)

What was the punch-line of a famous royal photographer?

Snowdon, never Beaton.



Dick Frizzell, Amazing Grace, 2017.

What was the nickname of a much-loved Victorian woman photographer?

Julia Margaret Camera.

When an eminent Marxist art historian, Professor Joe N. Lye (cousin of Len) was asked about the

influence of Jacques-Louis David on art history, he replied: **"It's too early to tell."**

A reactionary critical response to a realist masterpiece by Honoré Daumier: **"Third-class, untrained painter, doesn't know his station!"**

What did the thief of Goya's portrait of the Duke of Wellington brilliantly succeed in conveying?
The significance of the negative space in art.

Prince Albert is re-landscaping Buckingham Palace, and it being the late 1840s, is keen to give work to the distressed Irish. Through his good friend Lord Kilburn he has found an admirable landscape architect, Seamus O'Connor. When the two meet, landscaping is in full flight and Seamus fulsomely sings his men's praises...

"'ve got all the best Irish diggers, Sir – green side up, Paddy! All the best Irish shrubs and seedlings – green side up, Paddy! And my men will do you most beautiful Irish herbaceous borders, Sir – green...!"

"Sehr gut, Herr O'Connor, but why you ask the Paddy for the green side up?"

"Ah, Sir, he's just laying down the lawn!"

I was shocked to see a conservator cleaning a dark old baroque painting with a toothbrush. I asked her "What's the problem?"

She replied: **"Mola decay!"**

What did the art historian say when he was told he'd won the Lotto?

"Terrific! Is it an Annunciation?"

After the triumphant Gothic rebuild of St Denis, the holy anthem played to serenade the great Abbot was quite pointed:

Suger, Suger (by the Archies).

What did Rossetti say when his fellow Pre-Raphaelite annoyed him?

"You stupid Holman Hunt!"

Who was the eminent, high camp 18th century art connoisseur who uncannily anticipated Pop Art?

Sir Horace Warhol.

What did the mugger say to James Tissot?

"Watch out!"

The *image* shows, **Austin Osman Spare and Witch**, by Austin Osman Spare, painted in 1947.

