

# friends' perspective



## Award-winning artist Grayson Perry

Guest speaker at the 43rd Pilkington Lecture - see page 3



### MUMA Development Update

See page 6



### Bacon Portrait Framing

See page 2



### Appeal Update

See page 4

# He would be delighted...

Friends fund framing of Francis Bacon's Portrait of Lucian Freud



The Friends recently funded the gilt framing of Francis Bacon's Portrait of Lucian Freud (1951)... Bacon insisted on expensive gilt frames to give the work 'status'.

The work is currently prominently displayed in 'Projections: Works from The Artangel Collection' and was also recently in 'Who Cares? If you only see the illness, you miss the person', alongside paintings by L.S.Lowry, Pissarro, Sickert, Gilbert and George, Kevin Dalton-Johnson and Lucy Burscough. Mary Griffiths, curator of modern art said "It has been transformed from a drab frame to a strong frame around a great painting with the wow value Francis Bacon certainly wanted."

In Portrait of Lucian Freud, Bacon has subverted traditional portraiture by leaving some areas unfinished and by including the

shadow of another presence in the foreground. Bacon often used photography for reference and he may have borrowed Freud's pose from a photograph of Czech writer Franz Kafka. Conservator Ann French said: "We commissioned a new gilt frame in the style preferred by Francis Bacon which met with contemporary conservation standards, together with low-reflecting glass. This has really improved both the appearance and care of the painting, making display easier – all kindly funded by the Friends of the Whitworth."

This work is much admired around the world, frequently being requested for exhibitions, alongside the self portrait of Lucian Freud Man's Head (Self portrait I), 1963 (also seen in Who Cares?) and Peter Blake's Got a Girl. Bacon's will shortly travel to the National Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, for their exhibition 'Francis Bacon: Five Decades' from November 2012.

## 21st Century Obelisk

Whitworth Park

An obelisk is now in Whitworth Park commissioned by the Gallery from French artist Cyprien Gaillard. It's a traditional obelisk shape, but is made from recycled brick and concrete. The brick is from houses recently demolished in Moss Side and the concrete is from the remains of 1960s flats demolished in the 1990s.

Cyprien Gaillard (born 1980) lives and works in Berlin. He has exhibited internationally and last year won the prestigious Marcel Duchamp Prize. The obelisk has been made possible through the assistance of the Friends of Whitworth Park, local councillors Mary Murphy (Hulme ward) and Alistair Cox (Moss Side ward), Manchester City Council, Manchester Metropolitan University and GB Building Solutions.



Anne Mackinnon,  
Gwynneth Littleton and  
Sonia Chapman



Lord Mayor of  
Manchester, Councillor  
Harry Lyons with Maria  
Balshaw, Director of  
the Whitworth and  
Manchester Art Gallery...  
and a happy park visitor!



# Grayson Perry

Joan Gem on the special guest speaker for the 43rd Pilkington Lecture

Join us on Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2011 for the 'Friends' Annual Pilkington Lecture followed by Dinner in the Gallery.

Grayson Perry is an award-winning artist who works in a variety of media, including embroidery and photography, yet he is best known for his ceramic works: classically shaped vases covered with figures, patterns and text. In 2003, he became famous as the first ceramic artist to win the Turner Prize. Grayson – who is arguably as famous for his female alter-ego Claire as he is for his work - explained that dressing up was a way for him to deal with post-exhibition blues as a young artist. He is also the latest artist to be elected to the ranks of the Royal Academicians in the category of Printmaking.

Grayson continues to take on a diverse range of projects from guest appearances on shows such as Have I Got News for You and The Culture Show. In 2005 he wrote and presented an hour-long documentary for Channel 4 entitled Why Men Wear Frocks in which he examined transvestitism and masculinity in the 21st century. In the programme, Grayson spoke candidly about his own experiences and the effect it has had on him and his family. The following year Grayson published an autobiographical account of his formative years entitled Portrait of the Artist as a Young Girl. He also has a show at the British Museum opening in October this year.

Information supplied by Royal Academy and Curtis Brown. Grayson Perry's appearance is being sponsored by a private donation. For booking details see the FOW website or mailing.

*Pictured right: A scarf designed by Grayson Perry, photo by Joan Gem*



## NEWS SNIPPETS

### More collections to be revealed...

When work begins on the Gallery redevelopment, visitors can expect to see more of the treasures from the Gallery's permanent collections on display during the redevelopment phase.

Exhibitions will highlight the diversity and strength of the collection through themed displays. We are sure that many of you will relish this news!

### Peter Booth News

Peter Booth of the Gallery café has gone into orbit - he's also at the stylish glass-walled café at the new visitor centre at Jodrell Bank - to go with the tasty food there are spectacular views of the Lovell telescope.

### Film Nights 2011

Time for the popcorn-our ever popular film nights continue in the autumn - the theme is **four evenings of drama, mystery and suspense** see the FOW website and events sheet for more info.

## York Races

Friends had a very successful fundraising day at York Races

Pictured here is Jane Wood who also kindly provided these photos.



# The Boy Who Bit Picasso

Gwynneth Littleton shares her enthusiasm for a book for all ages

I enjoy name dropping for fun but have only a small list on which to draw. How different has been the life of Antony Penrose! His mother was the beautiful and talented Lee Miller: not only was she the muse of Man Ray but she was the only female Second World War photographer who went into the concentration camps. Later, when her husband, Roland Penrose, friend of many great artists including Picasso, was opening his home to them, she was there with her camera.

That is where her son Antony came in. He was an engaging young boy and that's how he came to bite Picasso. Together they went round his father's farm. Picasso was more than a little interested in the bulls and Lee Miller followed them with her camera. The result is an amazingly intimate account of a short period in their lives. It all looks so idyllic and Antony has made it into a delightful book for all ages.

Antony delivered a scintillating Pilkington lecture some years ago and we had an exhibition of Lee Miller's photos here too. Now he has given an autographed copy of his book to be included in a fund-raising event – see below, details to be announced. Antony shares the Friends' great affection for the Whitworth Art Gallery.



## Future Fund-raising Event

The Antony Penrose book is just one of the items kindly donated by writers and artists for our appeal. Textile artist Alice Kettle whose work and personality have delighted us in the past is contributing – 'The new developments at the Whitworth will make it one of the key art galleries in the north' said Alice. 'Obviously having my work in the permanent collection gives a special interest and I am delighted to be a part of this process of growth.'

Printmaker Anne Desmet has sent a wood engraved print (pictured) entitled Passage of Light. This is one of the Victoria Baths series of works shown at the Whitworth in 2008. The Gallery also has one of this edition in its permanent collection. The work won the Society of Wood Engravers prize in 2008 at the Originals National Open Print exhibition at London's Mall Galleries.



## In the Chair...

*Stuart Halsall has been your 'new' chairman - succeeding Vivienne Blackburn - for some months now and is settling into his role in this very busy fund-raising year for the Gallery and the Friends. As Friends you know of the successful £8 million Heritage Lottery Fund bid. Stuart, in a recent letter, spoke of the vital need to raise the final £1 million before the exciting grand opening of the new development at Easter 2014.*

Stuart joined the Friends in 1997 and has been a committee member since 2001. Some Friends were delighted to visit Iran thanks to Stuart and the travel company Distant Horizons. He has been overseas

visits organiser for more than 6 years aiming at visiting places Friends may not perhaps go by themselves. 'My first FOW European visit was to Berlin and Potsdam,' said Stuart. 'This was followed by Ravenna and Bologna, the Veneto, Madrid and the Meseta, Sicily, Dalmatia, Barcelona and Valencia - Stockholm and Gotland this summer and Thessaloniki next year. Our proposed visit to Syria and Lebanon has been postponed.' He read Natural Sciences and then went on to business school and a career in finance, retiring a couple of years ago.

While at college he took part in a 'Commonwealth Expedition' overland to India and learned to appreciate art by visiting the Fitzwilliam. 'My interests are cultures, art, archaeology and geology-shared with my wife Mirren - and we have travelled fairly



# Shop Talk

Hope you've looked and bought in the shop recently!

It is brimful of new and covetable goodies... stationery featuring works in the collection, affordable presents at under £10, candles, designer jewellery, a handy and fact-filled guide to the Gallery (replacing 100 Years at the Whitworth), inflatable picture frames, jigsaws (pictured - showing Nana, Niki de Saint Phalle's wallpaper in the Gallery collection) and cards of works in the Whitworth collection - quirky items which make unusual presents and of course art and design books, exhibition catalogues and art magazines. Books galore geared to artists and exhibitions and new items are coming in all the time... look out for bone china Whitworth mugs - there's also artist designed wallpaper and paint from the Little Greene Paint Company. Also recently added to the range are limited edition prints researched and collected for the shop by Ian Irvine, himself a printmaker and teacher, who is a visitor services assistant at the Gallery. Friends have 10% discount with membership card... and in the cafe!



Clare Duiker (pictured) who works part-time in the shop is delighted at the range now being offered. Clare who is studying for an Open University humanities degree specialising in art history and French is also a volunteer at the Manchester Museum in the Living Worlds gallery on the handling table.

extensively in pursuit of these. I am pleased to be helping the Gallery in their development and am particularly excited that the publicly accessible space will be doubled and designed in such a way that it will be easier to see most of the Gallery's collections. I also hope the new facilities will encourage more people to become Friends of the Whitworth. As 'founder members' we are keen supporters of the Friends of Whitworth Park so are pleased with the Gallery development plans to reestablish links with the Park.'

Christine Pidcock has now joined the Friends' committee. She joined the 'Tuesday team' thirteen years ago and when Beryl Freer, membership secretary retired, Christine took on this role. She deals with new members, subscriptions and mailings ably assisted by Angela Fowler and Mary Frankel with Sonia Chapman dealing with computer entries.



L-R: Angela Fowler, Christine Pidcock and Mary Frankel

# MUMA Architect Update

Stuart McKnight updates us on the new development at the gallery



**Stuart McKnight of McInnes Usher McKnight Architects - MUMA - shares his relish of the project with Gill Crook, editor of Perspective - and we look forward to the 'wow' factor.**

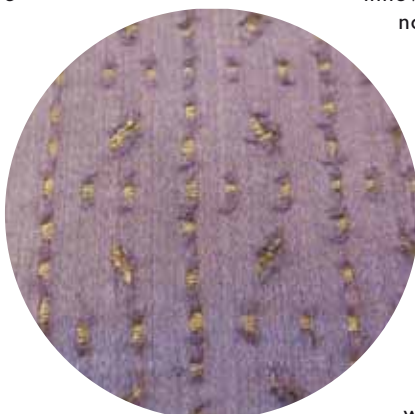
MUMA, established a decade ago has an impressive back catalogue - including the extension to Cornwall's Newlyn Art Gallery, The Exchange in Penzance, and the £30 million revamp of the Medieval and Renaissance Galleries for the V&A. At the competition shortlist event funded by the Friends of the Whitworth, so many felt MUMA had captured the spirit of the Gallery, the existing solid architecture and the potential of the park in the redevelopment of the Gallery.

*Was this a project to relish? - a design perfect for creative minds?*

Yes, definitely. That is why so many architects wanted the project. How often do you get the chance to build an art gallery in a park. It is an amazing opportunity and the chance to make a difference is something to relish. Working at the Whitworth is as good a project as you can get.

*What were your initial ideas for the building and its construction?*

We looked at the potential within the existing building. We did not actually propose to build on the competition site but beside the competition site. It was actually a reasonably innovative idea not to follow the brief and the plan now is to have the collections in the basement and move the lecture theatre to the grand hall as it was in the past.



In terms of construction though we prefer to use tried and tested materials, but maybe use them in an innovative way. The combination of those materials may be a little bit unexpected.

We quite like to learn from tradition whenever we can, which you can see in some of our past projects for example wet laid Cornish slates at Newlyn. In Manchester we are interested in the brick - we don't feel the need to be overtly innovative. It is always to do with looking to the character of an individual project, understanding local techniques and looking for opportunities.



Architectural Relief Construction by Victor Pasmore (1965)



*Stuart has looked at and been thrilled by the Gallery collections citing a Victor Pasmore relief (pictured) and a textile as inspirations - it is possible that the texture of this early 17<sup>th</sup> century slashed silk satin fabric (pictured, probably Italian) used for doublets may find its way into the building.*

*Do you hope the artists will respond to the park?*

I very much want that to happen. We are making a number of changes with this in mind. We are setting up views from inside to outside so hopefully artists will respond to that. We are creating a promenade which is a place to display art which is going to feel outside the Victorian building and more in the park than being in the building because it is glazed in such a way that you will have walked through the solid Victorian masonry and will step out into the promenade. That's the place which can have installations and art, but fundamentally we are creating an art garden-so a place outside in which artists could be making art. I think they will-it is more than a hope. I absolutely believe they will respond to the park. I don't know how you can resist!

*Of the V&A commission you are quoted as saying 'We have worked to minimize overt display and visual clutter.' Is this how you see the Whitworth?*

At the V&A the objects are so incredibly beautiful and obviously the whole project was about displaying those objects, but in displaying objects there are so many practicalities we have to deal with - security, humidity control, temperature devices, interpretative devices that we witness museums sometimes becoming overcluttered through necessity. We also have a concern that quite often you can see an architectural statement being made where an architect will impose his own signature on the space and by doing so begin to undermine the clarity of the art being displayed. So at the V&A we gradually stripped away everything we could and then worked with natural materials really to provide an appropriate backdrop for the objects. This extended to working with the objects themselves where we stripped away historical non original elements-1970s bits-false columns, false handrails from a French medieval staircase.

Now at the Whitworth it is a little bit different because we are not laying out and displaying the collection as an exhibition design. We feel our duty here is to provide calm, uncluttered spaces for the display of art. In terms of architectural expression making the new connection with the park is enough for us. We don't feel we have to do more than that, otherwise the effort goes into being discreet. For example in the new landscape gallery we are bringing in good north light without being able to see the source of the light so there is just a wash of light filtering from above. You can't see the windows, you can't see the light control devices or the air extract, and the air supply is also not visible from almost all of the gallery. There is however one very large window with a view to the park. So we will be hopefully creating spaces with character, but not visual clutter. Our attitude in the Whitworth changes when we go into the public circulation spaces in the café and the promenade. That is where you see the mullion we have developed and maybe expressions of structure and pattern-in the area where the public are relaxing rather than within the galleries.



Stuart McKnight (centre) with Gillian McInnes and Simon Usher

*Do you believe in the wow factor?*

I don't know whether I do or not. I am not so really interested in the wow factor. I am interested in an architecture that is right for a place and an architecture that over time is interesting and over many visits is interesting and over time becomes more and more understood and loved. I think it is possible to have wow factor and achieve that, but I think it is more important to have something that is right for context and right for place than have instant gratification so I think there is a wow that can develop. I would hope that sometimes someone sitting in our café might look over the park at the wonderful trees and glance around and understand what we are doing with the structure and kind of feel wow, but hopefully a little quiet wow as opposed to something that shouts at you as you walk through the park, because I think to

us the Victorian building is the factor.

*I put it to Stuart that many see the front of the building as forbidding...*

The present building is announcing itself as a building of civic presence. The exterior (it is sometimes claimed) may put people off, but it is muscular and proud and very much of its time so in that sense the Victorians were producing the wow at the front. When we come to the back and the park we asked ourselves during the competition whether we should be doing something that competes with the front and tries to be equally apparent or whether we should do something different and our choice was to actually do something more informal and maybe less obvious in a sense than the big gesture at the front. So I suppose what I am talking about is a quiet wow.

When in future you will be able to see right through the whole depth of the building and see the trees, there will be a sense of surprise and the building will feel utterly and completely different. And that's the kind of effect we quite like. You might not realise that MUMA made that change-you might not realise that you couldn't get that view before so when you come into the building you'll just see something that feels right and that doesn't need to have our signature on it-a bit like uncovering the potential of what is there. I think sometimes an architect's duty is just to release potential - witness the use of the sky and the sea at Newlyn.

*So look at the ugly back of the Gallery now before it is transformed! I had a rewarding and long talk with Stuart about the new Whitworth - look for more on the practicalities of the new extension in the next edition of Perspective...*



## A trip across Morecambe Bay

This was another fun fundraising event for the Friends – a walk across Morecambe Bay this summer led by Cedric Robinson MBE. Friends Freda and Harry Moody organised this event and the visit to York Races (see page 3). The trip brought to mind the David Cox watercolour 'Crossing Lancaster Sands' from the Gallery collection (pictured below).



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## Friends at the Manchester International Festival

Many Friends enjoyed the 'buzz' of the Manchester International Festival with events such as The Life and Death of Marina Abramović at the Lowry – it was a bonus to have been involved in Marina Abramović Presents at the Whitworth in 2009.

Also pictured here is Whitworth Park at night as the setting for Tony Oursler's The Influence Machine. This was a spectral son et lumière with videos projected onto trees and smoke haunting Whitworth Park. Just a glimpse of the exciting and innovative events at the Festival.



***l.to r. Willem Dafoe, Marina Abramović, Antony (Antony and The Johnsons), Robert Wilson***

**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.**