

NEWSLETTER

NO.11 — SPRING 2014

£1.00 WHERE SOLD

Methodist **Modern**
Art Collection



'Faith in Focus' - The Collection at Salisbury

DEAR FRIEND

Once again the team at Cultureshock Media have done us proud with this first Newsletter of 2014 bearing, as it does, very much an Easter focus. On pages 2 and 3 we have Geoff Cornell's atmospheric photograph of the Souza 'Crucifixion' painting, placed as a focal point above the High Altar at Salisbury for the duration of the 'Faith in Focus' exhibition. This image, together with Craigie Aitchison's 'Pink Crucifixion' gives us two very different interpretations of the outcome of Good Friday, yet both sitting comfortably within the expressed vision of what a collection of modern Christian art is all about.

Friends of the Methodist Modern Art Collection

(The Supporters of the Methodist Modern Art Collection)

Patrons: President of Conference, The Very Revd. Nick Bury, The Revd. Tom Devonshire Jones, The Revd. David Gamble

Bob Williams

Secretary to the Friends of the Collection and Newsletter Editor
11, Late Broads, Winsley
Bradford-on-Avon

Wilts, BA15 2NW
Phone: 01225 720188
bobandmad.thefirs@gmail.com

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Above: Elisabeth Frink (1930-93), *Walking Madonna*, 1981

Left: F.N.Souza (1924-2002), *The Crucifixion*, 1962. Oil. From the Methodist Modern Art Collection
Photo: Geoff Cornell

Front cover: Jyoti Sahi (b.1944) *Dalit Madonna* c.2002 Oil. From the Methodist Modern Art Collection

All concerned with the showing of the Collection in the City of Salisbury were delighted at the overall response from the wider community. Works of art speak differently according to where they are placed. As Bishop Nicholas Holtam observed at the Opening, the choice of the Cathedral and the Young Gallery as split venues, was an inspired one, symbolically linked by the cathedral's own Elisabeth Frink sculpture, 'Walking Madonna'. As many readers will be aware, the bronze is positioned in the Close, facing away from the Cathedral but towards the city, suggesting outreach towards the community it serves.

Some Easter Thoughts on Craigie Aitchison's 'Pink Crucifixion'

A MEDITATION, BY GLENYS JONES

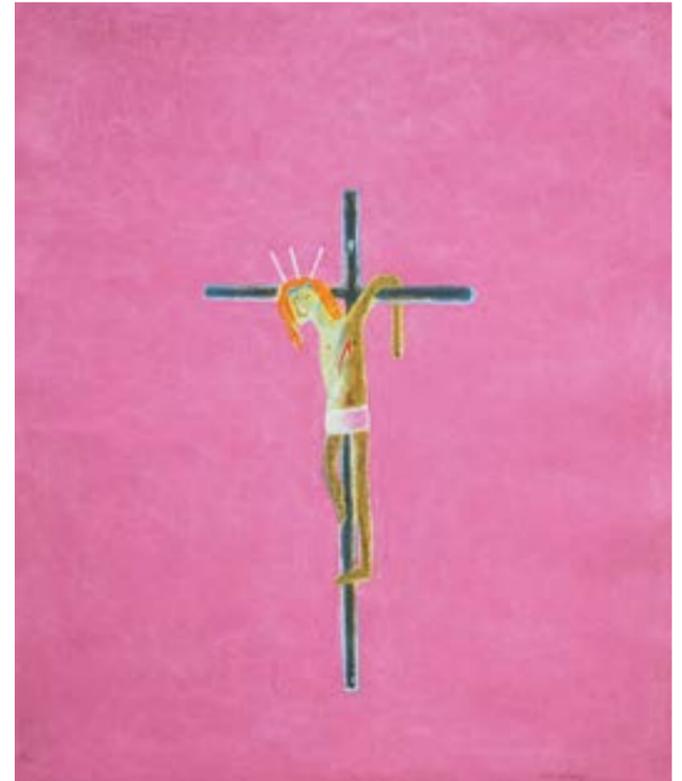
Pink: How shocking!
How outrageous!
How daring!
How bold!
Bright, shocking, in your face, pink.
The pink of teenagers making a statement, standing out from the crowd.
The breast cancer campaigner.
The pink of the Dulux advert: The young man goes to the best party! -
The Pink Crucifixion: People stop and stare. They talk.

The picture challenges and shocks.
It's daring and innovative;
Challenges to think outside the box.
It's off the wall, in your face!
Perhaps not too far removed from Jesus...
Perhaps the picture reminds us of when we were first challenged by the Cross?

The Cross - A brutal place.
The work of Jesus on the Cross:
A symbol of hope and new beginnings.
We are a risen Easter people.
We come in faith to the Cross.
We move forward beyond the Cross.
We place our faith in events we did not witness.
We give thanks for the first witnesses to tell their story;
For those who still give the message of "Good News" through their creative work.
We are reminded that we are washed, cleansed, forgiven, restored, redeemed and healed at the Cross.
Perhaps pink represents the vibrancy of Jesus...
A Jesus whom we serve, journey and give witness to?

Happy Easter.
He is Risen. Alleluia.

Glenys is a Local Preacher and member at Castle St. Methodist Church, Abergavenny.



Craigie Aitchison (1926-2009). *Pink Crucifixion*, 2004. Print from etching 35/50. From the Methodist Modern Art Collection

It seems that Craigie Aitchison's initial interest in the Crucifixion as a painterly subject was in fact a reaction to a comment, made by a tutor at the Slade in the early 50s, concerning Aitchison's copy of a Georges Rouault Crucifixion: 'This is far too serious a subject for you'. His response to this withering rebuke was to make it his core subject for the greater part of his working lifetime as a painter! Artist/illustrator Peter James Field (whose on-line Blogs are well worth reading) summarizes Craigie Aitchison's body of work on the Crucifixion as... 'containing no anger or violence, only solace and, at times, melancholy'.

Managing Trustees of the Collection

OUR TRUSTEE IN PROFILE IS THE REVD. GEOFF CORNELL



Geoff Cornell is a Methodist minister serving in Enfield, North London. He became a Trustee around five years ago. 'I'm still not quite sure why I was asked to join the Trustees' he said, 'because I don't bring any particular art qualifications or experience to the role. What I have found over the years, however, is that art speaks powerfully to me and to other people – and I can get quite passionate and articulate about it!' It is Contemporary Art that

has had the most impact on him – Martin Creed, Mark Wallinger, Antony Gormley, Rachel Whiteread. 'These are invariably sculptural installations, none of which are practical for a travelling collection such as ours! I find a profound spiritual quality to many such works and bring my Christian experience and theology into conversation with them. For instance, for me, Gormley's 'Blind Light' was a profoundly religious experience of the Shekinah'. He may not know as much as others about modern artists or the provenance of works but he does know what fires him. As such, whilst holding firmly to the focus of the Collection being the life and work of Christ, he is eager to explore less representational and more contemporary works rather than acquiring works by older artists that fill gaps in our Collection.

Geoff has responsibility for supporting exhibitions of the Collection in the southern half of Britain. 'The Trustees work incredibly hard, driven by their passion for both the works and for the opportunities they provide for people to engage with the Christian story and gospel in ways that are open, conversational, less doctrinal, less pressured. It often requires just one or two people in a local situation to have an equally passionate vision for the possibilities of an exhibition to emerge. These people then put in an immense amount of work. It's interesting that the impact of exhibitions is often long-term, often through the contacts made, the conversations begun. It often moves the church into a new place...'

A work in focus

TRUSTEE GEOFF CORNELL'S CHOICE

This painting, purchased for the Collection in 2010, comes from a series of much bigger works that the artist terms *Mutilates*, which she completed some fourteen years ago. They are all of single white figures against black backgrounds and the paintings and drawings generally focus on the human figure confronted by hostile and extreme situations - blizzards, deserts, diseases, piercing light - and the figure morphs into shapes of fragility or grotesqueness as a result. It is both mutating and mutilated...

Geoff writes: 'Unglazed, in acrylic, this is a vulnerable work. Susie describes it as a 'mutilate', fragile, broken. The figure is cruciform, but full of life, almost playful, almost like a dancing Indian god. And the work, although small, has huge power - it almost has a cosmic quality, with the flecks behind the figure seeming like the clouds and stars of distant nebulae. 'Ecce Homo' is of course Pilate's statement at the trial of Christ - 'look at this fellow!' And so we look - and reflect on who Jesus is, as Pilate had to do - and this work bursts Jesus out of religious and social



convention into a wider understanding of the nature and purposes of God. But then in the trial narrative in John's Gospel, Pilate discovers that really Jesus is asking questions of him - who is he, whom does he serve, what is he doing with his life? I find this work asks the same questions of me.'

Susie Hamilton (b.1950)
Ecce Homo, 1999. Acrylic.
From the Methodist Modern
Art Collection

GLEANINGS AND REFLECTIONS



Nicholas Mynheer (b.1958), *Rest on the Flight to Egypt*, 2003. Oil on canvas.
From the Methodist Modern Art Collection

RE-IMAGINING THE SACRED: ART. 'HOPE ON THE JOURNEY'

Trustee of the Collection, Sarah Middleton, recently met with artist Nicholas Mynheer. Nicholas was speaking at 'Re-imagining the Sacred', a series of public events exploring our experience of the sacred in relation to the earth, economics, food, education, art and conflict. The venue was St. Ethelburga's Centre for Reconciliation and Peace in the City of London. Website: www.stethelburgas.org.

'Every mother and child is a madonna with the newly born Jesus', said Nicholas Mynheer, as he described how he sees life in terms of biblical themes. The Methodist Modern Art Collection acquired his 'Rest on the Flight to Egypt' in 2003. On February 12th, 2014, here at St. Ethelburga's, he touched the hearts and minds of an eclectic audience showing variations on this theme of the Holy Family in flight, linking it with the plight of refugees today.

Dwarfed by the high-rise Heron Tower (its neighbour on Bishopsgate, which describes itself as an Advanced Business Life Environment), the intimate St Ethelburga's presents a powerful witness in an alternative, one could say

'biblical', way. Created after an IRA bomb fell on the site in 1993, it stands testimony to new life out of destruction. It offers a space for dialogue, and its small garden is a green and beautiful oasis for passers-by.

Nicholas' work showed how hope and oases can be found in the most desperate of situations. Journey is a key metaphor for him, not least Christ's journey to the Cross. His sculpture, 'Veronica wipes the brow of Jesus', can be seen at www.mynheer-art.co.uk

I am grateful both for the work of this artist and the discovery of this venue – food for a Lenten journey.

My thanks to Sarah for this interesting report on the work and motivational thinking of one of our extant Collection artists. Ed

PRAYING WITH ART

Could I draw your attention to a most valuable link to an article, Praying with Art, written by trustee, Sarah Middleton:

www.methodist.org.uk/deepening-discipleship/spiritual-practices/devotion/resources

This will take you straight into the RESOURCES > PRAYER page to access an article that was initially commissioned by the Methodist Church for their Deepening Discipleship website, and focuses on a piece of work Sarah had been doing with the Modern Art Collection whilst Visiting Research Fellow at Oxford Brookes.

'THE LAMENTATION AT THE FOOT OF THE CROSS'

*by Giovanni Domenico Tiepolo (c.1750-60)
National Gallery, London*

Readers of the 'Methodist Recorder' may well recall the article that appeared just prior to Easter 2013. This excellent piece was contributed by the Revd Brian Cooper, a Baptist Minister and contributor on the arts. He described the work as a 'a little-known masterpiece that provides a window on to Christ's suffering and death'. It is certainly a very powerful painting with which it would be well worth spending time, should you find yourself in the National Gallery over the Easter period.

GREAT BRITISH RAILWAY JOURNEYS (SERIES 5) WITH MICHAEL PORTILLO

The fourth programme in this series, 'Haworth to Huddersfield', was screened on BBC 2 in January of this year. Railway buffs among you who regularly view this popular series (an enthusiasm particularly popular with the clergy!) will perhaps have noted Michael Portillo spending a generous proportion of the programme in conversation with Prof. Ann Sumner, Methodist Modern Art Collection Trustee and Executive Director of the Bronte Parsonage Museum, at Haworth. It was a fascinating insight into the Bronte heritage, filmed on site in and around the Parsonage.

THE PASSIONART TRAIL ACROSS MANCHESTER

The PassionArt Trail takes place from *5th March - 21st April 2014* hosted by 6 major venues in Manchester city centre, showing more than 60 art works by 20 artists.

As recently reported in the Methodist Recorder, The PassionArt Trail trail invites the participant to explore their own personal journey, in relation to the Easter passion, with the reality of everyday life using traditional and contemporary art sited in gallery, museum and sacred spaces. Collection artists Ghislaine Howard and Mark Cazalet will both have works on display. Full details can be found via the website: www.passionarttrail.co.uk.

THE COLLECTION ON ITS TRAVELS...

Faith in Focus

*Salisbury Cathedral and the Young Gallery
(September–October 2013)*

Cathedral and City unite in celebrating the Collection.

This was an extensive showing of the Collection across two very different venues. Individual works were also on show in two 'city centre' churches.

At the well supported opening event, at the Young Gallery, speakers included John Glen MP, Councillor Penny Brown (Mayor of Salisbury), the Right Revd Nicholas Holtam (Bishop of Salisbury), the Revd Dr Andrew Wood (Chair of the Southampton District), exhibition co-ordinator Revd Margaret Jones, Peter Riley (the Young Gallery), and on behalf of the Collection Trustees, the Revd Geoff Cornell (Vice-Chair), Bob Williams and Peter Forsaith. The coming together of City and Cathedral was particularly welcomed. A special celebration Evensong was held, at the Cathedral, on the preceding Thursday.

Salisbury Methodist Church spearheaded key fund-raising and the pattern of local organisation with Churches Together in Salisbury and the Salisbury Circuit all playing a vital role. A grant of £1,000 was received from Wiltshire Council and a range of generous donations from individuals



A selection of images from within the Cathedral, the Private View Evening at the Young Gallery and the Dalit Madonna seen at St Thomas' Church.



helped things along. Indicative of the local determination that the whole exercise should be a success was the fact that some 65 people, from 10 different churches, acted as stewards at the Gallery (stewarding at the Cathedral being covered by their own permanent arrangements).

Visitor numbers were gratifying. 1,590 visitor footfalls were recorded at the Gallery. The Cathedral estimate that they received 16,500 visitors during the month of October: we have no means of knowing how many of these viewed the exhibition, but Cathedral guides reported great interest. The week of the City Art Trail (an annual event, held this year from 5th – 13th October) saw significantly higher numbers passing through the Gallery. The presence of a number of visitors from overseas was noted and there were a number of visits from school groups, including one from a special school.

The exhibition was supported by a number of reflective and interpretive talks in the Cathedral, the Gallery and at St Thomas's, the location of the 'Dalit Madonna'. The best attendance (over 50) was at a Saturday morning talk by a well-known local art expert. On another occasion the Revd John Turner gave an illuminating talk on the two Rouault aquatints that were to be seen hanging in the North Nave Aisle, revealing so many different elements within the two paintings. He considers Rouault the most passionate artist of the 20th century - with a predominant interest in the Passion. As an artist he was, apparently, the ultimate perfectionist. One was horrified to learn that, just before he died, he burnt some 300 works as he considered them unfinished or fell short of the ideal image that he sought.

The value of these lost pieces today? A conservative estimate suggests £2.5 billion! These two works from the Collection, will certainly be viewed in a new light by all of us fortunate to hear John's exposition.

Locally produced Reflective Guides to the works were available at both main venues: that in the Gallery (by the Revd Cecil King) was particularly well received. Both in the Cathedral and at the Young Gallery, the provision of Bible passages linked with the works added to the whole visual experience. It was encouraging to record the sale of 85 copies of the 'Guide to the Collection', always an indicator that an exhibition has made a real impact.

Curators Jacqueline Creswell, at the Cathedral, and Peter Riley at the Young Gallery, together with the vastly experienced Peter Forsaith able to offer support from a distance, are to be warmly congratulated. Their combined endeavours has certainly ensured that the exhibition has left a lasting legacy to the life of Salisbury, both in bringing the City and Cathedral together in an unprecedented manner and, indeed, raise the profile of the city's churches within the community at large; in all bringing faith into focus in and around Salisbury.

I would wish to register my thanks to Margaret Jones, herself pivotal to the success of the visit of the Collection to this particular Cathedral City, for much of the background detail included here. Ed



ELSEWHERE IN THE ART WORLD...



THE DEATH OF NELSON MANDELA...

It is not generally part of my brief to engage in political comment within these columns but the passing of Nelson Mandela is, I feel, ample reason to call in an exception to the rule. Not least because of the strong influence of the Methodist Church in his formative years (the oldest document in his personal archive was found to be a Certificate relating to his being received into Membership).

A World Leader of enormous stature, we remember him as a man of great courage, great vision, great dignity, great humility - and, perhaps most important of all, as a great reconciliator who, quite simply, represented the triumph of the human spirit over the dark forces of inhumanity.

Among the rather mixed bag of commemorative portraits to be seen within the U.K., two of the finest are featured here. I have yet to see a modern



portrait drawing, executed in charcoal, to match Paul Emsley's. He was, in 2007, the winner of the prestigious BP Portrait Award but, more recently, took a grossly disproportionate amount of flak over his image of the Duchess of Cambridge.

The bust of Nelson Mandela, which stands on the South Bank is the work of the late sculptor Ian Walters and was unveiled, in 1985, by the then ANC President Oliver Tambo. Walters, himself an indefatigable worker for peace, justice and human rights is also credited with bronze portraits of former Prime Minister Harold Wilson, Trevor Huddleston and Lord Soper. A further 9 ft statue of Nelson Mandela stands in Parliament Square.

Above Left: Paul Emsley (b.1947)
Charcoal Drawing
(By kind permission of the artist)

Above Right: Ian Walters (1930-2006)
Bronze. 1985.

'HEAVEN IN A HELL OF WAR': STANLEY SPENCER R.A.

*Somerset House, London
(November 2013 - January 2014)*

Stanley Spencer (1891-1959) was one of the key exponents of 20th C. figurative painting. Appointed an official War Artist in 1918, this small exhibition was of work normally to be seen in the National Trust's Sandham Memorial Chapel, Burghclere, near Newbury, which is currently undergoing some urgently needed conservation. The Behrend family, a major patron of Spencer's, built Sandham specifically to house his paintings; the series of sixteen framed canvases, two sets of spandrels and a dramatic altarpiece, painted in situ. His poignant images reflect Spencer's personal response to WWI and his own experience during the years of conflict; time spent in Macedonia and as a medical orderly at Beaufort Hospital, Bristol. Stanley spent six years, from 1926, painting this series, essentially a domestic record.

The title of this exhibition is linked to the impending Centenary of the Outbreak of WWI. He is, of course, best known for his Cookham/ Resurrection images and the figure of Christ is a dominant one in his work which is very much a personal vision. This was a vision shaped by a profound religious conviction, in itself

somewhat unorthodox but influenced in his early years by his Methodist mother. It seems somehow rather appropriate that much of his work, and the associated memorabilia, have a final resting place in the Spencer Gallery, in Cookham, the former Methodist Chapel in the town.

Peppered with personal and unexpected details, the Sandham paintings combine the realism of everyday life with dreamlike visions drawn from his imagination. In his own words, the paintings are 'a symphony of rashers of bacon' with 'tea-making obligato' (!) and describe the banal daily life that, to those from the battlefield, represented a 'heaven in a hell of war.' For Spencer, the menial became the miraculous; a form of reconciliation. The great 'Resurrection of the Soldiers' altarpiece is of course impossible to move but a full projection is used at Somerset House. A remarkable painting that reveals the culmination of his message of peace and redemption. For Stanley Spencer the concept of the Resurrection was synonymous with the end of 'war to end all wars'.

This exhibition moves on to Pallant House, Chichester: March-June 2014

MICHAEL KENNY R.A.: 'THE CRUCIFIXX'

Bath Abbey

'THE STATIONS OF THE CROSS'
*Quest Gallery, Bath
(March 5 - April 24 2014)*

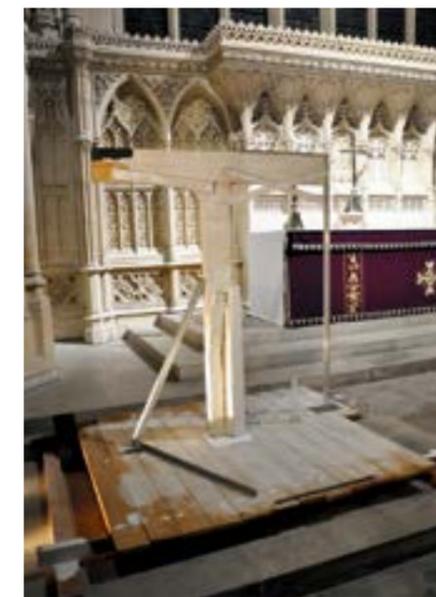
Michael Kenny (1941-1999) was one of the most influential sculptors of his generation. Elected a Royal Academician in 1986, he was an artist/ sculptor who died at the height of his powers when he still had so much more to give.

First impressions might suggest that 'Crucifixx' barely warrants a second look, giving the appearance, as it does, of a construction hurriedly assembled from off-cuts and scraps of wood simply found lying around. Yet, as a piece of 3-Dimensional art, it gradually 'gets to work' to suggest that it is a sculpture very much directed at the secular society in which we find ourselves. Its use of humble and dispensable materials, to reflect the transient nature of existence, actually puts out a powerful message. Alan Garrow, Vicar Theologian and responsible for bringing 'Crucifixx' to Bath Abbey, comments - 'Set in the sanctuary this 'ordinary' object becomes part of a richer and more expansive story. Here, that which was thrown away has become permanent; that by which humans are torn apart has become the means by which they are restored to wholeness'.

Concurrent with the display of 'Crucifixx' at the Abbey has been the opportunity to view Michael Kenny's 'Stations of the Cross' at the Quest Gallery. These constitute his last major series of drawings, barely completed

before his untimely death in 1999. They range from the fully figurative to the totally abstract and are often described as some of the finest examples of genuinely religious art, within the Christian tradition, made since the Reformation. Brian Falconbridge, former President of the Royal British Society of Sculptors, and a lifelong friend of Kenny's, defines the 'Station' drawings thus: 'The impact that they make upon the viewer conveys, on the one hand, the dirt and the squalor of suffering and, on the other, the triumph of nobility of sacrifice. As a series they mark the poignant summation of a lifetime of draughtsmanship'.

Michael Kenny (1941-99) 'Crucifixx' 1976.
Objets trouvés assemblage
Collection: The Royal Academy



FORTHCOMING TOUR PROGRAMME FOR THE COLLECTION

2014

5 March–29 April

Trinity Methodist Church, Wirral Circuit

Contact: Revd. Christine M Jones
01513 555 379
christinemjonesmethodist@gmail.com
www.trinityellesmereport.org.uk

2 May–27 June

Brontë Parsonage Museum, Haworth

Contact: Prof. A. Sumner
01535 640194
Ann.Sumner@bronte.org.uk

17 July–21 September

Yorkshire Dales, Leyburn

Tennants Auctioneers, The Auction
Centre, Leyburn, North Yorkshire DL8 5SG
Contact: Revd. Alan Coustick
01969 625 749
alan.coustick@methodist.org.uk

1–14 October

Banbury Circuit

Contact: Mike King
01295 678 958
mpk_mcb@hotmail.co.uk

2015

Mid-January–end March

Wrexham Methodist Church Regent Street

Wrexham, North Wales, LL11 1RY
**Oriel Sycharth Gallery,
Glyndwr University**

Mold Road, Wrexham, LL11 2AW
Contact: Revd. Richard Sharples
01978 361 489
rvsharples@phonecoop.coop

(tbc)

Post-Easter: Ballymena, N Ireland

(tbc)

Autumn: Cambridge Methodist Circuit

2016

(tbc)

Lent: Lincoln Cathedral

(tbc) April–June

Ealing



The Faith in focus banner at the entrance to Salisbury Cathedral

A THOUGHT TO LEAVE WITH YOU....

In tribute to a very fine British sculptor who died last year –

‘Sir Anthony Caro, while emphatically a secular artist, is capable of evoking great spiritual resonance in his work. His sculptural contributions to the rebuilt St. Jean Baptiste, Bourbourg (destroyed in 1940) creates perhaps the most visionary of contemporary dialogues between art and sacred architecture that I have ever encountered. The Chapel of Light, at Bourbourg, should illuminate future thinking on how to engage major contemporary art in our churches’. — Tim Marlow