

friends' perspective

 FRIENDS
OF THE
WHITWORTH

ArtFund♥

Museum of the Year 2015

Awards are flowing in and the Whitworth is getting record numbers of visitors. Full story page 2.

Whitworth wins **ArtFund** Museum of the Year 2015!

Isn't it wonderful! The Whitworth has won the prestigious £100,000 Art Fund Prize for Museum of the Year. This superb award was presented to Maria by novelist Ben Okri at a ceremony at Tate Modern. 'This prize will allow the Whitworth to continue taking our art out into the world around us,' said Maria 'and bring new audiences back in. We feel that everybody who comes through our door is curious and up for wonder.'

Stephen Deuchar, Director of the Art Fund and chair of the judges said, 'The Whitworth's transformation has been one of the great museum achievements of recent years. It truly feels like a museum of the future.'



Susie Stubbs, Nicola Walker, Esmé Ward, Maria Balshaw, Jo Beggs, Cornelia Parker and Mary Griffiths

What a summer of love!

Awards are flowing in...

The Whitworth has been awarded RIBA NW Building of the Year 2015, RIBA NW Award 2015 and RIBA NW Conservation Award 2015.

RIBA comments: "This extension to the Whitworth Gallery on the edge of Whitworth Park builds on John Bickerdike's 1960s work in a way that on entering seems subtle in the extreme but then gradually builds outward in a sympathetic but entirely original way. A project for all seasons – art, nature and architecture combine – could be the eulogy for this building. Reminiscent of 1950's Aalto the Whitworth is neither high key nor insistent on overtly fashionable 21st century architectural magazine style.

This is not just conversion or adaptation of existing. The new architecture emerges quite seamlessly as an integral yet individualistic part of the whole assembly – a café bar is all glass, views to the trees are almost internalised, a cloister below is shaded with almost impossibly slender fins. One can almost say that here the new architecture almost outshines the current exhibitions. This is a compliment to the architects – not a criticism of any artist, for to provide spaces which do not shout out, nor have sharp minimalism that announces 'gallery' yet provide something that is of international standard, is an achievement that merits more than a little attention". The gallery will next be in line for the prestigious Stirling Prize – fingers crossed.

We are also celebrating winning the Art Fund Prize for Museum of the Year 2015. The Whitworth was shortlisted as one of six finalists. These were Dunham Massey (National Trust), Altrincham, Imperial War Museum, London, The MAC, Belfast, Oxford University Museum of Natural History, HM Tower of London (Historic Royal Palaces).

To mark this wonderful recognition the gallery has launched its Summer of Love and a programme of events with something for everyone... see the programme at: www.manchester.ac.uk/whitworth

Since 2005 the Whitworth audience has increased by 120% and so far has welcomed more than 210,000 visitors (and counting!) – there could well be half a million visitors this year.

...and a personal award

A CBE in the Queen's Birthday Honours List for Dr Maria Jane Balshaw, Director of the Whitworth and Manchester Art Gallery... for Services to the Arts. Congratulations!

A greener park

Work continues around the gallery

The landscape around the gallery is becoming greener and more lush with of course the seasons, but work is progressing on the garden at the Park entrance and Oxford Road side. This summer should see the opening of The Alex Bernstein garden designed by Chelsea Gold medallist Sarah Price with fruit trees and wildflowers.

These photos hint at the transformation.



In the beginning was... nice sculpture



Simon Periton's gates at park gallery entrance



Michael Lyons Phalanx 1977 now in the park - the sculpture was in front of the gallery for many years



Patrick Osborn, Landscape and Sustainability Technician starts to create clouds from the buxus



Enjoying the art hampers



The eternal bronze snowman - Nate Lowman's Snowman 2014



Picnickers by Hippocratic Tree, 2014, Christine Borland

Recognition for Friends

The Friends of the Whitworth have been welcomed into the Beyer Circle of the University of Manchester. This celebrates and honours the generosity of some of the most significant benefactors to the university.

Donors who have committed more than £100k to the university are recognised. So as you know that's us - the Friends recently contributed £150k for the Whitworth's capital development appeal, which went to the equipping of the Collections Centre and we also funded the shortlisted architects' competition, won by MUMA.

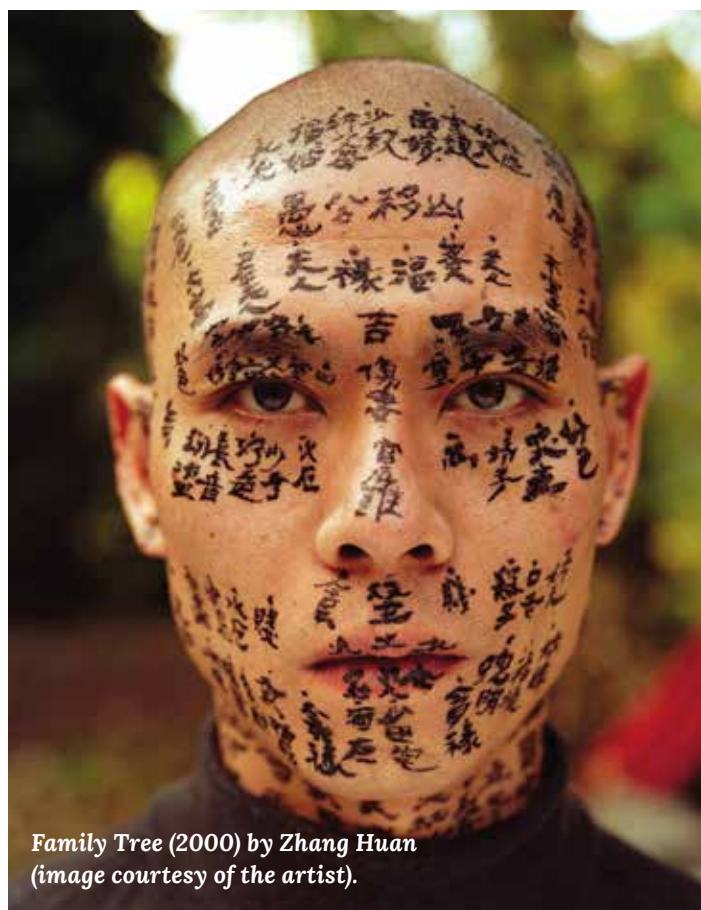
That is why the Friends are here... to enjoy the gallery, the company of Friends and to support the gallery and raise money, but it is good to have recognition of our work over the years.

The Friends have added more than 1000 works to the collections. Friends' chairman Stuart Halsall and Gill Crook, editor attended a ceremony in Whitworth Hall



L-R: Gill Crook, Stuart and Mirren Halsall.

where many benefactors were acknowledged. These included Pauline Karpidas, whose gifts of paintings and sculpture can be seen at the Whitworth. Our membership leaflets and 'friends perspective' were handed out at an earlier promotional event.



Family Tree (2000) by Zhang Huan
(image courtesy of the artist).

Four Decades of Chinese Art

A major exhibition currently in the gallery is the M+Sigg Collection - Four Decades of Chinese Art. It shows 80 significant works by leading contemporary Chinese artists including Ai Weiwei, Cao Fei and Zhang Peili.

Spanning 40 years it takes visitors on a journey through the subversive practice of artists including the 'No Name Group', via events on Tiananmen Square in 1989 and ending with the incredibly vibrant art scene of today.

'The M+Sigg Collection is drawn from Swiss collector Uli Sigg's unique collection,' explains Maria Balshaw. 'He realised that the experimental contemporary art practices emerging across China were going undocumented. It is now universally recognised as the largest, most comprehensive and important historical 'document' of the culturally dynamic period of Chinese history between the 1970s and the present day.'

Colin Jellicoe

Friend Helen Fowell gives her personal view of a Manchester character

Something of a local legend, Colin Jellicoe has been running his independent gallery for 52 years. In his spare time he is an established artist and a recent retrospective was well supported.



Born in Manchester and trained at Manchester Regional College of Art, he met Geoffrey Keys and a joint venture started in Rusholme in 1963. Later through the Manchester painter and art critic Margo Ingham, Colin met his current business partner Alan Behar and they opened the Portland Street gallery in 1968.

Venture down the steps to the semi-basement and you will be greeted by Colin wearing his signature denims and bootlace tie. Call him on the 'phone and the usual greeting is 'I'm still here!' He stocks a variety of affordable art by both new and established artists to tempt budding collectors. His shows last several months and his hanging spaces quickly book. Colin has his own distinctive style, informed by his childhood passion for Western films and comic book illustrations. Just as Rembrandt and Vermeer dress their models in exotic clothing to set their scenes, so he uses Western props to support the storyboard narrative of his paintings. Other paintings have a more local flavour; usually figures set against the watery sunlight and muted colours of his beloved Stenner Woods.

I have only know Colin for a couple of years, after I called into the gallery and started selling some of the pictures I had done, mainly hallucinatory landscapes in the Romanticist tradition, more recently collages of archetypal figures using scraps of found objects. Colin has been a tower of encouragement, humour and a wealth of stories about his many celebrity encounters (fond memories of L S Lowry's visit). This generous and modest man is a hero of art and culture in Manchester. Long may he be 'still here!'

Gwynneth Littleton

Gwynneth Littleton, a stalwart of the Friends' 'Tuesday Team' is bowing out after many years of help, knowledge of art and expertise – here she gives us a pithy comment or two – with a little help from Picasso

Memories

From the moment I walked into the Worthington Room with its aura of slightly faded grandeur I was captivated. I loved listening in on which speakers we were to have and which trips were to be organised, near and far.

A little wine sometimes graced the proceedings. Perhaps the highlight was for me, through Alistair Smith's foresight, to be trained as a guide and in so doing, getting to know the curators who were willing to share their expertise. It was a privilege and a challenge taken very seriously by me. I enjoyed too the stimulus of working alongside a fine group of people on Tuesdays, to whom the Gallery owes a great debt. 'Art washes away from the soul the dust of everyday life.' Picasso. It certainly has for me.

Pictured below: Gwynneth Littleton and Grayson Perry



Galleries and museums galore! BAFM

More than 2,500 in the UK...

Bernadette Reynolds is a Collections Centre volunteer. Here she gives her view of the BAFM North West Regional Conference at the Atkinson Art Gallery, Southport. It has also been revamped and modernised – we're not the only one!

On a gloriously sunny Saturday in April a group of Friends descended on The Atkinson in Southport. The welcome was as warm as the weather and our hosts were excellent. Director Emma Anderson gave us a brief history of their £20 million refurbishment.

Sheila Maddison, chairman of the Friends of The Atkinson and Bernard Rostron, BAFM chairman introduced the speakers – Stephen Whittle, manager of the museum and art gallery who swiftly transported us along the Sefton coastline taking in Aintree, golfing, landspeed record and early flight to the rise of Southport as a resort.

Gaye Blake Roberts, Director of the Wedgwood Museum looked at collections and collecting. She pointed out there are more than 2,500 galleries and museums in the UK generally no further away than 20 miles. Her own Wedgwood Museum is collecting for posterity by acquiring 21st century ceramics.



Stephen Whittle, Atkinson museum and art gallery manager treats visitors to a glimpse of the stores

Guided tours and a peak behind the scenes were a highlight. An 'in conversation' between Sheila Maddison and James Walsh, President of Southport Palette Club was humorous and poignant in equal measure as they reflected on times in his life. Bernard Rostron thanked members for their support over his 6 years as BAFM regional chairman and introduced his successor Michael Brightman, chairman of the Friends of Marsh Mill, Thornton, Lancashire.

Do visit this gallery – there are some inspiring paintings and the Atkinson Museum has been the final stage of the reopening of the seaside town's arts and cultural centre.

A Friend on TV

You may have seen the BBC2 Horizon programme, 70 Million Animal Mummies: Egypt's Dark Secret. It looked at the practice of mummifying animals revealing that up to 70 million creatures were wrapped and buried in underground catacombs.



Friend of the Whitworth Dr Lidija McKnight, research associate was shown with a team from Manchester Museum using the latest medical imaging technology to scan 100s of animal mummies.

They scanned wading birds, falcons, cats, shrews and a 5 foot long Nile crocodile. A crocodile shaped mummy was found to contain 8 baby crocs carefully wrapped together.

BAfM Article

Friends' Perspective Editor Gill Crook has contributed an article to the BAFM Journal Summer 2015. We are the Friends in Focus feature. To view go to: www.bafm.co.uk/bafm-journals

Anthony Van Dyck

A portrait at Manchester Art Gallery

Portraits at the Whitworth and at Manchester Art Gallery, where Anthony Van Dyck's late self portrait is in pride of place. Saved for the nation by the Art Fund, Heritage Lottery Fund and the National Portrait Gallery and other donors the work is on a tour of the country.

Art historian James Hall explains this is the only self portrait in which Van Dyck wears a fashionable paned or slashed doublet with white collar. London was an international centre for fashion and textiles a main export. A fine suit of clothes could cost more than a Van Dyck portrait priced between £30 and £50. 'The painter has stylishly sexed himself up: the white shirt billows voluptuously through the slits' wrote Hall in the Art Fund's Art Quarterly. He is the author of *The Self-Portrait: a Cultural History* (Thames and Hudson).

The painting is in its original carved oak and gilt frame – topped by sunflower motif, symbol of the loyal subject who follows his king as a sunflower tracks the sun... but you know that... there is of course Van Dyck's Self-Portrait with a Sunflower, 1633.



Terracotta Tiles at the Gallery

Old established firm Shaws of Darwen crafted terracotta tiles for the new Whitworth.

We learned on the Channel 4 programme Grayson Perry's Dream House that Shaws have also created the terracotta figures for his latest project a house he's been building telling the story of a fictional Essex everywoman Perry has imagined called Julie Cope.

...and included in the £8m redevelopment of York Art Gallery are more than 300 double-hexagon shaped tiles made by Shaws inspired by the paving found on York streets and alleys known as Stable Pavements or Rosemary Setts.

Lancashire expertise keeping tradition alive.



Christine Tomkinson, volunteer in Collections Centre and FOW treasurer Michael Braid

'Got to look and see, not just look'

Fashion designer Sir Paul Smith at RHS Chelsea gaining inspiration from plants. How true – and reminding of graffiti when new Whitworth expanding before our eyes:



Thursday Film Screenings

Look out for our popular Friends' film shows during Thursday Lates.

Kendal to Croatia - Out and About with Friends

We are always looking for places to discover, enjoy and talk about – here Joan Gem, Programme Secretary gives a glimpse of what she and the Tuesday team get up to...

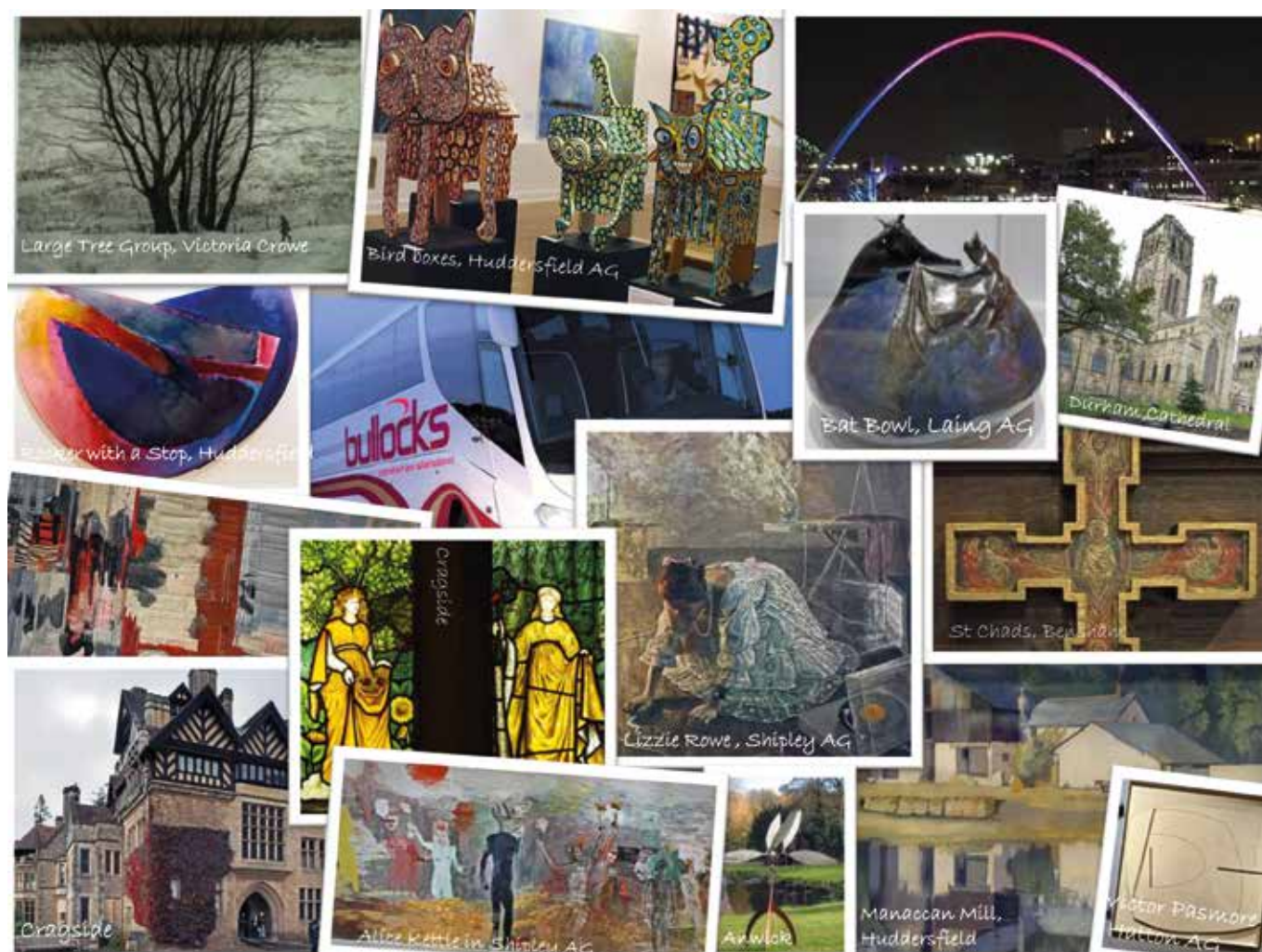
Whenever I see a white coach with red writing and go faster stripes driving past, it reminds me of 'Friends of the Whitworth' trips, past and future. Bullocks comfortable coaches and their clever drivers are very much part of our day trips and they always look after us well. I then start to wonder where we should visit next.

Fortunately our so called 'Northern Powerhouse' is packed with great art venues within easy reach. Most years we will visit Tate Liverpool and Abbot Hall, Kendal as these galleries cleverly advertise future exhibitions up to a year in advance which makes planning easy for the programme team. Where else do we get inspiration from? Firstly we rely on 'Friends' passing on local information and personal contacts, then we

take inspiration from Historic Houses Association, Museums Guide, Contemporary Art Society, TV programmes and most importantly the Art Fund. We try to find new or newly extended places to visit and our visits may just be a fleeting introduction.

So what is currently in the planning phase for the future? Warrington Museum and Art Gallery; the Wedgwood Museum; London; Edinburgh; the Mary Rose and Osborne House; Kent; also Germany (Dusseldorf), Croatia (Zagreb) and Burma. As always plans may change as opportunities suddenly pop up. Not to forget events in the fabulous Whitworth itself... free Sunday afternoon classical concerts, films and lectures – all for a very small fee.

Please use the website to send comments or email with suggestions and we do still open post once a week on Tuesdays. I also occasionally write a Blog if anyone is interested in becoming a 'Follower' at: <https://joanatfow.wordpress.com/>



Montage: Joan and Gus Gem

Why not take this once in a lifetime opportunity to really make a difference to the Whitworth? All donations, large or small are welcome – please send cheques payable to the Friends of the Whitworth at the address below...

Chairman, Friends of the Whitworth, The Whitworth Art Gallery, University of Manchester, Oxford Road, Manchester, M15 6ER.

Editor: Gill Crook. If you have any ideas for Friends' Perspective I would be pleased to hear from you. Contact me at fow@manchester.ac.uk