

## Art Collection of the University of Warwick Annual Report 2009 - 2010

### Introduction

In July 2009, the University was invited to resubmit all policies and procedures relating to the Art Collection for approval by the Museums Libraries and Archives Council, under the terms of the Accreditation Scheme which sets standards for the care and management of public collections.

Most of the first half of the year was taken up with ensuring that we provided full documentation and evidence of the way that we manage and care for the collection. This allowed us to review systems and to recognise that even though our collection is dispersed across over 100 different departments, research centres, public buildings and staff areas, our standards are good. In July 2010 we were awarded full accreditation.

Although the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council is one of the quangos to be abolished by the current government, the award of accreditation means that we can apply for loans and donations to the collection with proof that our management systems are robust and in the best interests of the both the works and the public.

### 1. Display

Looking through the list of movements of works of art, it is clear that the majority of these were reactive, largely as a prelude to refurbishment programmes. However, of note are the installation of two major commissions for the Art Collection, each of which had taken several years to come to fruition.

*Colour Corrections* by Lucia Koch was installed in the International Digital Laboratory in November 2009. On a previous visit to the University, Koch became interested in the way that the Digilab seeks to create virtual experiences. Initially, she planned to use digital technology to affect the light throughout the building but following extensive discussions, she chose to work with the windows in three sites, by adding colour filters cut in the shape of traditional, domestic windows. The works provide a sense of the domestic environment within this institutional building and introduce the largely unremarked language of vernacular windows, specific to different countries and continents, into this British location. Within a building where a constant environment is maintained by its orientation and the regulation of light and air by computer, the coloured filters heighten the play of light outside, the passing of the day, the changing weather and seasons.

*Everything is Real* by Mark Titchner was installed in the refurbished Butterworth Hall in the Arts Centre in April 2010. His text references Shakespeare's *All the World's a Stage*, Steve Lamacq's questioning of the authenticity of the Manic Street Preachers and the broader cultural question of the digital age about the relationship between audiences and a live performance. The layers of cut oak are not only a visual connection to the use of wood in concert halls but recall the craft traditions of Coventry, particularly the silk ribbon industry, the clock-making industry and the technical drawings of the motor industry.

Also of note is the exhibition in the Mead Gallery drawn from works in the collection and curated by Liz Dooley. Entitled Destination, it brought together over 40 works that addressed

the idea of place and landscape and included works by Layla Curtis, Richard Long, Fay Godwin and George Shaw. The exhibition received 1937 visitors, an average of 77 visitors per day and the evening tour of the exhibition was well attended.

The following buildings and departments had works of art changed or installed:

11/08/09	Re-installation; Learning Grid
11/08/09	Removals; Radcliffe House
19/08/09	Removals; Box Office, Arts Centre
20/08/09	Removals; Engineering Management (Westwood)
16/09/09	Re-installation; Box Office, Arts Centre
16/09/09	Re-installation; Humanities
13/10/09	New installation; John Hoyland, <i>6.3.66</i> , Philosophy
9 – 12/11/09	<b>Art Collection Commission installed</b> International Digital Laboratory; Lucia Koch, <i>Colour Corrections</i>
15/12/09	Removal; Humanities
01/03/10	Removals; Sutherland Suite and Social Studies Works by Francis Morland and Melanie Manchot on loan to Rugby Art Gallery
23/03/10	Removals; Reinvention Centre
25/03/10	Re-installation; Reinvention Centre
26/03/10	Removals; Physics
26/03/10	Removals; Medical Teaching Centre
12/04/10	<b>Art Collection Commission Installed</b> Arts Centre; Mark Titchner, <i>Everything is Real</i>
20/04/10	Re-installation; Coventry House exterior, return of sculpture by Peter Randall-Page from exhibition at Yorkshire Sculpture Park
26/04/10	Collection of artworks from various locations for Mead exhibition
27/04/10	Removal; History of Art, print by Andy Warhol for loan to exhibition at Wolverhampton Art Gallery
18/05/10	New installation; Business School, Toby Paterson, <i>St Ives Blue</i>
18/05/10	Re-installation; Humanities
18/05/10	Re-installation; Physics
18/05/10	Re-installation; Arts Centre exterior, sculptures by Liliane Lijn and Geoffrey Clarke
01/06/10	Return of works from Mead exhibition, various locations
09/06/10	Removals; Science Building, Westwood
13/06/10	Re-installation; return of sculpture by Francis Morland from exhibition at Rugby Art Gallery
30/06/10	Removals; Library
30/06/10	Re-installation; Engineering Management (Westwood)
30/06/10	Re-installation; Sutherland Suite
13/07/10	Reinstallation; Medical Teaching Centre
13/07/10	Re-installation; Physics stairwell
15/07/10	Removals; University House
15/07/10	Removals; Engineering Management (Westwood)
15/07/10	Removal; Engineering

## **2. Interpretation and Access**

The Art Collection website sustained 406,751 hits, an increase of over 1125 per week on last year. The majority derive from outside the University. Searches continue to centre on the work Eduardo Paolozzi and on the events pages.

Funding from the Prince's Foundation for Children and the Arts allowed the children from six primary schools in areas of significant social deprivation in the region to undertake a major programme of engagement with the visual arts. A total of 94 head teachers, teachers, teaching assistants and governors attended 6 training sessions before 525 children from Bennett's Well Infant and Junior School, Chelmsley Wood; Camp Hill Primary School, Nuneaton; Chilvers Coten Community Infant School, Nuneaton; Galley Common Infant School, Nuneaton; Hatchford Community Primary School, Chelmsley Wood and Race Leys Infant School, Bedworth visited the University with their teachers and parents. They all came twice, to follow the Sculpture Trail and then the Colour Trail and then returned to their schools to make their own work with artists Jayne Harris, Ruth Spaak, Nadia Wazera and Jo Buffery. Evaluation found that the children and the staff responded very directly to the freshness and the depth of the experience that they were offered, an experience that they would never have had otherwise. The encounter with high quality contemporary art and the opportunity to make work of a scale and ambition that the schools have never achieved before was a profound shift in the culture of the schools and their sense of aspiration and of possibility. The benefits were such that another application to the Prince's Foundation has been successful and those six primary schools are now embarking on a project called Start With Theatre with Warwick Arts Centre.

The Curator also participated in a project with Cardinal Newman School where Year 10 students visited the sculpture trail and then made their own sculptures at school before returning to the University to make formal proposals for siting their own sculptures on campus in a round table presentation.

In addition, the Curator conducted a number of trails and tours for adult groups including the Friends of Leamington Art Gallery, University administrative staff and potential donors to the University. The Art Collection was represented on a stall at the University staff training day in April where people were able to find out more about the range of activities that support the collection.

The Curator led a seminar on the development of the collection for students of the History of Art Department's MA in British Art Institutions. In addition, five third year art historians worked with the Curator and the Curatorial Assistant as interns, undertaking a variety of tasks from scanning documents to researching loans for an exhibition.

## **3. Documentation**

The standard of documentation of the collection continues to be good. Digitisation of the records is finally underway but has been dependent on student interns and so progress is slow.

## **4. Conservation**

Expenditure focused on two restoration projects - the installation of an aluminium band around the top of Cosmic Wallpaper by Simon Patterson to hold it in place despite the

immense condensation in this area, and the resecuring of the bronze head of Jack Butterworth by Elisabeth Frink.

The Annual Survey took place in June 2010 and was undertaken by the Curatorial Assistant and the Curatorial Associate. Due to time constraints, only works in serious need of cleaning were cleaned at the same time. It was disappointing to note that some works had sustained damage such as scuffs and scrapes due to careless behaviour in their vicinity. However, in general, most works remained in good condition.

Conservation costs were higher than usual due to an increase in the number of freelance art handlers employed to move displays while the post of Gallery Technician was frozen.

## **5. Storage and accommodation**

The University plate and regalia has been removed from the store. Storage, office and workshop accommodation remains under pressure.

## **6. Security**

A Crime Reduction Officer carried out an assessment of our security arrangements. They felt that the systems in place were as robust as possible and had no major recommendations to make.

## 7. Acquisitions and Loans

### 7.1 Acquisitions

In addition to the commissions, the major purchase this year was the acquisition of a painting by Clare Woods. Clare Woods' paintings are derived from her photographs of undergrowth and vegetation, which are taken at night, often in desolate, contested or overlooked locations such as areas of scrub or deep woodland. Painstakingly transcribed using layers of enamel paint on aluminium, the resulting images are often ambiguous and disturbing. She is widely regarded as heir to the Neo-Romantic generation of artists that includes Graham Sutherland whose work is represented in the collection. Based in the Midlands, Woods has been commissioned to make work for the London 2012 Olympics. The Friends of the Mead contributed to the purchase.

### 7.2 Loans-in

Diane Ibbotson contacted the University to offer to lend a work that would be a companion piece to her painting that was bought by the Coventry College of Education in 1970. Both works are self portraits of the artist, reflected in a mirror and will be hung together in the New Education Building in Westwood.

### 7.3 Loans out

George Shaw

*The Swing*

Subversive Spaces: Surrealism and Contemporary Art

Compton Verney Warwickshire, 3 June – 6 September 2009

Peter Randall-Page

*Flayed Stone III*

Peter Randall-Page

Yorkshire Sculpture Park, 29 June 2008 - 29 January 2010

Andy Warhol

*Birmingham Race Riot*

Pop Protest, Art for an Anxious Age

Wolverhampton Art Gallery, 1 May – 30 October

Melanie Manchot

*Alex Porter Kisses Michael Jordan*

*Clairat Brown-Dunn Kisses Galileo*

Francis Morland

*Kiss*

Rugby Collection 2010

Rugby Art Gallery, 16 March to 13 June 2010

Peter Midgeley

*Paper Maze*

Forced Journeys: Artists in Exile in Britain c.1933–45

Sayle Gallery, Isle of Man; 10 April - 23 May 2010

The Williamson Art Gallery and Museum, Birkenhead; 17 June – 5 September 2010

## 8. Disposal

No works have been disposed from the collection in 2009-10.

## 9. Financial Plan

It will be noted that conservation costs are higher than usual. They reflect payments to external and internal art handlers while we are without a gallery technician.

## 10. Staffing

Staffing for the University Art Collection remained concentrated in the dedicated half-time post of Curatorial Assistant. As initiatives heighten the profile and use of the collection, it is recognised that a full-time post is required to support developing audiences and the budget was rewritten to accommodate this change in April 2010. The Gallery Technician post remained frozen for the entire year. Although the Arts Centre allowed a proportion of his salary to be used to hire in technicians for removing or reinstating works, it meant conservation costs rose with the employment of additional staff and that much daily maintenance and preventive conservation had to be undertaken by the Curatorial Assistant and Curatorial Associate or abandoned.

Staff activities during 2009-10 were as follows:

### **Sarah Shalgosky, Curator**

- Adviser to Government Art Collection, DCMS
- Member of Steering Panel of ACE Turning Point West Midlands
- Member of West Midlands Gallery Directors' Group
- Member of Steering Panel of Coventry Forum for Contemporary Art
- Member of University of Warwick Environment and Amenities Committee
- Axis selector/writer
- Guest speaker, Leamington Spa Art Gallery
- Leader of group of British Curators to Lisbon and Porto, sponsored by Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, November 2009
- Consultation for development of Coventry City Council Arts Policy
- Selector of new logo for Economics department
- Selector of images for Science City Project

### **Elizabeth Dooley, Curatorial Assistant** (half time post)

- RAW Training: Project Management Course (2 days)
- Conference – The Art of Location
- RAW Training: Professional Presentations
- Annual Staff Day – Mead/Collection stall

### **Mel Lloyd-Smith, Curatorial Associate** (1 day/week)

- Chair of Friends of the Mead
- Editor of Friends of Mead Newsletter