

friends' perspective

 FRIENDS
OF THE
WHITWORTH



Art from Friends

An insight into creating an exhibition,
full story, page 2

Cover: *The Sleeping Shepherd*, 1831-32, Samuel Palmer.

Art from Friends

Sue Dawson gives her 'insight' on the Friends' show in the Collections Centre or How to Learn Quickly is her alternative description.

Frank Auerbach, Wilhelmina Barns-Graham, Edward Bawden, Edward Burne-Jones, John Constable, John Robert Cozens, John Flaxman, David Hockney, Paul Hogarth, Thomas Jones, L.S. Lowry, Samuel Palmer, Eduardo Paolozzi, John Piper, Stanley Spencer, Graham Sutherland, Keith Vaughan, Richard Wilson, Christopher Wood, Lucian Freud, Paul Nash, Walter Sickert, Thomas Girtin, Edward Lear, Howard Hodgkin, John Davies, Pablo Picasso, Camille Pissarro, Paula Rego.....could go on and on. The Friends have contributed to the purchase of work by these artists and many more.

We have also supported the purchase of superb, beautiful textiles, stunning sculpture and wallpaper which shows the story of our lives.

Here Sue Dawson tells the story.



The opportunity to organise an exhibition was very exciting for Friends of the Whitworth. Deciding what to exhibit and the theme, left many of us scratching our heads. After several meetings we plumped for the aim to show the long relationship between the Gallery and the Friends by exhibiting the range of art works bought by or bequeathed to the Friends since 1933, our first year of existence. This created a very long list!

The Collections Centre was created to make the thousands of works held by the Whitworth more accessible to the public and the Friends funded much of its fittings. One of the ways it does this is to have short term exhibitions put together by groups who don't normally curate exhibitions, so providing a different 'insight' into the Collection as well as giving a tremendous opportunity of working with the gallery first hand and finding out what is involved in creating an exhibition. So far, exhibitions have been put together by older men in a care home, by a band and by a student – now it is the Friends' turn.

We have selected, with the help of Mary Griffiths, Senior Curator (Modern and Contemporary Art) works that have a range of art forms, a range of age, a range of date the works were acquired or bequeathed to the Friends of the Whitworth and a gender spread of artist – there are fewer women artists than men as you would expect of these older works.

A shortlist of 50 or so paintings, drawings, sculptures, textiles and papers was drawn up and then run past the gallery so that they could check the practicality or otherwise of these for display. Works were rejected on the grounds of being too big, already on



display or recently on display and to ensure variety.

We all had our favourites and it was stimulating sharing ideas and leafing through records to find things that had been forgotten for a time. This brought up many stories about past actions, some of which were on the lines of 'being in the right place at the right time' and others where the Friends sought to challenge and be at the forefront of contemporary art thinking.

This then led us on to thinking about labelling works and how to make the display more interesting than simply listing the artist and date made. We have put together longer descriptions of how the work was selected and bought or bequeathed and others about personal interpretations of our favourite works. We hope you enjoy these. Other things in display cases are historic items relating to the Friends and textiles and wallpapers.

We wanted to show how the Friends developed over time and the important work of Margaret Pilkington as well as how the Friends work now with the gallery by showing works acquired as recently as 2016!

What we really want to do is to entice you to come along and view the exhibition and more importantly bring your friends and relatives. There are plenty of membership leaflets, event information and handouts. Please give us your comments and suggestions – the exhibition runs all through Christmas and New Year and until 8 January 2017 so there is plenty of time.

Happy viewing! Read more opposite about some work from Friends. The Sleeping Shepherd on front cover is a well-loved work in the show.

Patricia Tierney, a new Friends' committee member tells of a very recent contribution by the Friends to the gallery

By his own admission, Steve McQueen, probably best known as director of feature length films, such as the Oscar winning, *12 Years a Slave*, turned to video as an art student because it allowed him to tell a story. No surprise, therefore, that McQueen's *Ashes*, the video recently acquired by the Whitworth, both tells a story and also came about because of another story. The two narratives are intertwined.

Working on the Caribbean island of Grenada in 2002, McQueen, intrigued by his vivacity, filmed a young man, *Ashes*, sitting on the prow of a small boat as it sped towards a seemingly endless horizon. Returning to the island sometime later, McQueen discovered that *Ashes* was dead, shot in front of his friends by a gang who wanted to steal a cache of drugs that *Ashes* had discovered hidden on the beach. He was buried in an unmarked grave. McQueen decided to use the previously unused footage of *Ashes* to create a memorial to him both on screen and in reality.



Steve McQueen, *Ashes*, 2002-2015.
Video still. Image courtesy the artist and Thomas Dane Gallery, London.

Ashes is a compilation of a number of elements: the earlier film of the young man, the endless possibilities of whose life seemed to be encapsulated in the sunlit future to which he was sailing, an account of his murder by two friends who were witnesses to it and whose voices have been jarringly superimposed over the earlier film, and images of the painstaking construction of a simple gravestone. Like all great works, though, this one transcends the

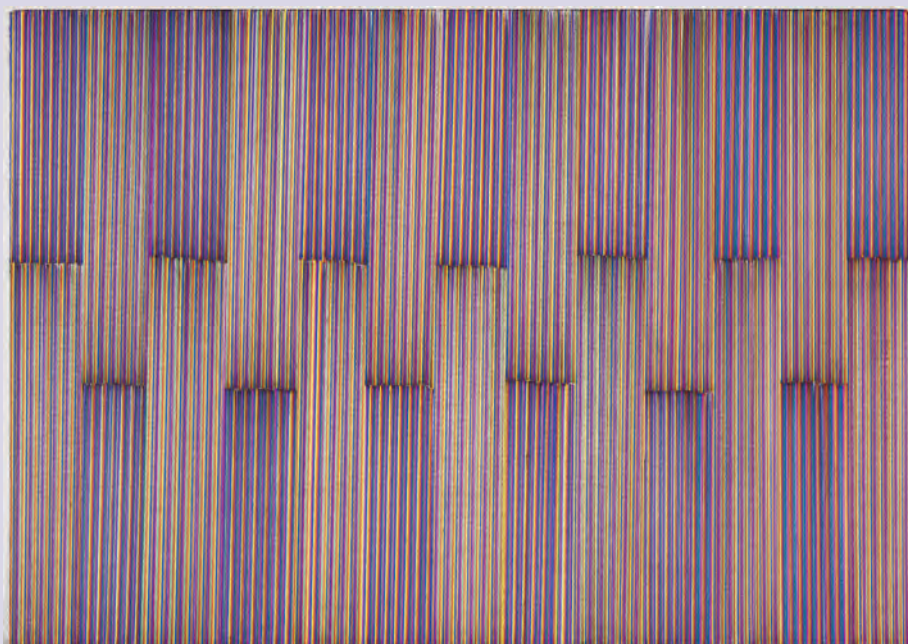
specificity of its context. In *Ashes* himself, we are offered a figure who stands for many wasted lives, lost to premature and avoidable death from drugs, Aids, shooting. The film as a whole invites us as viewers to reflect on the stark contrast between the promise of life and the absolute void of death, a *memento mori* for the 21st century. *McQueen was recently awarded a BFI Fellowship. This video will be shown at a later date.*

Nina Chua

Nina Chua has a studio in Manchester and one of her works *Narrow Interlock*, 2014 is a recent addition to the Insight show. Nina explains 'I attach no symbolic or narrative value to the work. It is simply the result of its process. However I am interested in how a surface gets imbued with meaning and the connection between body and work.'

In particular, the value of line, colour and support and all they articulate beyond words.'

Nina's work could also be seen at the recent Manchester Contemporary.



Nina Chua, *Narrow Interlock*, 2014.

Paul Nash, Whiteleaf Cross, 1931.



Works from the Whitworth appear in exhibitions all over the world!

Friends have no doubt seen them on their travels.

Paul Nash's Whiteleaf Cross might have been in this exhibition, but is on loan to Tate Britain for their Nash show .

In 2001 the Friends funded the gilt framing of Francis Bacon's Portrait of Lucian Freud (1951). You may have seen the work recently at Tate, Liverpool in Francis Bacon: Invisible Rooms.

Welcome Return

Samantha Lackey, Senior Curator, Programmes tells her story

I first came to Manchester as an undergraduate History of Art student in the early 1990s. Of course I came to the Whitworth, which had Richard Hamilton's Large Glass on display and I remember the 'welcome' event for students in the South Gallery.

Filled with strangers, the prospect of spending the next three years with these other students was terrifying, the experience saved by the deeply reassuring Derek Jarman, Evil Queen paintings, which I just loved.

I returned to the Whitworth in earnest to work on the exhibition Subversive Spaces: Surrealism and Contemporary Art, 10 years or so after that first visit.

By then I had an M.A. and a Ph.D. under my belt, but had never actually touched a work of art. The whole experience was a revelation: I worked with objects; with living artists; with brilliant colleagues in a brilliant gallery.

If I recall correctly the Friends of the Whitworth even supported my first ever visit to the Venice Biennale to research for the exhibition!



Sam in the Study Centre overlooking the Art Garden.

I was also lucky enough to be here as the Whitworth started formulating its plans for the HLF bid and for the possibilities for change and innovation that drew on the gallery's history and collections. However, the chance to develop a brand new art gallery lured me over the Pennines to The Hepworth Wakefield. That was a brilliant experience of working with Hepworth's sculptures, contemporary artists and Twentieth Century British art. The people and landscape of Wakefield were a pleasure to work with and among. The stories not only of Hepworth, but of an industrial heritage, political resistance and an attachment to the landscape were the background to all my work there.

But when the job of Senior Curator at the Whitworth came up I jumped at the



Chelsea Gold Medallist Sarah Price in the Art Garden she designed.

chance. It's rare to get the opportunity to return to an organisation, especially one that has undergone such change, while keeping its heart steady. Since returning, I have reacquainted myself with old colleagues, met new ones, revelled in the new gallery spaces and – more than once – gone into a cleaning cupboard that I was convinced was a new meeting room.

I've also started work on a really exciting exhibition programme. My first show will be ARTIST ROOMS: Andy Warhol, a revelatory look at the artist's later work that examines Warhol as an artist of political critique who foresaw the failure of the American Dream at the same time as he celebrated its iconography of hamburgers and Coca-Cola.

Death, politics and selfies explored in Artist Rooms



Andy Warhol, Skulls, 1976. ARTIST ROOMS, National Galleries of Scotland and Tate. Acquired jointly through The d'Offay Donation with assistance from the National Heritage Memorial Fund and the Art Fund 2008.

A stimulating and controversial show drawn from a collection of international modern and contemporary art owned by National Galleries of Scotland and Tate.

Samantha Lackey, see Welcome Return on the opposite page, has written of her involvement in this Warhol exhibition and many of you this month will have attended the lively preview at the gallery.

In 1968 Andy Warhol was pronounced dead: shot by feminist author, activist and member of his entourage Valerie Solanas. He was taken to hospital, received open-heart massage and was revived. Warhol explored his encounter with death through his art and in the photograph of his scarred torso by Richard Avedon. This visual examination of his death is a recurring motif where Avedon's photograph of

Warhol as a scarred Frankenstein's monster is displayed alongside the pale, empty-eyed Warhol in Self-Portrait with Skull (1978) and Self-Portrait Strangulation (1978).

His experimentations with his own appearance as a symbol of his work can be seen in the series of Self-Portraits – this repetitive self-image a foreshadowing of current selfie culture.

Back to a symbol of death in The Electric Chairs series (1971) taken from the 1953 photo agency image of the empty death chamber of Communist spies Julius and Ethel Rosenberg.

Other controversial objects symbolising 20th century America are on colourful view at the Whitworth – Dollar Sign (1981), Camouflage (1986) and Gun (1981).

These works are drawn from the extensive ARTIST ROOMS collection of 232 works by Warhol spanning the artist's entire oeuvre. ARTIST ROOMS was established through the generosity of Anthony d'Offay in 2008.

You may have seen Ron Mueck's work in ARTIST ROOMS at Manchester Art Gallery a few years ago.

ARTIST ROOMS: Andy Warhol runs until April.



Raimondi, Pyramus & Thisbe, 1505.

A passion for Marcantonio Raimondi

Friends were invited to a private view of the outstanding exhibition Marcantonio Raimondi and Raphael. It features the work of one of the radical originators and innovators of the European tradition of printmaking Raimondi (c.1480 – c 1534) and his groundbreaking collaborations with the Renaissance artist Raphael.

It is the first Raimondi exhibition in the UK and showcases the world-class collections of Marcantonio's work at the University of Manchester, housed at the Whitworth and the John Rylands library.

The exhibition has loans of prints by Marcantonio and unique drawings by Raphael from major collections including The Royal Collection Trust, Windsor; British Museum; V&A; Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge and Liverpool Libraries.

David Morris, Head of Collections at the Whitworth and Dr Edward Wouk, Lecturer in Art History and Visual Studies, University of Manchester have curated this stunning and exquisite exhibition.

Manchester University Press has published an extensively illustrated catalogue. This and prints are on sale in the Shop. Remember Friends' discount is available.



Raimondi after Raphael, Poetry c 1515.



David Morris sharing his passion for Marcantonio Raimondi.



'Postcards' from Vienna and Leeds

Back in June, in the summer of 2016, when we were still happy to be called Europeans, a group of 'Friends' travelled to Vienna to enjoy the art and culture of that elegant city with a troubled history. Our hotel just happened to be on the same street as the famous Café Central which soon became a regular stop for strudel and spritzer. It was also just round the corner from Palais Ephrussi the ancestral home of Edmund de Waal and known to everyone who has read the Hare with Amber Eyes. To read Adele Jennison's blog go to

www.friendsofthewhitworth.org.uk/Article

Art at home comes in many guises as we discovered on a recent day out in Leeds and Wakefield. From historic limb prosthetics in the Henry Moore Institute to giant concrete vegetables in the new Tetley gallery in Leeds, it has to be Art if it is in a gallery!

Under consideration for the future are always new experiences such as historic engines in Poynton or Vulcan bombers in Woodford and more Halls to be visited in Lancashire (Browsholme) and Cheshire (Adlington). After Hull – City of Culture 2017, there are Medieval Churches in Norfolk or Galleries in the great cities of south Wales to travel to, and we really should consider Margate, far away and hard to reach, but anything is possible for a Friends of the Whitworth tour.

Joan Gem

Here to Help

Dave Brind is a familiar face at the Whitworth. He tells us how he and other members of the Visitor Team talk about the exhibitions, give background information about a work which particularly intrigues (we have a few of those!) and the way to the toilets is there too!

Daily work at the Whitworth as a member of the Visitor Team centres very much on helping people enjoy and find their way around the gallery engaging in and explaining our collections - the varied aspects of themes and the work of artists on display.

Our Highlight tours, which we devise ourselves, run every afternoon at 2.00pm explaining the Whitworth's history, building and park as well as our interests in the current exhibitions. This gives a good opportunity for the public to see the works through our eyes incorporating time for questions and answers on any aspect about the Whitworth gallery.

Varied in its displays of contemporary and historic works, the Whitworth has a unique flavour in its exhibition programmes which makes engaging with the public very special every day.

A little of Dave's background

Having been fascinated in the back stage workings of the theatre, most of my early career was involved in live productions scenically at an amateur and then professional level.

Having trained as a scenic artist in south London, I worked for 10 years in the West End mainly at The Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, and then 4 years for the Library Theatre Company, Manchester.



Dave at installation of the Idris Khan work.

After working for the Library Theatre in the late 80s, I spent 20 years teaching Art and Design prior to coming to the Whitworth in 2014.

Searching for Eric Gill Joan Gem asks many questions!

In 1998 I bought a book; a Barbican exhibition catalogue by Judith Collins 'Eric Gill, The Sculpture' which includes a photograph of a stone carving 'The Holy Face of Christ.' This was first exhibited in the Goupil Gallery, London priced £70.

It was then bought from Gill by collector Charles Rutherston in 1925, who presented his collection to Manchester City Art Gallery.

This was Job 899 in Gill's ledgers and it was carved for his own pleasure. Gill more usually presents Christ as a man of action. Here he sleeps at peace with his head resting on his right hand, his upper torso naked. In choosing to portray Christ asleep, Gill renders him tender and sensual.

First question, why/how, does anyone connected to a Christian religion know immediately and without looking at the title know this is an image of Christ?

I have twice put in requests to Manchester Art Gallery to view this carving and been told both times that it was 'in an off-site store' and unavailable. I was thrilled to find it on exhibition at the Whitworth in Elizabeth Price Curates.

Eric Gill's name does not appear in the preview leaflet.

Many questions arise when people look at this exhibit. Dave (visitor team) is convinced Elizabeth Price has carefully placed it in juxtaposition with a clip of Charles Laughton's 'Night of the Hunter' about two children escaping the clutches of an evil priestly murderer?

Do we now consider Eric Gill an evil person? Should we not exhibit and admire his

wonderful art? I don't know and I have just purchased his autobiography by Fiona McCarthy published 1989, who says she was 'unprepared for the hostility that would greet revelations about his incestuous past.'

My final question: was Sam Taylor-Johnson inspired by this sculpture (now called Sleeping Christ) when she created the video installation of David Beckham for the National Portrait Gallery in 2004?



Eagle eyed readers may spot this article is typeset in Gill Sans Light.



Carol Hardie reads of another award for the Whitworth build - this time glazing.



Untitled 2016, Anya Gallacio's steel tree as seen from the café.

Another successful Pilkington Lecture and Supper - this year (47th) with potter and author Edmund de Waal. Thanks to Joan Gem and team for the organisation of this event.

We maintain our tradition of illustrious speakers from Sir Kenneth Clark, Dame Bridget Riley, Antony Penrose, Grayson Perry - see the full list in Art from Friends.



Edmund de Waal next to Bernard Meadows, Frightened Figure, 1976.



Esmé Ward, Head of Learning and Engagement with Edmund de Waal and Nicola Walker, Head of Collections Care and Access.



Pilkington supper in the café in the trees.

Friends of museums are the same the world over!

A bold statement you may think. What follows is an attempt to justify it.

Recently I was lucky enough to attend the annual meeting of WFFM (the World Federation of Friends of Museums) in Washington D.C. which like any good meeting began with a good party on the roof terrace of the hotel where we were based; the sun was going down and the view towards the Potomac and the downtown government buildings was almost romantic.

For those who don't know it, Washington is not a high-rise city and the pace of life is relatively relaxed perhaps because so many work for the government either directly or indirectly. Neon signs are few and far between, people cycle to work, walk and jog and use the bus. There are lots of green spaces and fewer 4x4s than in some parts of Cheshire.

Working sessions began with each regional Vice President (Australasia, Europe, North and South America) summarising their impressions of the major concerns of Friends of Museums

in their area, which provoked a lot of discussion.

Funding or lack of it, is a major concern worldwide, but especially in Europe and North America, where museums receive no government funding and tax concessions encourage donations of works of art and major funds for capital projects but revenue funding to keep the lights on is not enough to such an extent that curators' salaries are impounded and some major museums are as the US delegate succinctly put it 'bankrupt' and are being forced to close.

For the moment 33,000 small museums are often doing better as they depend on volunteers and are used to working with a shoestring budget.

However the most encouraging thing about the whole meeting was that there were more young Friends (i.e. under 30) than older ones. It was agreed by the oldies to seek out sources of funding, helping the young ones travel and get to know one another.

Rosemary Marsh

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**