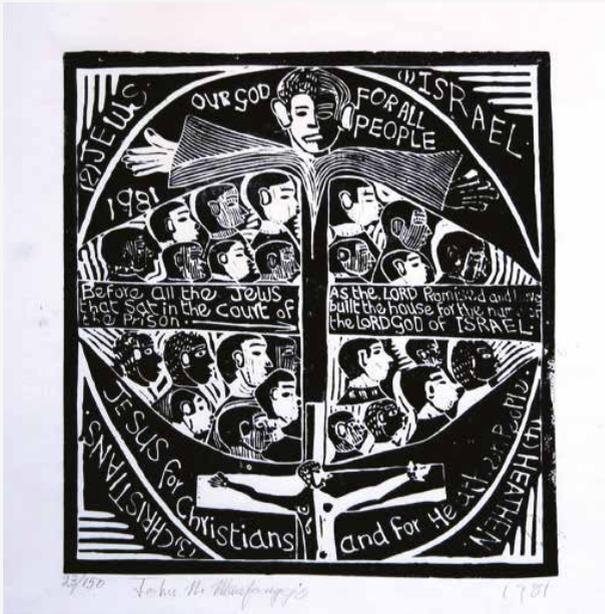


ANNUAL REPORT

*Report for the year ended
31 August 2019*





At the time this Report is being written, the world is experiencing the unprecedented challenge of the coronavirus pandemic and, in a number of countries, protests in the cause of Black Lives Matter following the brutal death of an African-American man. The universality of God’s love is the hallmark of works in the Methodist Modern Art Collection and not least of John Muafangejo’s linocut as shown above. Its title inspired Bewdley Churches Together to use ‘For all People’ as the name for their exhibition of twenty works from the Collection planned to open in March 2020. Sadly the announcement of the Covid-19 lockdown measures meant it had to be postponed a few days before it was to start. As you will read at the end of this Report, it is now planned for Lent 2021.

The international dimension of the Methodist Modern Art Collection led another exhibition host to focus on inter-faith dialogue as part of its programme. This was at Leicester, one of three exhibitions held during the 2018-19 year, and hosted by a team of Methodists and Anglicans across five venues comprising the cathedral, three churches and one retreat centre.

(Front Cover - from top) Members of the Management Committee with Chezzy Brownen and Robert Grose help lift Edward Burra’s *The Pool of Bethesda* into its packing case as an exercise at the Training Day held at Winsford. Photo: Ann Sumner; Sarah Stoll and Helen Davis work on Francis Hoyland’s *Nativity Polyptych* as part of the conservation programme of a number of works in the Collection. Photo: Ruth Bubb

(This page) John Muafangejo *Israel, Jews, Christians, Heathen, Our God for all People*. Methodist Modern Art Collection © TMCP used with permission

WHAT IS THE METHODIST MODERN ART COLLECTION?

'One of the art world's unexpected treasures, including some of the most powerful and arresting religious art of the 20th and 21st centuries.'

– Tim Marlow, Chief Executive and Director of the Design Museum, London, and former Artistic Director of the Royal Academy

The Methodist Modern Art Collection comprises paintings, limited edition prints and reliefs. In the early 1960s Dr John Morel Gibbs, a Methodist layman and art collector, realised that many Nonconformists had little appreciation of the insights that contemporary artists could bring to the Christian story. He decided to create a collection of prime examples of such work that could be toured around the country. He did this with the help of the Revd Douglas Wollen who was a Methodist minister. The works became the core of the present Collection and include key figures from British 20th century art, such as Edward Burra, Elisabeth Frink, Patrick Heron and Graham Sutherland.

In more recent years the Collection has acquired works by artists from the world church, including Jyoti Sahi from India, Sadao Watanabe from Japan and John Muafangejo from Namibia. Still expanding, works by contemporary artists such as Craigie Aitchison, Peter Howson, Susie Hamilton, Clive Hicks-Jenkins and Maggi Hambling have been acquired, and today the Collection comprises 50 paintings, prints, drawings, relief and mosaic works. It is valued as a key resource for mission and evangelism, whether on a denominational or an ecumenical basis.

The Collection, in whole or in part, is available as a touring exhibition. It has travelled widely and has appeared in town and city galleries, cathedrals, churches and schools over the years. When not on tour, it is held in a secure storage facility.

The Methodist Church is the fourth largest Christian Church in Britain, after the Anglican and Roman Catholic Churches, and the Church of Scotland. It has more than 4,110 churches and a total membership of approximately 170,000 people. World Methodism is made up of 80 Methodist, Wesleyan and related Uniting and United Churches in 138 countries. Global membership numbers some 80 million.

EXHIBITIONS OF THE COLLECTION THIS YEAR



Winsford: Salt and Light

Between 7 and 30 September 2018, the Collection was displayed in Trinity Methodist Church and St Andrew's Methodist Church in Winsford, Cheshire.

The title for the exhibition 'Salt and Light' came from the local area's historic and present links to the salt industry. Winsford is the home of the Cheshire Salt Mine, the largest in the UK, which dates back to Roman times. It was also a reference to Jesus' instruction, in the Sermon on the Mount, when he speaks of salt and light and calls those who hear him to have an impact on their surroundings. The one key aim of the exhibition was to engage with the works so everyone could see that faith can be expressed through art.

The programme started with Messy Church the day after the exhibition opened.



(Anti-clockwise from top left) Works on display at St Andrew's Church, Winsford; A young person's interpretation in clay of Ghislaine Howard's *The Washing of the Feet*; Eamonn Mallie shares his thoughts about Francis Hoyland's *Nativity Polyptych* as part of a Sunday afternoon talk on some of the works in the Collection on display. Photo: Ann Baker

Here a range of media and techniques were used by families to respond to some of the works on display, exemplified by the modelling clay form of Ghislaine Howard's *The Washing of the Feet*, the Roman helmets made in response to Peter Rogers' *The Mocking of Christ*, and ideas around a good meal inspired by looking at the Roy de Maistre and Ceri Richards *The Supper at Emmaus* paintings.

During the time the Collection was in Winsford the churches worked with the Crosshatch Community Gallery and Makerspace to promote art engagement, with drop-in events throughout the exhibition and formal talks focusing on the relationship between modern art and religion. Then, after the works had been exhibited, a Legacy Exhibition took place over November and December. This supporting event was planned from the start as something that would extend the impact of the main exhibition and give people another way to respond to the works. It was hosted at a number of venues around the town including the local library. This again increased the profile of the Collection in the area.

Revd James Patron Bell commented that: *'the Collection being displayed in Winsford has added a little flavour to our lives, very much as salt does, and shed some light on the stories of faith in a new way.'*

The Management Committee was grateful for the assistance provided by those involved at Winsford, enabling the works on display to be surveyed as part of the planning of the conservation programme.



Dublin: Faith and the Artist

Thirty works from the Collection were exhibited at The Royal Hibernian Academy (RHA) in Dublin from 14 November to 21 December 2018. This represented an exciting 'first' – an exhibition beyond the borders of the UK and the Crown Dependency of the Isle of Man. From the outset, members of Curator Neil Payne's Steering Committee were clear in identifying their three objectives: to provide an educational and spiritual experience for those who visited the exhibition, to raise the profile of the Methodist Church in Ireland and to engage



with folk of all ages beyond the relatively small Methodist community within the Republic of Ireland.

Footfall within the RHA over the five-week period of the 'Faith and the Artist' exhibition exceeded 23,000. From comments received, the RHA's skilful hanging proved particularly effective. It is perhaps to be regretted that there was no one in the exhibition area to welcome visitors and be able to talk about the works, but the rules of the RHA did not allow for

The Collection display in the gallery at the Royal Hibernian Academy (RHA) in Dublin.
Photo: Ann Baker

specific stewarding in the exhibition gallery itself. One of the Management Committee members conducted a well received seminar ahead of the opening and there was a further programme of talks with popular appeal.

Three schools engaged, on pre-arranged visits, with guided tours, taking advantage of the schools' material thoughtfully prepared and available to young visitors. A number of other schools made their own arrangements. Other groups taking guided tours were the Methodist Historical Society of Ireland, local vocational history and art appreciation groups, and students from the National College of Art and Design.

There was an excellent website available throughout the period of the exhibition. Posts on social media underlined the extent to which it is possible to reach an even wider audience and confirmed the extent of interest in the Collection during its stay in Dublin.

Dr Gesa Thiessen, a theologian who lectures both at Trinity College Dublin and at Sarum College Salisbury, reviewed the exhibition in the Irish Times: *'From the 1980s onwards theological research on the relationship between faith and the arts has proliferated on an unprecedented scale. A curious and remarkable addition to this development is the Methodist Modern Art Collection currently on exhibition at The Royal Hibernian Academy in Dublin. It is curious and remarkable indeed as one might not have expected the Methodists, originating from the Nonconformist dissenter tradition, to venture into collecting religious art. But then, when one considers the life of John and Charles Wesley one may be less surprised, as neither*

ever left the Church of England. Ranging from stark existentialist works to more decorative, illustrative depictions, there is nothing showy or sensational here. Rather one will encounter works of art that were created with a profound sense of artistic integrity, prompted by an intention of trying to grapple authentically with the enduring themes of Christian faith.'

Leicester: Wondering Soul

Across Leicester from 2 May to 9 June 2019, highlights from the Collection were displayed as part of the 'Wondering Soul' exhibition. This title, selected by visitors to Leicester Cathedral, was inspired by the great hymn by Charles Wesley – 'Where Shall My Wondering Soul Begin?'

There was an energising opening event at Leicester Cathedral with an excellent attendance of over 100 people. An innovative dance response to the Collection by students from De Montfort University was followed by an interactive tour of the key paintings by one of our Collection artists, Mark Cazalet. The opening speeches were by the Very Revd David Monteith, Dean of Leicester; the Revd Helen Cameron, Chair of the Northampton Methodist District and Professor Ann Sumner, Chair of the Management Committee. The display of works in the Cathedral had a real 'wow' factor, with Jacques Iselin's *The Elements of the Holy Communion* dramatically hung over the Communion table, Eularia Clarke's *The Five Thousand* displayed nearby, Maggi Hambling's *Good Friday: Walking on Water, 2006* symbolically displayed near the font and Norman Adams' *Christ's Entry*

into Jerusalem sited where the flags in the work reflected the flags in the St George's Chapel beyond.

In nearby Bishop Street Methodist Church works such as Patrick Heron's *Crucifix and Candles: Night 1950*, Elisabeth Frink's *Pieta* and the newly re-framed Ralph Beyer's *The Son of Man is come* were well hung on dedicated screens. Further works were on view at St Nicholas Church and at St Andrew's Church - where the newly conserved and re-framed John Reilly *The Feeding of the Five Thousand* was displayed. Graham Sutherland's *The Deposition* was displayed, by itself, in the small chapel at Launde Abbey, some 45 miles distant, on show for two weeks as part of their 900 years celebrations. After 18 May, the Sutherland joined the greater part of the Collection at the Cathedral.

A well-produced 'What's On' leaflet included a range of innovative and thought-provoking events. These ranged from contemplative photography and reflective drawing workshops to lively discussions and lectures on 'Artists and Early Methodism' and 'Methodism and Modern Art'. In addition there was a special Quiet Day retreat on 4 May, inspired by the Sutherland, at Launde Abbey and led by art historian Miriam Gill. On Bank Holiday Monday there was a community event in Leicester Cathedral Gardens entitled 'Picnic in the Gardens'. This was inspired by Eularia Clarke's *The Five Thousand* painting and local people were encouraged to participate in creative activities. With their help, a group



picture, re-interpreting and inspired by the original work, was created and 1,000 knitted fish were given away to those who engaged in this activity with some displayed later near the work itself in the Cathedral. The event was rounded off with a performance by the 'Sound Café', a community choir made up of vulnerable adults living in Leicester. The workshop which resulted in the creation of 'Wondering Soul' spray paint murals was also well attended.

Each Sunday at the Cathedral, preachers were invited to focus on one of the paintings from the Collection in their address. There was also an engaging Dean's Discussion focusing on the Collection, in which one of our Management Committee members participated. The closing celebration at



(Clockwise from opposite)
 Jacques Iselin *The Elements of the Holy Communion* on display above the altar in Leicester Cathedral. Photo: Ann Sumner;
 Revd Hilary Lomax awaiting visitors at the reception point at Bishop Street Methodist Church in Leicester. Photo: Sarah Middleton

Bishop Street Methodist Church provided an opportunity to thank some 40 volunteers who supported the exhibition and hear some of the poems from the ‘Wondering Soul’ poetry zine, read by the poets.

Overall 513 people attended these special events and services throughout the duration of the exhibition and some 11,500 people viewed the works.

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

The owner of the Collection is the Methodist Council but responsibility for its care and development is devolved to a Management Committee. The aims of this Management Committee are to care for, develop and promote the Collection, in order to encourage people to enter into conversations about God in Christ in the contemporary world and to offer material that can bring new dimensions to study, worship and spiritual life. The vision statement is: 'The Methodist Modern Art Collection - Seeing the Spiritual'.

The Management Committee normally meets three times a year but 2018-19 saw additional meetings as part of two extensive Reviews set in motion by Professor Ann Sumner as its new Chair. A Practice Review led by Chezzy Brownen involved a Training Day at Winsford while the Collection was being exhibited there. A Governance Review led by Professor Mike Tooby involved a Visioning Day in October at The New Room in Bristol. A Task Group comprised of Management Committee members was also set up with a view to implementing some of the recommendations of the Reviews.

Work was done on drawing up new Terms of Reference for the Management Committee and investigating some possibilities for a new permanent home for the Collection.

During the year, the Collection moved to temporary storage at Upper Heyford. It had previously been based at Oxford Brookes University from 1998 when Westminster College first offered it a home. This arrangement continued after the merger of

the college with Oxford Brookes in 2000. It is right to record thanks for the university's willingness to house the Collection over this long period, and for the interest and commitment of the staff closely involved with this, as well as the continued support of the Westminster College Oxford Trust on behalf of the Methodist Church.

In particular, during the whole period of its life in Oxford, the Collection was cared for and maintained there principally by Dr Peter Forsaith. Peter served as Custodian of the Collection from late 2000 until 2019, alongside his other responsibilities as Research Fellow, Oxford Centre for Methodism and Church History. His reflections in the Friends Newsletter (Issue 23 / Spring 2020) bear testimony to the breadth of his commitment, which ranged from the sheer physical effort involved in caring for such a travelling collection to his deep academic, cultural and spiritual involvement in this work. We wish to record our gratitude for all that he has done to make the Collection better known and appreciated in Methodism and much further afield.

Management Committee members during the year were Ann Sumner (Chair), Ian Baker (Friends Secretary), Meryl Doney, Ruth Gee, John Gibbs, Rebecca Gibbs, Graham Kent, Sarah Middleton, Lucy Newman Cleeve, Simon Sorokos and Bob Williams. As volunteers they contributed significantly to the work of the Collection by offering their differing professional expertise and experience. The continuing support of John Gibbs since stepping down as Chair in July 2018 was valued in Ann Sumner's

first year in the role. In addition, we were served well by Connexional Team members Jo Hibbard (Director of Engagement) and Liz Millard (Senior Administrator, Mission Department).

The Management Committee meeting in November 2018 marked the retirement of two long serving members - Meryl Doney and Bob Williams. Meryl initially joined as an ecumenical adviser and in the later years served as Vice-Chair. She contributed a wealth of wisdom and experience from her work in London galleries, and played a major role in the Management Committee acquiring works by Craigie Aitchison and Maggi Hambling. Bob served as a Management Committee member, Secretary to the Friends and Newsletter Editor for over ten years. He kindly agreed to remain as Newsletter Editor. Fuller tributes to both of them can be seen in Friends Newsletter (Issue 21 / Spring 2019).

Profiles of all current Management Committee members can be seen at www.methodist.org.uk/our-faith/reflecting-on-faith/the-methodist-modern-art-collection/introduction/mmac-management-committee/

ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE DURING THE YEAR

Financial Position

The Methodist Church provides a budget to cover expenses such as the cost of Management Committee meetings and the initial visit to possible exhibition venues. The Church also pays the insurance premium. Funds for the care and conservation of the Collection and for the production of new interpretative material etc. come from the income generated from the loan fees, sale of publications and other sources. This income is held in a special fund at Methodist Church House and a statement of the account is presented at the end of this Report.

Monies obtained or donated specifically for the acquisition of new works are held in the same fund but monitored separately. No works were purchased during the year.

We are indebted to members of the Finance Team at Methodist Church House for their assistance with our financial affairs.

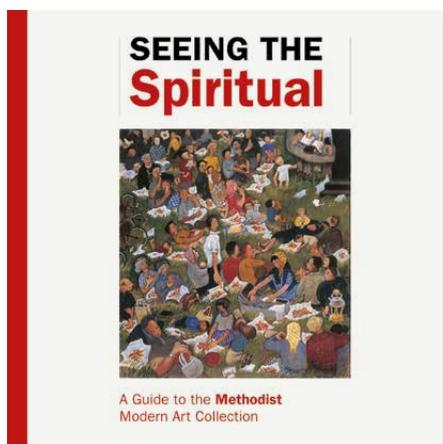
The design costs for both the Annual Report and the Friends Newsletters are covered by the generous support of Phil Allison of CultureshockMedia.

The costs relating to one newly conserved work displayed at the Leicester exhibition and for the two Reviews were supported by The Gibbs Trust.

Review of the work of the Collection

In accordance with recommendations of the Practice and Governance Reviews of 2018, a Rejuvenation Pause began in the summer of 2019. This enabled urgent conservation work to key paintings based on in-depth surveys, consolidating paint and cleaning surfaces, and re-framing and glazing where required to ensure works can safely be loaned out to venues. The Methodist Council agreed a substantial sum towards this programme, as well as funding for two to three years' interim storage with the National Conservation Service in Upper Heyford. The pause has also given time to develop partnerships, consider the potential of new locations as a permanent home for the Collection, and new approaches to interpretation.

A skills audit of the Management Committee members was refreshed and it was agreed to proceed with advertising for new members particularly with expertise in fundraising, collection care and exhibition management. Our loan documentation would be reviewed, a new Collections Policy would be drawn up, as well as a Mission and Interpretation Policy. The Connexional Director of Evangelism and Growth, Trey Hall, attended the Management Committee



Front cover of 'Seeing the Spiritual - A Guide to the Methodist Modern Art Collection'

in May 2019 for a strategic conversation about the Collection's potential role in contemporary apologetics and outreach.

Resources and Publicity

The highlight of the year was the production in conjunction with Methodist Publishing of 'Seeing the Spiritual – A Guide to the Methodist Modern Art Collection'. This contains descriptions of all the current works in the Collection together with the appropriate Bible passage. It includes those works acquired since the publication date of the previous guide in 2010. The overall quality of presentation has been remarked upon in comments received from purchasers. We are very grateful to those members of the Management Committee, staff at Methodist Church House and those at Methodist Publishing involved in the publication of this new guide.

The Leicester exhibition team produced an excellent zine called 'Response Poems' written by children and adults stimulated by their viewing of a number of the works. Visual Commentary on Scripture (VCS), a freely accessible online publication that provides theological commentary on the Bible in dialogue with works of art, also featured Theyre Lee-Elliott's *Crucified Tree Form - The Agony*. See thevcs.org/stricken-smitten-bruised-and-afflicted/agonysacrifice

Friends of the Collection

It was in November 2008 at Wesley College in Bristol that the Friends of the Collection was launched 'to foster interest and goodwill'. Ten years later it has been a time

to reflect upon and celebrate all that has been achieved. A key person involved throughout this period has been Bob Williams serving in the combined role of Secretary to the Friends and Newsletter Editor with much dedication and a considerable commitment of his time and energies. As part of easing down in his life, he relinquished his roles as a member of the Management Committee and as Secretary to the Friends in November 2018. Ian Baker took over as Secretary to the Friends after gaining one year's experience as a Management Committee member. Bob continues to serve as Newsletter Editor.

The number of new Friends joining during the year was disappointing given the existence of the Friends being mentioned at exhibitions and through other publicity channels. Our existing Friends continued to ensure the finances of the Friends remained sound and a generous legacy was received from the estate of a former Friend. We remain extremely grateful to all who support the work of the Friends and act as ambassadors for it in wider church and community circles. Their personal approach and links are an effective means of increasing the number of Friends.

The President of the Methodist Conference, Revd Michaela Youngson, served as Patron during her term of office. As a result of an approach made by Bob Williams, it was also a pleasure to announce that Lord Leslie Griffiths of Burry Port had agreed to become a Patron. He featured in the 'In Focus' pages of Issue 20 / Autumn 2018 of the Newsletter reflecting on his long connection with the Collection and his

acquaintance with Sadao Watanabe's *Christ enters Jerusalem* as his choice of work.

Two issues of the Friends Newsletter were produced during the year. As always they contained an excellent balance of exhibition reports, other news of the Collection, poems, book reviews and details of art related topics and events across a broad geographical area. Bob Williams acknowledges the help provided by a wide range of contributors who submitted materials with a little bit of arm twisting on his part. While he led the publication process this was in conjunction with our colleagues at CultureshockMedia. The mailing out is now undertaken 'in house' thus deriving some cost savings.

Relationships with other bodies

We entered a business relationship with the National Conservation Service in Upper Heyford to provide a temporary storage home for the Collection. Reciprocal links continue, through the interest and expertise of our Management Committee members, with arts organisations such as ArtServe, Art and Christianity and Visual Commentary on Scripture (VCS). An online 'exploring art' course, commissioned by Wesley House Cambridge, generated considerable interest in the Collection. Three members of the Management Committee were involved with promoting the Collection at Love Marlow described as '*a festival of community activity, created by the people of Marlow, for the people of Marlow*'.

PLANS FOR FUTURE PERIODS

Having witnessed how individual works of art such as Jyoti Sahi's *Dalit Madonna* can speak into the social and political agendas of the day, the Management Committee is determined to keep a cutting edge to the Collection in terms of which works are acquired and how they are offered as resources for prayer, study and theological reflection. Reviewing our policies on Collections Development and Mission and Interpretation is a key activity in this respect.

The programming of exhibitions continues but carries some uncertainty because of the unknown full impact of the coronavirus pandemic. The current plan is for the Bewdley Churches Together exhibition, which sadly had to be postponed from March 2020 because of lockdown measures, to be rescheduled for Lent 2021. Two exhibitions are planned to follow in the summer and autumn of 2021 re-launching the Collection after its Rejuvenation Pause.

The web gallery of images will no doubt play an increasing part as digital platforms expand. There will continue to be a focus on the important question of securing a long term home for the Collection.

Sarah Middleton
Interim Chair from April 2020
to August 2020

(appointment arising from leave of absence of the Chair between November 2019 and August 2020)

August 2020

METHODIST MODERN ART COLLECTION

Income and Expenditure Account

	Year ending 31 Aug 2018	Year ending 31 Aug 2019
INCOME (£)		
Sales of literature, loan fees, grants and donations	19,215.98	8,017.60
Interest	36.59	32.00
Total	19,252.57	8,049.60
EXPENDITURE (£)		
Production of interpretative material, conservation work	6,986.86	12,899.29
Surplus (Deficit) for the year	12,265.71	(4,849.69)
Balance b/fwd – 1 Sept	10,215.45	22,481.16
Balance c/fwd – 31 Aug	22,481.16	17,631.47

For an update on the locations of future exhibitions and for information on borrowing the Collection please visit our website at www.methodist.org.uk/artcollection

or simply search
'Methodist Modern Art Collection'

Alternatively, contact the Administrator at the following address:

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London
NW1 5JR

Email: artcollection@methodistchurch.org.uk
Tel: 020 7467 5214