

NEWSLETTER

NO.18 — AUTUMN 2017
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Methodist **Modern**
Art Collection



*A companion de Maistre surfaces in Australia
The Collection in Canterbury and Haywards Heath
Secretary of Conference in Focus*

EDITORIAL

Our readers will find a report on two rather special events featured in this edition; namely the loan of our Souza painting to St. Paul's Cathedral, by way of commemorating the 70th Anniversary of the, sadly, all too violent move to Indian Independence and helping to mark the somewhat happier 2017 UK-India Year of Culture. Also we report upon a fascinating story tracing the recent history of a companion *Noli me tangere* painted by Roy de Maistre.

I am particularly delighted to highlight the Revd Canon Gareth Powell, Secretary of the Methodist Conference, as the subject of our 'In Focus' feature, in this edition. Gareth is a great champion of the Collection and, indeed, a founding Friend from our inception in 2008.

I should make Friends aware of a recent change in nomenclature regarding the day to day administration of the Collection. The reality is that the Methodist Council are in fact 'The Trustees'. Thus, henceforth, those of us charged with the responsibility for overseeing the works, serving the needs of intending borrowers, researching possible new acquisitions, ensuring the twice yearly delivery of our Newsletter, etc., are now to be referred to as the 'Management Committee'. Friends will also be interested to know that we will, shortly, be actively seeking to add to our number on the Management Committee. This, both to ease our increasing workload and to replace those who, having given sterling service, will be looking to stand down in the near future.

Finally, I can confirm that the Vimeo footage of Tim Marlow's *An Introduction to the Methodist Modern Art Collection* is, at last (!) available to view on our website.

Art Collection Management Committee Members

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(The Supporters of the
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Patrons: The President of Conference and
The Very Revd Nick Bury

Bob Williams

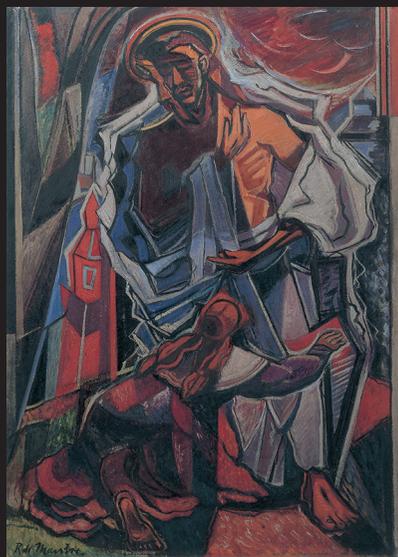
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Roy de Maistre, *Noli me tangere*, 1949.
Oil on canvas. From the New Norcia
Collection, W. Aus.



Roy de Maistre, *Noli me tangere*,
1952-58. Oil. From the Methodist Modern
Art Collection

NOLI ME TANGERE

Roy de Maistre 1894-1968)

Poet David Subacchi adds
his thoughts to a subject
that Australian artist Roy de
Maistre found all-consuming.

There is something strange
About this picture
Or is it my imagination
Noli me tangere

Touch me not, says Christ
To the kneeling Magdalene
For I have not yet
Ascended to the Father

He towers above her
Advises the catalogue
And close up
This is perfectly clear

But if I take several steps
Back from the painting
And look again
I see another Mary

Dark haired with arms
Embracing the Saviour
Still kneeling
But straighter backed

And more in scale
A more confident figure
I point this out to others
They look for themselves

But remain indifferent
Each time I look
My certainty grows
Look at it yourself

Who knows what
You will see
Who knows how
It will touch you.

Front cover:
The Collection has an
appeal for all ages
Photo: Christina Chelmick

An Australian Roy de Maistre that has undergone three name changes!

'New Norcia looks forward to building its contemporary religious art holding into a collection of national significance for the benefit of all Australians.'

This Newsletter feature has its origins in an e-mail that I received, some little while ago and quite out of the blue, from a remote monastery in Western Australia! It seems that the New Norcia Benedictine Community have, amongst other interesting heritage artefacts, a collection of contemporary religious art from the 1940s to the present day, comprising work by important Australian artists.

It so happens that the then Curator, Christopher Power, of the Order of St. Benedict, was working to acquire a painting by Roy de Maistre. The work in question is, in fact, a Deposition painting (*Noli me tangere*) and uncannily similar to our own work in the Methodist Modern Art Collection. He was much intrigued by this similarity and wondered whether we could shed any light on this connection fearing that the painting that interested him might even prove to be a fake or, merely a copy.

I felt that I was able to reassure him in this respect in that it seems that de

Maistre regularly adopted the practice of producing a series of subsequent studies prior to the final work. As the original background notes on de Maistre, in Roger Wollen's *Catalogue of the Methodist Church Collection of Modern Christian Art* informs us, - 'That there should be several versions of a subject is therefore not surprising. In addition to the Methodist painting there are two or three other versions of *Noli me tangere*. The largest and earliest dates from 1950-51 and was painted for the Arts Council's Festival of Britain exhibition *Sixty paintings for '51*. This painting is very similar to the Methodist Version'. In March 2016 Chris came back to me with the exciting news that the de Maistre painting had indeed been acquired and arrived at its new home, rather appropriately, on New Norcia's 170th birthday. A number of interesting observations from the picture's provenance that Chris has researched make interesting reading -

Roy de Maistre was born in Bowral, NSW, 1894 and died in London in 1968. The New Norcia *Noli me tangere* seems to be one of several versions, possibly three, which de Maistre produced in the late 1940s/1950s. Most probably painted in the artist's studio at 13 Eccleston St, Westminster, London, de Maistre's permanent home from 1932. A slightly larger version (95 cm X 67 cm, painted 1952-58), in a different palette, is in the Methodist Collection of Modern Art. It is possible the New Norcia version was exhibited at the de Maistre retrospective exhibition at the Whitechapel Gallery, London in 1960.

The New Norcia version seems to have found its way into the hands of Neville Keating Pictures, London. Somewhere around this time it underwent a name change becoming *Judgement of Solomon(!)*. Neville Keating then, in 1977, seem to have sold it on to Australian Galleries, Melbourne under its new title, for \$1,800. It remained in Australia but changed hands several times - and a further name change - *Christ and Mary* in 2004. In 2016 it was purchased, at a 'bargain' \$30,600 by the Benedictine Community of New Norcia for its contemporary Australian Religious Art Collection, reverting to its original title of *Noli me tangere*. Chris Power contributes the interesting background to what might be deemed a 'sister collection' from the Antipodes -

The New Norcia Collection is a large body of artworks that has been steadily building since 1985. It is the only known collection dedicated to Judaeo-Christian art in the country.

The contemporary Collection of approximately 160 works, is housed in a large, well appointed exhibition space at the Museum and Art Gallery. Because the community remained overwhelmingly Spanish until the mid 20th century, the Collection has a distinctly European rather than an Anglo-Saxon bias. Approximately 60,000 people visit the site annually.

In collaboration with artists, benefactors and supporters, New Norcia looks forward to building its contemporary religious art holding into a collection of national significance for the benefit of all Australians.

The Secretary of The Methodist Conference in focus

The Secretary of the Conference, according to the Standing Orders of the Methodist Church, plays a principal part in the oversight and leadership of the Church, an exciting but rather daunting task that includes working alongside many others to develop the Church's vision of unity, mission, evangelism and worship; to develop the strategic management of the Church's affairs; and to give effect to the vision and strategy of the Church. One of the joys and challenges of the role is the sheer breadth of this vision – we are a theologically broad Church, and this is reflected in the vast number of ways in which we seek to worship God and proclaim the gospel. I am delighted that one thread in this rich tapestry is the Methodist Modern Art Collection, having glimpsed in my travels across the Connexion its impact on worship and teaching and on the lives of individuals exploring the meaning of the incarnation.



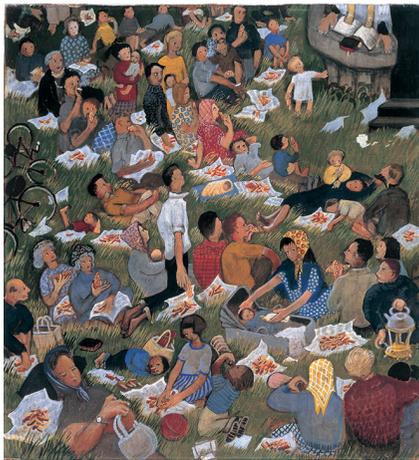
The Revd Canon Gareth J Powell.
Photo supplied.

I had the privilege of first encountering the Collection through Dr John Morel Gibbs. We first met in the old Cardiff and Swansea Methodist District when I was in the process of candidating for ordained ministry – over subsequent years, on a number of occasions, John drew my attention to the Collection and encouraged me to think creatively about the role of the visual arts in the life of the Church.

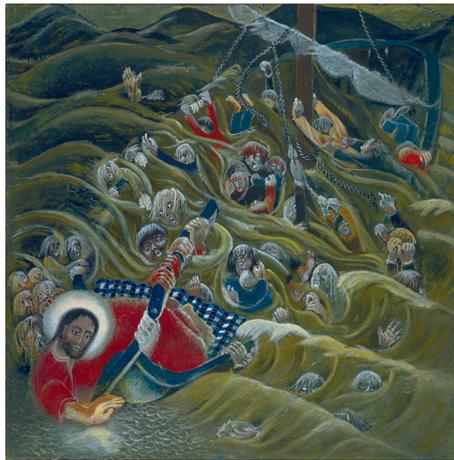
The Revd Dr Colin Morris, perhaps one of the most effective communicators of the word that Methodism has seen in the past 50 years, pointed out that for many years, nonconformists “believed it better to enter the Kingdom of Heaven blind rather than deaf; what the believer saw was marginal to salvation – hence the austerity of the average chapel – whereas what he or she heard was crucial.” I hope, in Methodism, that we have now moved to a more holistic understanding of the relationship between the spoken word and the visual arts – and how both can help us in our task of attending to the glory of God. The Collection invites its viewers to look through its works to the God who reveals Godself in the life of Jesus, in the spoken word, and through works of art created by human hands.

The Revd Canon Gareth J Powell was appointed as the Secretary of the Methodist Conference in July 2015, having served as the Assistant Secretary since 2011. Prior to his appointment as Assistant Secretary, he served in circuit and chaplaincy appointments in Coventry and Cardiff, and has also served as the Ecumenical Officer of the Methodist Church in Wales and Co-Chair of the Methodist Anglican Panel for Mission and Unity.

Secretary's choice



Eularia Clarke (1914-70)
The five thousand, 1962. Oil



Eularia Clarke
Storm over the lake, 1963. Oil



Norman Adams (1927-2005) *Christ's entry into Jerusalem*, 1991. Watercolour

All from the Methodist
Modern Art Collection

I confess that I have struggled to isolate a single piece from the Collection on which to focus. My favourite changes almost every time I approach the works from a new context (and with a new task in mind!).

At the moment, I find myself drawn to Eularia Clarke's *The five thousand*. Every time I look at it, I am attracted to a different detail in this busy painting (although I often find myself looking hopefully at the figure that seems to be brewing tea). For me, the colour, the noise and the busy activity all evoke the glorious disorder of the incarnation and the miracle of God's communion with each one of us. For Methodists, it evokes too the messiness of our calling to be 'in connexion' with one another – a profound sense of the way in which, as members of the Body of Christ, we feed and are fed by one another as an expression of God's abundant love. I often

oscillate between this piece and Clarke's *Storm over the lake* – two works in which the central figure is tucked into a corner, and in which God-in-Christ is a willing inhabitant of the chaos and community of the world. I also find myself drawn to Norman Adams' *Christ's entry into Jerusalem* – perhaps it is telling that all three pieces bristle with colour and detail and activity. Again, this work seems to me to speak profoundly of the incarnation and the nature of our faith. It suggests that the physical matter of this world *matters* – and that we must take seriously the physicality of God's marvellous creation.

THE COLLECTION ON ITS TRAVELS

PICTURING FAITH

*The Beaney House of Art
and Knowledge*
14 January – 23 April 2017

From January-April of 2017 the Methodist Modern Art Collection in its entirety found a home at The Beaney – the busy museum, gallery and tourist information hub right in the centre of Canterbury.

The Collection was sponsored to come to the city by Kent College Canterbury, the Methodist residential school. From the beginning of the negotiations the staff at The Beaney were excited and fully committed to this partnership of the Collection coming to a professionally run gallery space in a city that has been the centre of pilgrimage for centuries.

The Collection was hung in the beautifully lit temporary exhibitions room where over the next few months no

fewer than 11,367 people were to visit. This included people of all ages including school parties (the Art Department of Kent College developed a work sheet which was used by a number of children from local schools). One of the benefits of The Beaney is that it is a space which is naturally visited by the large number of tourists who come to the city.

The exhibition was opened at a special event where a number of local dignitaries attended. Lord Griffiths of Burry Port and Jo Jones, the Head of Museums and Galleries in Canterbury were guests of honour. Immediately comment was made about how well the exhibition had been hung and the strength of having the whole Collection together in a gallery space.

The Beaney showed their commitment to the project by paying for the services of a professional artist for 6 months who worked with talented Year 10 pupils from two schools in the

area - Canterbury Academy and Kent College, to develop a second exhibition based on the responses of young people to the themes raised by the Collection. This second exhibition called 'All Faiths and None' (a ground breaking piece of co-operative work between the independent and state sectors) was very well received and had its own separate opening attended by the Lord Mayor of Canterbury. A paper based on some of the paintings and the work of the exhibition was used by the Methodist Church in Britain in a Connexional Day on Apologetics.

As well as this, three separate lectures aimed at different constituencies and held at different venues around the city took place. Richard Cork spoke about the Modern Art Collection as a whole at Kent College, Peter Forsaith talked at St. Peter's Methodist Church about Wesley's view of art and Canon Christopher Irvine (Canon Librarian)



'Picturing Faith' Exhibition poster.
Photo: Martin Cox



The Collection beautifully displayed at The Beaney. Photo: Martin Cox

‘The Beaney – a professionally run gallery space in a city that has been the centre of pilgrimage for centuries.’

talked at the Cathedral about the work of Ceri Richards.

In all a most successful set of events and an exhibition which garnered a great deal of interest including church trips out, school visits, articles in The Tablet and coverage in the local and regional press.

– Revd. Dr. Paul Glass, Chaplain, Kent College, Canterbury.

Staff and students from Kent College, Canterbury hosted the third of our Focus Groups, organised by the MMAC Management Committee as part of the strategic planning for the Collection. Those present shared feedback and ideas over lunch in the College dining room with Sarah Middleton and former Collection trustee, Angela Dewar. A submission was made in writing by a Methodist church member in Canterbury; the two Year 10 students with us had contributed works to the ‘All Faiths and None’ exhibition shown at The Beaney. It seems the big impact of the ‘Picturing Faith’ exhibition had been to open up conversation about faith. Simon Sorokos, on the staff of Kent College, asked whether a Partnerships Officer might create more regular links between town galleries, local churches and university art departments in the ongoing tour programme, building on successful instances of where this has happened before.

– Sarah Middleton



Top: Left to right – Lord Leslie Griffiths of Burry Port, Jo Jones (Head of Museums and Galleries, Canterbury), Dr. David Lamper (Exec. Headmaster of Kent College) and the Revd Dr Paul Glass, at the Opening.

Below: Exhibition Co-ordinators, Simon Sorokos and the Revd Dr Paul Glass, seen with Edward Burra's *The pool of Bethesda*.

Photos: Martin Cox

WALKING ON WATER

*Haywards Heath Methodist Church and United Reformed Church
22 June – 16 July 2017*

Attempting to stage a major exhibition of world-class artworks in Haywards Heath was an audacious proposition from the first as ours is a small commuter town in West Sussex. We knew this would prove to be a unique event for the town and an opportunity to engage in an act of outreach, by these churches, within the local community.

130 people attended the Private View, including local clergy, councillors, church members and volunteers. We

were delighted that Nathaniel Hepburn (the then Director and CEO, Ditchling Museum of Art + Craft) was able to be with us to open the exhibition and address the invited guests.

The exhibition was very well supported by more than 70 volunteers to act as guides around the exhibition venues and provide refreshments. There was a busy programme of events, including a number of concerts and workshops, together with a series of talks,

by academics and clergy, on Collection artists John Muafangejo and Edward Burra, with Mark Cazalet once again well received when conducting a tour entitled 'Sacramental Imagination'. Special services were held at both churches each Sunday over the course of the exhibition.

The aim of our Curator, Judith Blocker, was to ensure that visitors could enjoy the paintings without being distracted by too much information. Therefore the works were hung with only the labels beside them on the wall. But she also wrote a one-page 'Looking Guide' for each artwork which was numbered and offered interpretation and information. This approach seemed to work well with our visitors and many bought the 'Guide to the Methodist Art Collection' after enjoying reading our own looking guides. An important part of our strategy was to use online access to enhance the visitor experience. The looking guides were loaded onto the website on a special area and accessible from any smart phone or from the two tablet computers (one at each church).

The very effective hanging design for both churches had been completed by Judith a few months before the exhibition. Many of our visitors commented on the pleasing tonal effects, the counter-weight effect of placing the dramatic Lee-Elliott *Crucified tree form – the agony* next to the bright pink Aitchison one and the strong visual impact of the two large paintings facing the viewer on entry to the URC – Burra's *The pool of Bethesda* and Clive Hicks-Jenkins *Christ writes in the dust*. Indeed, the exhibition was planned to take advantage of the long, uncluttered sight-lines available to us in the open spaces of the two churches so that viewers could step back and appreciate the



Top: Ann Phillips modelling one of the two striking Art Collection T-shirts designed by Haywards Heath. Photo: Christina Chelmick

Below: Curator Judith Blocker, Nathaniel Hepburn, Sarah Middleton, representing the Collection and Nicola Sheldon
Photo: Christina Chelmick



A young visitor absorbed by the Iselin painting.
Photo: Christina Chelmick



Three young ladies contemplate the Bavin painting.
Photo: Haywards Heath Methodist Church



Sarah Middleton, doing her bit to plug the Friends Group at the Haywards Heath Opening!
Photo: Christina Chelmick

larger artworks from a distance, as well as close-to. However, retaining a line of chairs in both the Methodist Church and the United Reformed Church enabled visitors to stay longer, sit and contemplate the artworks.

The one local school who felt able to arrange a visit, with 30 Year Two children, had a wonderful time. Led by Bethan Hobbs, a local freelance art teacher, and assisted by their own teachers, they focused on two works – *Dalit Madonna* and *The Elements of the Holy Communion*, which provided a good basis for collage work. Our experience echoes that of other organisers in the recent past and underlines the lack of flexibility schools have today.

(Sadly, a familiar story – Ed).

We drew in many people who had never previously or only rarely visited either of the churches and it appears that they were much impressed both in terms of the impact of the exhibition and the hospitality shown. We also experienced working on a large project with another church and with Christians from a range of churches, as volunteers and supporters.

We hope this will provide a pattern for future events and should prove especially gratifying as there is no active ‘Churches Together’ organisation in our area.

Longer term, the exhibition has raised the issue of the lack of cultural facilities in our area and the question remains as to whether the churches can play a role in a strategy to address that deficit. The possibility of a youth worker with an arts focus is on the table. We would very much like to see the establishment of an arts centre, although finance would be an issue. Nevertheless, having delivered a successful project, we hope that this places us in a favourable position for any future plans.

2,676 visitors viewed the works over the 25 days of the exhibition. Once again, we have a Visitors’ Book that bore testimony to the impact the works had on the viewing public....

‘Very moving. The pictures go right to the heart of Christianity and its message.’..... ‘Thank you for providing such an awesome exhibition. So spiritually moving; too special to miss.’..... ‘The exhibition gave me something to think

about and to reflect on my faith in a different way. Thank you!’..... ‘Profoundly moving as well as so interesting. Thank you for your lovely stewards who have welcomed us and been so helpful.’..... ‘Fabulous – thank you so much – wonderful range of work – a real blessing.’..... ‘Great exhibition; thanks for bringing it to Haywards Heath.’..... ‘One can but hope that this exhibition might lift a veil on Methodism, no longer the fringe radical movement of 300 years ago (my relatives included!). Even centenarian auntie, with whom I’ve stayed this last week, was so thrilled to see the images on line’.

– Nicola Sheldon

*The Ditchling Guild of
St. Joseph and St. Dominic*

In July, I visited Haywards Heath to hear Sarah Middleton and Lottie Hoare speak about work and life in early 20th Century Ditchling and, specifically, about the engraver, Philip Hagreen.

The venue was the United Reformed Church in South Road where there were also a number of works from the Collection on show as an integral part of the ‘Walking on Water’ Exhibition. The welcome was warm and the layout very pleasing in the attractive building; the display stands were particularly well arranged, solid looking and allowing plenty of space around each picture. I had been at Ditchling when Hagreen’s grandson, Richard Ritchie, had presented his grandfather’s work to the trustees (as they were then designated) some years ago and am familiar with the Ditchling

‘story’ but I knew very little about Hagreen himself.

Sarah’s talk was centred around David Jones and his struggle to make sense, through his art, of the pain of his experiences in the trenches during 1914/18. (see *In Parenthesis*, by David Jones). We were given a description of the set up in Ditchling during the early 20th century. The group consisted of the co-founder of the artists commune, Eric Gill, his unconventional family, and the associated group of stone cutters, wood engravers, weavers and painters, including Gill’s co-founder Hilary Pepler, Philip Hagreen, David Jones, Edward Johnston, the calligrapher and watercolourist Edgar Holloway. Sarah described some of Holloway’s etchings and portraits and how, later, she came to

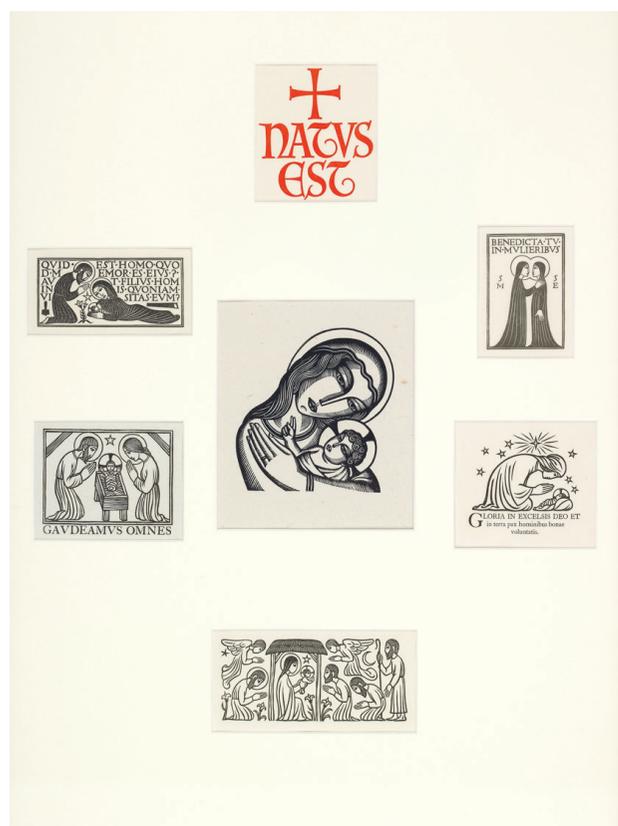
know his widow, Jennifer, also a painter, and their home on Ditchling Common. The group moved in 1924, en bloc, to Capel y Ffin, near Abergavenny, where they remained working for four years. A display of several books on the artists and the Arts & Crafts movement was a useful addition to the talk.

Lottie Hoare came to know Hagreen, after his death, by reading a collection of his letters, which she subsequently edited and compiled for publishing. Hoare found Hagreen, as well as being a sensitive and meticulous artist, ‘a thoughtful and outspoken observer who had a remarkable talent with words’. The title of her book suggested itself after she had read the following, by Hagreen, a Catholic, ‘I doubted the orthodox teaching when it did not tally with experience’, and so a ‘A Sceptic and a Craftsman’ was published, on line, in 2009. Easy to find and to read.

The work by Hagreen in the Collection is a white page of six small wood engravings of scenes from the Nativity. It was hung in a group of black and white works, above a plinth holding David Jones’ exquisite miniature wood cut of Three Kings, designed for a Christmas card and made during his time in Wales. Alongside were two powerful pieces by the African artist, John Muafangejo, both linocuts, with strong anti-Apartheid, political references. This grouping was a happy juxtaposition and it was good to be able to see them all together after such interesting and informative talks.

– *Angela Dewar*

Angela will be familiar to many readers as a former trustee/Management Committee member of the Methodist Modern Art Collection – Ed



Philip Hagreen (1890-1988) *Natus Est (He is Born)*, 1923-55. Six woodcut prints on paper. From the Methodist Modern Art Collection

VISUAL ARTS PROGRAMME: F.N. SOUZA'S CRUCIFIXION SHOWING AT ST. PAUL'S

St. Paul's Cathedral, City of London

1 – 30 August, 2017



His Excellency Mr. Y. K. Sinha seen here with the painting, on display in the Dean's Aisle of the Cathedral. Photo: Ann Sumner

The Managing Committee were very pleased to accede to a request that this significant work should be loaned to St. Paul's for the month of August. This by way of commemorating the UK-India Year of Culture and a twelve month period of cultural exchange on the 70th Anniversary of Indian Independence. The presence of this work, within the Cathedral, was marked on 17 August, with a special Evensong attended by His Excellency Mr. Y.K. Sinha, High Commissioner for India, followed by a Reception with an opportunity to view the painting.

FN Souza (1924-2002) had an interesting life. He was born in Goa, a Portuguese enclave, in West India. He attended art school in Bombay from 1940 but was expelled in 1945 for participation in the Quit India Movement, a campaign started by

Mahatma Gandhi in August 1942, which demanded an end to British rule. Souza, with other Indian artists, formed the Progressive Artists Group in 1947, the year of Indian Independence. The artist moved to London in 1949 and quickly won recognition. He was awarded the John Moore prize in 1957 and participated in the Commonwealth Artists of Fame exhibition in 1977.

Souza's works are displayed in The National Gallery in New Delhi, Tate Britain, London and Wakefield Gallery and many other significant institutions. Having trained in Mumbai he came to England in 1949 and established himself with a number of successful solo exhibitions that included a number of religious works. He absorbed influence from a number of traditions but pursued his own vision. His crucifixion paintings were particularly striking and the work he executed in 1962, now in the Methodist Modern Art Collection, was deemed an entirely appropriate work to display, in St. Paul's, for this occasion.

Souza's religious paintings are notable for a quality of fearfulness and terrible grandeur. He painted The Crucifixion as a subject on a number of occasions, including this work, in which Christ hangs on the cross with two figures, probably St John and a disciple. The overtly expressionistic style creates a wild and unsettling scene of a public execution. Christ's loving arms dominate the scene bringing into focus the belief of Christians that God shows his love for the world in Christ's sacrifice. Refuting what he called the 'blond operatic Christs' found in the churches of his childhood in Goa, Souza brings us back to the horror of Christ's public execution and invites us to interrogate the pains and cost of love

and how this love might, indeed, reflect the divine.

Throughout its history, art in St Paul's Cathedral has inspired and illuminated the Christian faith for those who visit, and provided a focus for reflection, meditation and contemplation. This legacy continues today through the Cathedral's Visual Arts Programme which seeks to explore the encounter between art and faith in a powerful and challenging context. In recent times, a series of interventions by artists including Antony Gormley, Gerry Judah and Bill Viola have further enriched the daily pattern of worship and the spiritual encounter experienced by visitors to the Cathedral.

– Simon Carter (Head of Collections, St Pauls) and Meryl Doney

ELSEWHERE IN THE ART WORLD

FORTY DAYS - FORTY ARTISTS

St. Michael's Church, Discoed, Powys
1 March - 18 April 2017

The demise of rural churches and chapels is a source of sadness as resident numbers decline, those of faith become fewer and the upkeep of a building becomes both a financial and practical challenge. St. Michael's, Discoed, a medieval church with Victorian modifications located in the Welsh border country, provides a counter to this trend. Some sensitive and quality re-ordering of its internal space has taken place thus making it more flexible in terms of use. Through the efforts of the Friends of St Michael's, it now offers an attractive venue for a range of art and cultural events that connect the secular with the spiritual.

For a number of years during Lent it has responded through art and this year their fifth Lent exhibition titled '40 Days 40 Artists' was held. As curator, Charles MacCarthy asked forty artists to respond to ten themes from the Passion story. The result was that ten groups

of four artists produced individual interpretations of each of the ten themes and took inspiration from the work of an Old Master on the topic. The ten subjects chosen describe the events immediately before and after the Crucifixion as well as the Crucifixion itself.

The contributions were mainly through paintings and drawings but there were five sculptures including *Jesus carries the Cross* by Lottie O'Leary inspired by Lorenzo Lotti - a good alliteration on the L letter. This acted as the poster and brochure cover for the exhibition but visitors looking at the back of the sculpture would have spotted the carved faces of the crowd. Certainly this was a case of needing to look at the equivalent of both sides of a coin. The pictures varied in terms of how readily it was possible to detect the inspiration of an Old Master and for some it was a more tenuous link. Thelma Ayre's oil on canvas of *The Entombment* drew cleverly on Gustav Klimt while Christopher Kilmartin's *The Mocking of Christ* drew on Piero Della Francesca but positioned against

a faint background of a supermarket interior. It was also interesting to see Collection artist Richard Bavin feature among the selection of works, with his interpretation of *Pieta*.

All were presented professionally with a simple display of the biblical text beside each work and a well produced guide was available. A picture a day was also posted on their Facebook site thus serving as daily stimulus for personal reflection on one of the exhibits and reminding us that social media does offer some positive opportunities.

On a clear blue sky spring day you came away from St Michael's with spirits lifted. From looking at their programme in the past they are certainly providing a rural hub for a range of artistic expressions and cultural events. The reputation of St. Michael's, Discoed is clearly growing beyond its immediate locality. From all accounts this was their most ambitious project to date. It certainly touched the sacred and the soul in sight and in mind.

- Ian Baker



Lottie O'Leary *Jesus Carries the Cross*.
Photo: John Gibbs



Lottie O'Leary - Reverse side of *Jesus Carries the Cross*.
Photo: Ann Baker

SUSSEX MODERNISM - RETREAT AND REBELLION

*Two Temple Place, London
28 January – 23 April 2017*

This little gallery, just off the Embankment, is one of London's best-kept secrets. Formerly Astor House and used as an exhibition space only for the past six years, this was my first opportunity to view both the building itself, described as a perfect gem of late Victorian architecture in the neo-Gothic style, and the art works that comprised this exhibition – 'Sussex Modernism: Retreat and Rebellion'.

Works of religious significance on show included a fine David Jones oil, *Madonna and Child* of 1920, a painting in a landscape setting that very much reflects the South Downs and on loan from the Ditchling Museum of Art and Craft, two Vanessa Bell sketches (1946) - an Annunciation and a Nativity, an enormous watercolour, pencil and ink drawing – *Crucifixion* (1942), by Duncan Grant, almost certainly a preliminary drawing for his finished work, to be seen in St. Michael's and All Angels, Berwick. Also on view were a couple of gouache sketches, by Hans Feibusch, a German Jewish artist who sought sanctuary in the U.K., on fleeing Germany, in 1933. His two sketches – *Nativity* (1940) and *The Baptism of Christ* (1951) were from the Pallant House Collection. Finally, worth a mention, although perhaps not one of his very best, was a Graham Sutherland *Noli me tangere* also from Pallant House.

Among other well known names featuring in this excellent little exhibition, with works of a secular nature, were Eric Ravilious, Edward Wadsworth, Edward Burra, Henri Gaudier-Brzeska, John Piper (a fine watercolour of Chichester Cathedral, viewed from the Deanery), together with pieces of sculpture by Eric Gill, Frank Dobson and Henry Moore.



From the Top: *Family in Flight*. Resin; *The Mark of Cain*. Aluminium; *Noah and the Dove*. Plaster; *Samson in the Temple*. Bronze

There have been widespread concerns, in recent times, about the desirability of continuing to hold works by Gill – an issue that has also been exercising our own Management Committee. Such misgivings have been the subject of a number of newspaper articles, concurrent with the 'Eric Gill: The Body' exhibition, running at Ditchling over the summer months. This 'Sussex Modernism' show included a woodblock of his daughter, Petra, very much the central figure in this furore.

– *The Editor*

CHAIM STEPHENSON: BETWEEN MYTH AND REALITY

*St Martin-in-the-Fields,
Trafalgar Square
1 March – 10 May 2107*

This was a striking little exhibition of sculpture, showing in the crypt, on the theme of Biblical characters from the Old Testament and Refugees.

Born in Liverpool to Russian immigrant parents, Chaim Stephenson produced a huge body of work. He had, as a younger man, spent time as a miner (a Bevin Boy), shepherd and gardener. Having seen action in the first Arab-Israeli war he returned to work on a newly established kibbutz in Galilee. It was during his time there that, self-taught, he created the first of his sculptural pieces. Although not practising religion himself he found, in the Old Testament, a wealth of inspirational stories. It wasn't until he returned to England in 1971 that he finally became a full-time artist. Invitations to exhibit both in Europe and the U.S.A. came his way. His *Living South Africa Memorial (Homage to Soweto)*, on permanent display in St-Martin-in the-Fields was unveiled, in 1994, by Archbishop Desmond Tutu.

The pieces that particularly caught my eye were a very early but dramatic work, *Samson in the Temple* (1972), *Noah and the Dove* (1984) and *The Mark of Cain* (1988). His preoccupation with the subject of refugees, and the link between their presence in Biblical times and the world today was clear to see in his *Family in Flight* and *Fleeing family* (both 1993) and *Fleeing Mother and Child* (2012). See adjacent images.

He died in March, 2016, aged 89. This tribute exhibition provided a rare opportunity to view his work on public display as his sculpture is mostly held in private collections.

– *The Editor*

EULARIA CLARKE - THE ART OF FAITH

Oxford (St.Giles, The Oratory & the Quaker Meeting House)
3 – 23 June 2017

Elizabeth Eularia Clarke (nee Baines), 1914-70, was a distant relative of Thomas Gainsborough and has had her work critically compared with both Stanley Spencer and Paul Nash. A visit to Florence at the age of 17 was the trigger that fired up her aspiration to become a religious painter. She read Theology at St. Anne's, Oxford and took life-drawing classes at the Ruskin under the eye of Gilbert Spencer and Barnett Freedman. She converted to Catholicism in 1959, although the relationship with her Church was always a troubled one.

Her trademark scenes were almost always of gospel stories in the contemporary setting of the mid 20th Century, with over half of her oeuvre of some 90 works painted between 1967-70, after her diagnosis with terminal cancer; a remarkable statistic. Very few works

were sold or given away. When she did so, she always made a copy for her own Collection. Two of her finest works, *The Five Thousand*, 1962 and *Storm over the Lake*, 1963, as Friends are aware, found their way into the Methodist Art Collection. The replacement copies, on display in St Giles, were, in my opinion, inferior to the originals, being rather dark and lacking the strength of colour that make the two paintings in our Collection so striking.

Highlights of Eularia Clarke's work at St. Giles were *Hole in the Roof*, 1966 and the cheerfully amusing *Come down Zacchaeus*, 1967 (both featured in this Newsletter in the recent past) and *Stones into Bread*, 1969. Works showing in the Quaker Meeting House included *The Sowers*, 1968 and *The Mixed Sheaf*, while over at the Oratory three paintings which

most certainly caught the eye were *Coming up from the Water*, 1965, showing a baptism ceremony taking place underneath an inner city canal bridge and *Preaching from the Boat*, 1967, showing desperate folk clamouring to reach Christ's outstretched hand (echoes here of contemporary scenes, in the Mediterranean, of refugees drowning - with the few fortunate ones being rescued), and *I am the Door*, 1970. Here we see the framework of Christ's embracing arms and hands carrying both the viewer and the throng of eager folk towards an entrance where a man in black is knocking hopelessly on the door which is already wide open. Eularia's very final work is *Fire on the Earth*, 1970, with its reference to Luke 12, v 49, an attempt to interpret one of the more difficult passages of the New Testament. The artist herself comments: 'We can see everyman embracing both the fire and God'; a powerful 'swan song' from the brush of an inspired artist.

It was gratifying to see that the trustees of the Eularia Clarke Collection have embarked upon a gradual programme of re-framing, inevitably an expensive exercise. The plain broad, smooth wooden frames certainly serve to enhance the paintings. The Curator is also to be congratulated on the wealth of information conveyed in the picture labelling. It may also be of interest to know that she has recently published a biography of the artist - 'Eularia Clarke: Painter of Religion' by Rebecca Sherlaw-Johnson and available from Amazon UK at £14.99.

This exhibition was only the second, and certainly the most comprehensive, since Eularia Clarke's death in 1970.

- *The Editor*



Eularia Clarke *Fire on the Earth*, 1970. Oil on canvas on board
Photo: Geraint Lewis. © Eularia Clarke Trust

RAPHAEL: THE DRAWINGS

Ashmolean Museum, Oxford

1 June – 3 September 2017

The Ashmolean, with its impressive archive of classical drawings, promoted this summer show of 120 works by this Renaissance master for an exhibition rightly described as unmissable. Supplemented here by pulling in loans of similar treasures, primarily from the Royal Collection, the Uffizi, the Louvre, British Museum and Vienna Albertina, itself home to 65,000 drawings and a million old master prints, the show set out to underline (as if we needed reminding!) just what a brilliant illustrator of the human form Raphael was. Described as more versatile than Michelangelo and more prolific than Leonardo, it was indeed a tragedy for posterity that he died so young, at the age of 37, in 1520.

The majority of the images on show were working drawings, detail sketches or stand alone drawings of religious subjects or biblical personnel. Nominating my outstanding half dozen (in chronological order), they would feature as follows: – *Head of an Apostle*, c.1503, Black chalk, from the British Museum, perfectly captures the emotional and spiritual state of the subject. *Virgin with the Pomegranate*, c.1504, Black chalk, from the Albertina; quite breathtakingly beautiful. Raphael spent many hours exploring the universal theme of the 'Mother and Child', exploring different ways of articulating physical and emotional intimacy – a mother's protective tenderness and the child's vulnerability – in his in-numerable drawings of the Madonna and the infant Christ. Equally his ability to portray both the male physique and a clear element of fear is wonderfully captured in *Study for Two Soldiers in a Resurrection*, 1511, Black chalk, from the Royal Collection.



The Exhibition Poster

Similarly, the manner in which he captures the emotion of the moment is instantly recognizable in his *Study for a Miraculous Draught of Fishes*, c 1514, Pen and brown ink over chalk, from the Albertina. Two fine works from the Ashmolean's own Collection and thought to have been generated in 1515 were *Study for an Angel*, Red chalk – the figure described as bathed in divine light (an incredible skill) and *Study for Charity* from the Sala di Constantino, in the Raphael Rooms in the Vatican; a superb little composition of an animated group of a mother and three

demanding small children. Finally, and coming full circle, another remarkable image of an apostle, again from the British Museum - Raphael's *Head of an Apostle in the Transfiguration*, 1519, Black chalk, captures brilliantly the process of ageing in this black chalk drawing of an elderly missionary.

Indeed, an unmissable experience.

– The Editor

FORTHCOMING TOUR PROGRAMME FOR THE COLLECTION

2017

3-9 October

Ben Rhydding

Ben Rhydding Methodist Church
89 Wheatley Lane, Ben Rhydding LS29 8ET
And
Christchurch Methodist/ URC Partnership
The Grove, Ilkley LS29 9L
Contact: Prof Ann Sumner
Email: ann.sumner@cantab.net

21 October – 31 December

(*Closed 24-28 Dec)

Hull

Princes Quay Shopping Centre,
Hull HU1 2PQ
Contact: Liane Kensett
Email: liane@markkensett.com

2018

Mid-May to mid-June

Isle of Man

Venue details: Showing at the Promenade Methodist Church, Douglas IM1 2LY, Ramsey Methodist Church IM8 1DS, Colby Methodist Church IM9 4NW, Our Lady, Star of the Sea R.C. Church, Ramsey IM8 1BH, St. Anthony's R.C. Church, Onchan IM3 1HT, Ballagarey Methodist Church, St. Mark's IM9 3AH and Peel Anglican Cathedral IM5 1HH.
Contact: Mr John Binns
01624 837143
Email: jbinns39@gmail.com

August

Sheringham, Norfolk

Contact: Revd Sharon L Willimott
01263 512405
Email: sharon.willimott@methodist.org.uk

September (tbc)

Winsford, Cheshire

Contact: Revd James Patron Bell
01606 558148
Email: james.patronbell@methodist.org.uk

October/November 2018 (tbc)

Dublin - or Dundee

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The Collection briefly takes precedence over the internal combustion engine!
Photo: Haywards Heath Methodist Church

SUPPLEMENT TO THE GUIDE TO THE COLLECTION

A fully illustrated Supplement is now available, as an insert, covering the major additions to the Collection since 2012, namely works by Craigie Aitchison, Richard Bavin, Philip Hagreen, Maggi Hambling, Clive Hicks-Jenkins, Peter Howson and Sadao Watanabe. Similar in style to the Guide itself, there are full accompanying notes on each of the works by the aforementioned artists. I will happily forward this supplement to Friends requesting a copy, to add to their Guide (*Please include 3 x 2nd Class Stamps by way of defraying P&P*). – Ed

A THOUGHT TO LEAVE YOU WITH

In an edition of the Newsletter where we are delighted to feature Gareth, it seems appropriate that we use his words that serve to welcome folk who might be accessing our re-designed Collection website for the first time.

‘From the early church to the present day, images have played a crucial role in the exploration of the Christian faith. Since the catacombs of Rome, the gospel has been articulated as much in image as it has in word.



The Methodist Modern Art Collection takes its place in this long tradition, providing an opportunity for new encounters, vibrant expressions of God's love, and a whole range of conversations that are both missional and pastoral.

We are enriched by the Collection.’

*The Revd Gareth Powell,
Secretary of the Methodist Conference*