

# friends' perspective



## Friends help to purchase textiles

FOW help to acquire important works from Anne Wilson and Jilly Edwards

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L-r: Anne Wilson, *Dispersions* (no. 27, no. 28, no. 31), 2014, details. Photos by Adam Liam Rose.

# Friends help to purchase textiles

## Acquiring important works by Anne Wilson and Jilly Edwards

You won't have seen that headline for a year or two as the focus has been on contributing to the Gallery's redevelopment. More than a year has gone by since the Valentine's Day reopening in 2015 – crowds have visited – many awards won – stunning exhibitions staged and the permanent collection from watercolours to wallpapers has enthralled thousands.

Now we are back to our remit of purchasing outright or contributing to works for the Whitworth (expect you have noted the rebranding) so when Jennifer Harris, deputy director of the gallery and curator of textiles, approached the FOW committee with a request for funding we were delighted. Jennifer sadly retires from the Whitworth in September so it is fitting that two textiles she particularly wanted for the collection will be on display this year if we can put all the funding in place.

One of the works you may have seen recently in Art\_Textiles. It is *Dispersions* (nos. 27, 28 & 31), a triptych of stitched works made of thread, hair and cloth by American artist Anne Wilson and a captivating work. Sculptural voids in the fabric caused by tears and worn areas in the used linen ground fabric are sewn open with

thread and hair to form perfect circles that pierce the cloth with the precision of a gunshot wound whose edges are softly dispersed. Jennifer writes: "Anne Wilson's work raises important questions about the use of textiles as an art medium, highlighting issues of power and gender and history. The Whitworth is seeking to extend its international reach and this is the first major acquisition in textile by a leading North American artist."

The Friends have also agreed to support the acquisition of a second textile work, by contemporary tapestry artist Jilly Edwards, if a funding application to the V&A Purchase Grant Fund is also successful. Edwards' woven tapestries are inspired by glimpses and memories of journeys, *Ma* (90 x 230 cm) being an abstracted depiction of the coastline around St Ives. "Edwards translates the quick, gestural marks of colour, shape and form that she records in sketchbooks while travelling into the slow and more contemplative work of tapestry weaving," explains Jennifer.

We look forward to seeing both works on show at some stage in 2016!



Jilly Edwards, *Ma* (2001)

# Gathering of strangers... but not for long

An evening to remember... J.M.W. Turner out of the box

More than 25 new members gathered outside the Study Centre on a dark, damp Thursday evening in January to meet members of the 'Tuesday team' and three of the curators: Deputy Director, Jennifer Harris, Head of Collections David Morris and curator of Modern Art Mary Griffiths.

Cheered by a glass of wine and a warm welcome from Friends' chairman Stuart Halsall and David Morris they set off in small groups into the Collections Centre, the Picture Store and for a special guided tour of the textile exhibition Art\_Textiles.

In due course the groups swapped venue so everyone had the chance to come face-to-face with a few unframed Turners taken out of their box for the occasion and experience the surprises of the picture racks in the store, where one may discover anything from an early Lucian Freud self portrait to a Picasso drawing or something much earlier.

We plan another such evening for those who could not come to this one. It's on Thursday, 7 July, 2016.

**Rosemary Marsh**



Sonia Chapman and Judith Wainwright



Mary Griffiths in the picture store



Jean Craske and Rosemary Bull



Sonya Crawford takes a close look

## Events Programme 2016

The Friends of the Whitworth Summer 2016 Events Programme is now published and available for booking on-line or by post. If you have an email address there is no need for an s.a.e. any more. We can confirm bookings by email. We hope there is something of interest to everyone in the programme.

We are exploring more exciting ideas for the future, **a trip to Edinburgh** is confirmed for 14-18 September and will definitely include a visit to **Little Sparta**, the mystical garden of Ian Hamilton Finlay. **Abbot Hall** will once again draw us to Kendal to see an exhibition of work by **Winifred Nicholson**. The Whitworth's Head of Collections David Morris will guide

us around an exhibition of work by **Marcantonio Raimondi**, a master printmaker of the Italian Renaissance. 2017 might include **a study tour of Bavaria** with a visit to the Darmstadt Artists' Colony or maybe **a trip to St Petersburg**, definitely **a trip to Hull, City of Culture with the Turner Prize** and in the Whitworth **Louise Bourgeois**. We are also happy to announce a date for your 2016 diary – **the 47th Pilkington lecture on Thursday, 10 November by artist and author Edmund de Waal**.

**Joan Gem**

Friends are seen here at the 46th Pilkington lecture with art historian broadcaster Tim Marlow.



A sparkly setting for supper...



Tim Marlow, David Morris, Mirren and Stuart Halsall



# Tibor Reich Retrospective

Sam Reich, Tibor's grandson reports on the exhibition at the gallery

*Until August there's a colourful retrospective at the Whitworth celebrating the centenary of the birth of Tibor Reich, the pioneering post-war textile designer who brought modernity to British textiles. If you do not recognise the name, you will almost certainly recognise the work whether you have flown on Concorde or bought G-Plan. Here **Sam Reich**, Tibor's grandson tells the Friends of the background to the show, which also features ceramics and photographs. Hear Sam 'live' 1pm, Sunday, 22 May 2016.*



Sam Reich before a colour montage of printed and woven textiles

**You have spent much time on the Tibor Reich archive. What did you most relish about this?**

I very much appreciated the archive as a historian (I studied History at the University of Bristol). My fascination was uncovering these brilliant stories of British design history and seeing how pivotal my grandfather was in shaping 20th century design discourse.

On the one hand I love looking through all of the old newspaper clippings, archive shots and articles and looking at the historical context whether it be the major projects he worked on (boats, planes, public buildings, major retailers) or the incredible processes he developed

(Fotexur, Collingo, Deep Textures etc).

The second thrill is the actual design itself and the beautiful design behind the pieces. Whether it is woven/printed textiles, plastics, rug designs, ceramics, drawings, photographs or film. The colour, the design, the craftsmanship, the quality, the technique all absolutely fascinate me. Because I am relaunching the company I take great interest in looking at the construction of the textiles and techniques he employed to create such innovative modern designs. The third angle, is a very personal one, for which I am finding out more about my grandfather and the legacy he left behind.

It is brilliant to find out more about your family history and go through a journey to see how textiles and design really have been the bed-rock of the Reich family for over 150 years ever since my great great grandfather set up a spinning mill in Budapest in 1868... I am very much of the opinion that archives should be accessed and studied and/or used for commercial purposes.

I think it is very important that history does not forget important figures – I intend to perpetuate the legacy of my grandfather through this exhibition and a 300 page book on his work – ed.'s note – this is available in the Gallery shop (don't forget your Friends' discount).



Manchester Tapestry, 1965 – Tibor Reich – Collaged Trial Piece  
© Tibor Reich Archive



Madison Colour Blanket, 1956 – Tibor Reich © Tibor Reich Archive





Happy trio Gill Reddick, Rosemary Marsh and Joan Gem at Tibor Reich Friends' opening

'abstract art for example is already so popular today that it is becoming an accepted form of expression and so offers few surprises to people who are used to it'

British Pathé video  
Nature Designs in  
Fabric 1957 - Tibor  
Reich exhibition.



Capturing the moment

**Will your dream of reintroducing people to his work become a reality?**

It will become a reality! We are relaunching the brand in the middle of this year selling high end luxury woven textiles to interior designers and architects.

**When you are faced with a collection of 30,000 Tibor Reich items is it easy to know what to choose?**

You have to start by identifying the key items. Some are much stronger and more important than others in telling the stories. Then you can look at the archive from a perspective of what is contemporary and timeless and which ones are more dated. There are also certain periods where the archive is stronger than others.

For us we found the 1950s was the hey-day for Tibor where he was most prolific and innovative.

**You have a 'can do' attitude. Where do you see yourself in the future?**

The woven textile industry is notoriously tough, but with the right attitude anything is possible. When my grandfather started the company in 1946 he was warned of the dangers of 'going alone' – he had no funding, nor was he even being employed by his own company (because he was Hungarian).

**Finally, what inspires you about the Whitworth?**

The permanent archive of 20th century textiles and wallpaper

and the commitment they have to teaching about the role 20th century designers played in shaping post-war British design and culture.

As Manchester had such an instrumental role in spinning and weaving cotton fabrics it is brilliant to be able to bring these textiles to a city which has such a rich history of manufacture. The Whitworth and its recent re-development have really created such a buzz and provide a great space to show these works at their best. Their commitment to showing, not only art but also design and industrial art makes them stand out from other museums. The curators understand the work and are passionate about sharing it.



Florida, 1957 – Tibor Reich – Printed  
Cotton, Fotextur Process  
© Tibor Reich Archive



Aluminium Story, 1953 – Tibor Reich – Textureprint  
© Tibor Reich Archive

# Sunday Concerts

Sue Dawson shares her enthusiasm for the Sunday concerts... and their appeal to toddlers.

*Sue is on a mission to engage new people to come to the concerts. She is also a volunteer in the Collections Centre, where she enjoys her involvement with the public and learning more about the collections. She studied history of art as a mature student.*

One of the many pleasures of Manchester life is spending a Sunday afternoon at our favourite gallery listening to some relaxing and contemplative music. The Sunday concert programme continues and is getting more and more popular. The concerts are free, open to all, informal and relaxed so it's just fine to listen to the entire concert or to dip in and out as is convenient.

Each concert lasts about 45 minutes and the music is very varied - mostly performed by students or graduates of our fine music college, the Royal Northern College of Music. The last few concerts have featured tangos for flute and guitar, modernistic sound and light performance by flute and classical and flamenco guitar. I'm sure if you ask any other person attending they will have their own personal favourites. What I'm fascinated and delighted by are the toddlers who are entranced by the musicians playing real instruments. They wander closer and closer to the strange people producing the sound - stilled by the new feeling. It's a fantastic learning opportunity and great to see families enhancing their creative afternoon at the gallery with some live music. Some stay for the entire concert, others for a few minutes. But the concerts attract people of all ages and there's plenty of room in the Grand Hall for coming and going not to disturb those who want to listen in a more concentrated way.

Funded by the generous bequest from Gina Miller, the concerts have been a long-standing part of the Friends' programme of events. They used to be in the South Gallery, but now we have a new time and place - 3pm in the Grand Hall. Next concerts are **17 April, 1 May, 15 May, 29 May, 3 July** but more may be added - for the latest information go to the Friends' website or for a more personal reminder give your email address to the Friends at the next concert you go to and we'll send the information to you. Rosemary Aikman Bull liaises with the RNCM to organise these events and Friends attend the concerts to greet concert goers - join us.

*Rosemary Marsh recalls - Gina Miller was personal assistant to Vice-Chancellor Sir William Mansfield Cooper and Secretary of Ceremonials organising special occasions from royal visits to degree ceremonies. A member of the Friends for many years and in the run up to retirement told Professor Reginald Dodwell, then Director of the Whitworth she would like to work for the Friends. He warned the 'Tuesday team' that someone good was coming - Gina quickly became programme secretary and organised our first trip 'abroad' to Dublin and a number of memorable days out. Gina left all her estate to charity - we were one of 10 she specified.*



Sophie Rocks and Stephanie Halsey from the RNCM



Denise with 2 year old Orla at her first concert



Sue Dawson in the Collections Centre



A child's view of Toddlers' Choice in the Collections Centre

## New community garden

Gill Reddick, who represents the Friends of Whitworth Park on the Friends of the Whitworth committee tells us about a new venture.

The Friends of Whitworth Park recently held an open day in the Learning Centre at the Gallery to unveil plans for the new Community Garden.

The 10 year plan led by Ken Shone was completed last year with the completion of the diagonal paths through the park, upgrading of the childrens' play area, installation of an outside gym and planting of the centre circle and wildflower areas. This coincided with the Gallery reopening and installation of new sculptures in the park.

Looking to the future we are concentrating on the area fronting onto Denmark Road where an unsightly hard-ball court has been removed. This area will adjoin the wildflower area leading from the Sarah Price designed Art Garden so that the north side of the park presents a 'new face' to the community.

Our aim is to introduce a Community Garden which will include an orchard area, raised beds for planting by the local community, an area for fruit bushes, and a 'square' where community activities can take place.



# A Trip to Istria and Friuli

## Sonia Chapman marvels at stunning mosaics

Mosaics and frescoes are amongst the memories of our trip to Istria and Friuli and the 4th century mosaics of the basilica of Aquileia in Friuli were the highlight. The journey accompanied by Nirvana Romell, started in Istria, a province of Croatia, and from there we travelled through Slovenia into Friuli in North East Italy.

After flying to Pula we had a tour of this Roman city, with its temples, triumphal arch and wonderfully complete Roman amphitheatre and where our guide had to compete with full volume loudspeakers announcing the arrival of Triathlon runners, so-called Ironmen who had been racing through the town. We moved on to Rovinj, a picturesque little port and our first hotel where we stayed for two nights and from where we visited Porec. Here walking through narrow streets with Venetian houses and pretty balconies we came to the 6th century basilica of Bishop Euphrasius and most complete of its kind.

Aquileia with its mosaics was for me the highlight. Having arrived at our hotel just in time for the prearranged Roman dinner, the following day started with the church bell just outside the bedroom window tolling the call to Mass at 6am. After this everything improved immeasurably when we met our guide who took us to what had been the port of Aquileia.

I found it a very evocative place and hard to believe that this Roman city is thought to have once had a population of about 200,000 when it was the capital of the region (Regio Venetia et Histria) and has now dwindled to about 3,500. The great basilica of the Patriarchs is the most complete building of old Aquileia still standing and was rebuilt in the 11thc in the Romanesque style, following sacking by the Huns and earthquakes. Within this building lies the 4thc mosaic floor, covering an area of 750 metres the largest in the western Christian world and which was only exposed early in the 20thc.

With its vivid depiction of animals, fishes and fishermen done in a naturalistic style I recorded the visit in my diary as quite stunning. Only local stone was used for the tesserae in this part of the basilica and we learnt more about mosaic and its creation at the Friuli School of Mosaic at Spilimbergo. Students follow a three year course in the techniques of creating mosaic and as we moved through the building we saw mosaic on every wall and walked on mosaics in every style and all created by them.



## Putting a face to a name



Pictured above: FOW committee - back Joan Gem, Christine Pidcock, Rosemary Bull, Mim Butler, Stuart Halsall, Rosemary Marsh, Michael Braid seated Susan Ash, Dr Susan Brown, Gill Crook, Anne Mackinnon (missing Gill Reddick, Ken Shone).

Above right: FOW admin. 'Tuesday team' taking a break Carol Hardie (near counter), Sonya Crawford (both new to TT), Anne Mackinnon, Secretary, Joan Gem, Programme and Gill Crook, ed. Friends' Perspective - and Peter Booth of the Modern Caterer.



Above: More Tuesday team - at work! - Mim Butler, Publicity, Sonia Chapman, Admin., Christine Tomkinson and Christine Pidcock, Membership, Stuart Halsall, Friends' chairman - missing Adele Jennison.

## BaFM

Michael Brightman, BaFM NW regional coordinator said that the highlight of the year was 'the success of the Whitworth and the award of Art Fund Museum of the Year 2015.

*'This is the largest arts award in Britain and the biggest museum prize in the world. It is awarded to the UK museum or gallery judged to have best demonstrated excellence, innovation and imagination.'*  
BaFM - British Association of Friends of Museums.



Visitors can join the Friends of the Whitworth in the shop. Thank you to staff there.

## The view...



...as seen from the cafe - it's a *prunus subhirtella autumnalis* - you knew that!  
...this summer also hoping to see a rather different tree from the café by Anya Gallacio.



Indoors... Red Door with Handle, Anya Gallacio's poignant time-lapse disintegration of gerberas.



## Floral Art

...a present for yourself or someone else? The next contemporary floral art workshop with international floral designer Craig Bullock is at the Whitworth on Saturday, 30 April. All materials provided and a tasty lunch in the café. Book at [bit.ly/lovewhitworthfloralart](http://bit.ly/lovewhitworthfloralart)

## New design team for Perspective

The next edition of 'friends' perspective' will be designed by someone new. Thank you to James Bainbridge for his support and expertise in the design of the newsletter. Your editor and James have worked well over the years... hold the front page now and again! The Friends have worked with TOMAS - Tim Owen Marketing Associates ever since the late Tim Owen came to a meeting of the publicity group and suggested his company could enhance our image! We have continued to improve with our website allowing on-line booking of events and giving members access to news of the Friends. We have had membership leaflets and film night flyers. Time moves on and TOMAS has other commitments, but we will continue to benefit from their support. Thank you to them and the family of Tim Owen - his daughter Lidija and wife Rae are firm supporters of the FOW.

## A reader writes...

'I love getting the Newsletter to see what is happening in Manchester and the Gallery, which seems to be going from strength to strength'.  
**A reader in Yorkshire!**

...A gold recently awarded to the Whitworth by VisitEngland in Large Visitor Attraction category 2016

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, 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](mailto:fow@manchester.ac.uk)**