

AUTUMN 2024

E-BULLETIN



Editorial

Since May, it is fair to say that there has been a perceptible buzz around the Gallery. The major exhibition *National Treasures: Monet in York – ‘The Water-Lily Pond’* has been a considerable summer success, and several spaces have been upgraded and revitalised, due in no small part to the Friends. Not only has our support enabled the entire Burton Gallery to be re-lit, but our funding for the conservation of collection works has been integral within a show that has broken visitor number records. I have wandered around the blockbuster on several occasions, and every time found myself jostling for position among throngs of visitors. The Monet-inspired wildflower meadow to the rear of the building beautifully evolved over the months, thanks to the Gardens team.

This edition of the e-bulletin contains a diverse range of topics, leading with the Friends’ funding of the Burton Gallery’s re-lighting and the Trust’s refurbishment of the stairwell. In appreciation of this, it seemed fit to grace the front cover with a detail from Francis Cotes’s large canvas which once again occupies pride of place in the newly redecorated stairwell, a work that the Friends part-funded back in 1987. In addition, there are welcome contributions on a members’ visit to Garsington Opera Festival and the Vale of Aylesbury, 19th-century responses to the Louvre’s *Concert champêtre* by artist William Etty and others, an interview with art collector and Gallery supporter Anthony Shaw, as well as an introduction to the latest exhibition *The Art of Wallpaper: Morris & Co.*

My final thought of this editorial is dedicated to my predecessor, Jim Sharpe, who sadly passed away earlier this year. During the pandemic, his contribution towards publishing thought-provoking online content was much valued during a time of great uncertainty for the Society, bolstering our engagement with members. Jim’s achievements clearly stretch far beyond his work with the Friends, especially as a talented and industrious Historian at the University of York. However, as a Friend, I can say that he will be, and has been, greatly missed.

Benjamin Hilliam

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We are always looking for new contributors, so if you would like to discuss an idea for an article, please contact info@friendsofyorkartgallery.co.uk

LET THERE BE LIGHT!

REVITALISATION OF THE BURTON GALLERY AND STAIRWELL

by Beatrice Bertram, Senior Curator at York Art Gallery

Friends, please accept my warmest thanks for the part you played in transforming the Gallery's spaces this spring. As can be seen from the images accompanying this piece, the lighting in the stairwell and the Burton Gallery had increasingly fallen short of the benchmark set in the Madsen Galleries following the 2015 refurbishment. As you can imagine, we were delighted when the Friends' committee generously offered to fund new lighting for our 'Permanent Picture Saloon' (as it was once called). This was the catalyst we needed to refresh the stairwell at the same time, ahead of our *National Treasures: Monet in York – 'The Water-Lily Pond'* exhibition. The reinvigorated spaces have been widely recognised and appreciated by staff, Friends, and visitors alike.

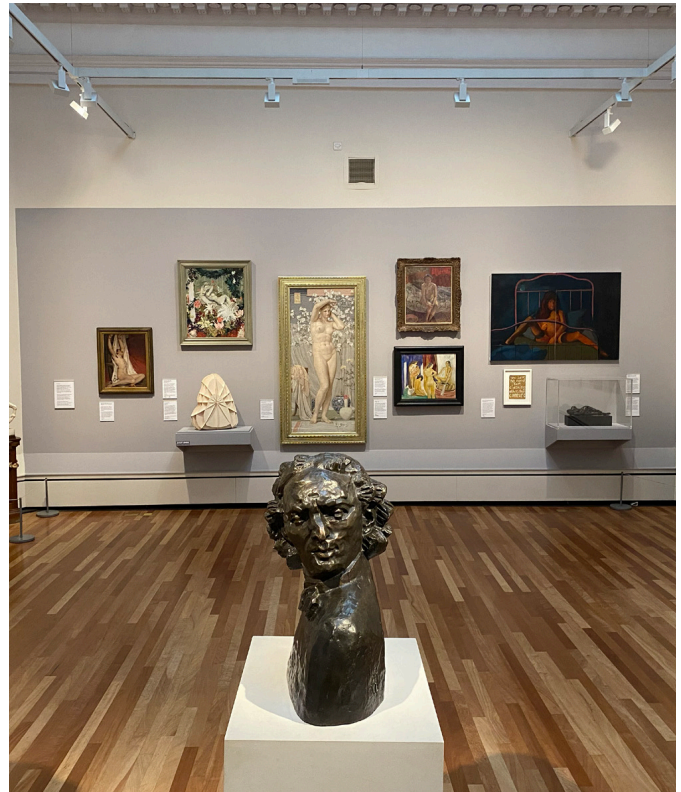
Once the commitment was made, the Curatorial team sprang into action, engaging ERCO, an architectural lighting supplier who were involved in the 2015 refurbishment and who had fitted the Burton Gallery's existing lighting track. In addition, ERCO possessed expertise in upgrading lighting in museum and heritage environments, having worked on prestigious projects in the UK and internationally, such as the innovative illumination of Dulwich Picture Gallery's 2019 exhibition *Rembrandt's Light*.

The illumination of the walls in the Burton Gallery is now much brighter and more even in appearance, and the new lamps also allow for further flexibility in lighting future displays. Importantly, the equipment can be adapted by fitting interchangeable lenses to produce increasingly dramatic spotlight effects, and are compatible with the existing tracks in both the Upper North and Madsen Galleries. We now possess a sufficient number of lights for each space and the purchased lamps have an average lifespan of 20 years.

Pre-Friends support...



Post-Friends support...



From top left (clockwise): two views of the Burton Gallery showing the uneven and patchy lighting; two views of the space following the installation of new lighting. Photos: Benjamin Hilliam

We also worked with ERCO to find a lighting solution for the stairwell, which due to building regulations needed to exist alongside the original hanging lamps. A new track now runs between the two, containing six light fittings which collectively illuminate the whole stairwell. The refurbishment allowed us to make essential repairs and presented the opportunity to choose a new wall colour. For this, we called upon our relationship with the paint manufacturer Little Greene, who you may know from their collaboration with the National Trust. They have supported several of our recent exhibitions, including *Drawing Attention* (British Museum partnership) and *National Treasures* (National Gallery partnership), which has resulted in some beautiful, rich tones to complement the works on display throughout the rooms.

The selection process for the stairwell colour was extensive and involved a wide consideration of examples from across the heritage sector. A range of shades from Little Greene's portfolio entered the competition, each backed by photographic examples of their use in various settings and applied to a 3D model of the stairwell hung with key collection works. The race really heated up when we filtered it down to five finalists and looked at samples in the space. Following consultation with Little Greene's colour specialist, *Blush* was chosen as the winning shade. This soft, rosy pink is a marked departure from the previous cool blue, and offers visitors a warm welcome while also acting as a harmonious backdrop for our paintings.

Although the stairwell was stripped of artworks to enable the refurbishment to take place, one canvas has returned to its original position: *The Honourable Lady Stanhope and the Countess of Effingham as Diana, and Her Companion by Francis Cotes* (1765). Measuring 240cm in height, there are no other walls in the Gallery upon which this work can be hung. The dusky pink wall colour now complements the women's garments, and it feels like we are seeing the painting and its intricately decorated frame in a fresh light. There is still much work to do, as we look to bring out more of the permanent collection into the Burton Gallery and the stairwell, but the public response has been brilliant, and it has been a real pleasure to see old favourites lit properly. The Friends' benevolence has enhanced the Gallery and its collections, so that everyone can benefit – thank you.



From top left (clockwise): Gallery stairwell prior to refurbishment; scaffolding construction; and two views of the re-painted and re-lit stairwell. Photos: Benjamin Hilliam

ON THE ROAD

THE FRIENDS VISIT THE GARSINGTON OPERA FESTIVAL AND THE VALE OF AYLESBURY

by Dorothy Nott, former Chair of the Friends

Leaving York early on the morning of 31 May, our first stop was at Ascott House, the country retreat for the Rothschild family and one of their six properties in Buckinghamshire. This was a delightful old farmhouse restyled in the vernacular revival tradition and set in glorious surroundings. The rooms were modest, light and airy, but crammed with hallmarks of the Rothschilds' obsession with collecting. Moving from the Outer Hall with paintings by Stubbs, Reynolds, Hogarth, Romney and Gainsborough, into the Dining Room was a seamless transition from British to Dutch style where paintings by Wouwerman, Steen, Van Ostade and Cuyp were hung on walls of *trompe l'oeil* Delft tiles. Ascott holds a significant ceramics collection of mainly Chinese porcelain, most notably in the Porcelain Room watched over by a lovely Andrea Del Sarto of [*The Madonna and Child with the Infant Saint John the Baptist*](#). More modern artists, too, feature including Rodin and Munnings as the Rothschilds continue their passion for art with a studio set aside for artists from the 21st century including Mark Alexander.

Time, sadly, was too short to have anything but a perfunctory glimpse of the gardens as we travelled on to Tring and probably the most unusual of the Rothschilds' collections – the Natural History Museum. This was given to Lionel Rothschild on his 21st birthday and is located in the grounds of the family home. It is an amazing collection of birds, mammals, reptiles, fish and insects beautifully mounted in glass cases, a wonderful resource for zoologists. There should have been even more exhibits, but unfortunately Lionel was forced to sell part of his bird collection to satisfy the demands of a jealous mistress who threatened to expose his various love affairs.



From top left (clockwise): front of Ascott House; the impressive gardens at Waddesdon Manor; and the Friends outside Waddesdon Manor itself. Photos: Dorothy Nott

Saturday morning took us to Waddesdon, designed in the 19th century as a French Renaissance chateau and Rothschild's most magnificent property. If Ascott was designed to impress house guests, it paled in insignificance to the grandeur of Waddesdon. Our first stop was the garden with its emphasis on bedding plants laid out as an Aubusson tapestry, statues, fountains and an aviary. Some of us ventured as far as the stables but there was little chance of seeing the whole of the 6,000 acres, or indeed Vasconcelos' [Wedding Cake](#) sculpture. The interior of the house was rather dark and full of priceless treasures, not all to our taste, though we could appreciate the quality of the 18th-century decorative arts

and porcelain. In many ways it was a reminder of FYAG visits to the Bowes Museum, the mechanical elephant substituting for the mechanical swan. George III got a look in too with a Royal silver service (French) and there were shades of Barnard Castle's Zurbarans in the lovely Guercinos. A trip to the cellars intimated the magnificent wine collection. We all felt that Waddesdon was somewhere you needed to revisit several times to absorb the whole experience.

But it was the opera which was the main draw, and it did not disappoint. Garsington Manor is sited in beautiful countryside and the recently constructed steel and glass opera house was designed to enable the audience to see as much of that as possible. The clever design is modular which allows for different shapes and styles of stage production. Before the first act of *The Marriage of Figaro* we learnt that the part of Figaro was being sung by the understudy owing to illness, but had we not been told we would never have known. The entire cast was in fine voice, the women in particular, and if I had to single out any one member of the ensemble, it would be the Countess for her beautiful pure singing and Susannah for her comic acting. In the interval we were treated to a gourmet dinner served with efficiency and charm before returning for the second act, the ending of which will stay in my mind for a very long time.

You would think that after that experience the rest of the visit might seem like an anticlimax, but the sun came out the following day as we strolled round the gardens of Stowe, seeing herons, egrets and cygnets among the temples and lakes, well-informed by Moira Fulton's illuminating introduction as we approached on the coach.

Our final stop was at Sulgrave Manor and what a delight! This is a real counterbalance to the richness of Waddesdon. Where Waddesdon was richly decorated, Sulgrave was homely. As we walked through the herbaceous gardens, we could see the entrance bordered by the flags of the United States and the United Kingdom as this was the home of the ancestors of George Washington and now run by an independent charitable trust. We were treated to an informative talk before wandering through the domestic scale rooms, many of which had been added by subsequent owners. Lawrence Washington, the original owner, had been mayor of Wolverhampton and acquired much of his wealth



From top left (clockwise): daytime and evening view of the landscape of Wormsley Park; the view over the lake towards Stowe House; and the front of Sulgrave Manor. Photos: Anne and Paul McLean

through two judicious marriages before his descendant, Robert, sold the property to pay off his debts. This was a wonderful antidote to the richness of the previous day as we lingered in the sunshine enjoying the peaceful surroundings.

I cannot end without a mention of our friendly and helpful driver, Erwin from Inglebys/Pullman, who always went the extra mile, including pit stops for newspapers and providing us with his own commentary on places of interest we drove through. We even arrived back in York earlier than anticipated.



Fig. 1. Titian or Giorgione, *Le Concert champêtre*, c.1500-25, oil on canvas, 105 x 137 cm, Musée du Louvre, Paris



Fig. 2. William Etty, Copy of the Louvre *Concert champêtre*, 1830, oil on canvas, 73 x 92 cm, on loan to York Art Gallery from a private collection (with frame). Photo: York Museums Trust

LE CONCERT CHAMPÊTRE

SOME RESPONSES TO THE PAINTING IN THE 19TH CENTURY: ETTY AND OTHERS

by Charles Martindale, Chair of the Friends

Recently York Art Gallery received on long-term loan a two-thirds-size copy, by York-born artist William Etty, of the *Concert champêtre*, a celebrated painting in the Louvre traditionally attributed to the Venetian painter Giorgione (1477-1510). Etty made his copy in 1830 during a period of revolutionary violence in Paris. We hope that the work may eventually be gifted to the Gallery. It has not yet been shown in York, but it has been loaned to an exhibition at the Museo Civico di San Domenico in Forlì, a city in Italy near Bologna, entitled *Preraffaelliti: Rinascimento Moderno* ('Pre-Raphaelites: A Modern Renaissance'). The exhibition of over 357 artworks, curated by a team including Professor Elizabeth Prettejohn of the University of York, showcased the love affair of Victorian and Edwardian artists with the art of the Italian Renaissance. It proved one of the most successful exhibitions ever mounted by the Museo over the years since its opening in 2005 in a renovated 13th-century Dominican monastery, attracting more than 120,000 visitors, a remarkable figure for a city in Emilia-Romagna generally not much visited by tourists. Italians reacted with huge enthusiasm to British art with which they were for the most part wholly unfamiliar (though unfamiliar also with the disparagement with which this art has sometimes been greeted in our own country!). There was generous support from a Foundation funded by the local bank, which paid for the conservation of Etty's painting and its frame. The work is now back in York, and will in due course be put on display.

The *Concert champêtre*, acquired by Louis XIV in 1671, only became commonly so called in the 19th century. Earlier it was often referred to as a *pastorale*, and it certainly has an idyllic pastoral quality. The scholar and critic Walter Pater (of whom more later) entitles it

the *Fête Champêtre*, probably to emphasize its relationship to the later pastoral paintings of Antoine Watteau, which share its mood and character, and which are often styled *fêtes galantes*. The copy is a good example not only of Etty's own work at its best but also of the 19th-century practice of copying from the Italian Renaissance Old Masters. Indeed, a number of eminent French painters copied the *Concert champêtre*, including Fantin-Latour (whose version was owned by Manet), Degas, and Cézanne. Etty himself said to a couple of friends in front of the *Concert*: 'I shall copy that picture as well as I can, to show your French friends how we manage such matters in England.'¹ The copy proved successful, which impressed a number of French painters of the time (including Paul Delaroche), even if it has its imperfections. The figures are well done, as is the distant landscape, but the trees on the right look a bit like puddings or cauliflowers. The original is not, as it happens, in good condition, so to an extent the best passages of the copy look fresher. The lusciously rich oil technique is perhaps more reminiscent of Titian (to whose hand the *Concert champêtre* is indeed now assigned by the Louvre) than of those works still generally attributed to Giorgione today. The copy certainly represents Etty's lifelong engagement with the art of the Italian Renaissance, and especially the art of Renaissance Venice. There was widespread concern in the period with discovering the so-called 'secret' of Venetian colour, which Etty shared.²

At the end of the 18th century the search for this 'secret' led to a remarkable scandal. The American-born President of the Royal Academy, Benjamin West, was duped by two fraudsters – Thomas Provis and his daughter Ann – into believing that they had a manuscript containing accounts of the ways the Venetian painters produced their colouristic effects. On the basis of this fake West produced in illustration a painting *Cicero Discovering the Tomb of Archimedes*, and also persuaded other academicians to take the forgery seriously and part with ten guineas each to receive instruction from the hoaxers. When the truth

1. The source for this quotation (located by Beatrice Bertram – see her doctoral thesis, details in 'Further Reading' below, vol. 1, p. 169) is A. A. Watts, *Alaric Watts: A Narrative of his Life*, 2 vols, Richard Bentley and Son, 1884, vol. 2, 58.

2. The Friends were recently treated to a superb lecture on this subject by the Gallery's Senior Curator, Beatrice Bertram; I am greatly indebted to her for some of the material in this essay.

emerged, West and others were criticized without mercy in the press and in satirical songs. And the famous caricaturist James Gillray produced a damning print [*Titianus Redivivus*](#) [*'Titian Reborn'*] – or – [*The Seven-Wise-Men Consulting the New Venetian Oracle – A Scene in ye Academic Grove No. 1*](#) (1797).

Etty's copy has an interesting provenance. Etty himself, who prized it highly, kept it in his studio to show prospective clients. On his death it was purchased by the art historian and critic Elizabeth Eastlake, and so entered the collection of Sir Charles and Lady Eastlake. It was Charles Eastlake who, as Director of the National Gallery, did more than anyone else at this time to promote and popularise the art of the earlier Italian Renaissance by his acquisitions for the nation. Later the Etty was owned by the artist Luke Fildes RA, whose notorious painting [*The Doctor*](#) (Tate) was so much loathed by Modernist taste, and most recently by the distinguished art historian Francis Haskell, Professor of History of Art at Oxford, who loved the original which he continued to believe was by Giorgione, despite an increasing tendency, supported by the definite ascription by the Louvre, to assign it to Titian or Titian and his circle (or sometimes Titian and Giorgione working together!).

Twenty years after Etty made his copy, the poet-painter Dante Gabriel Rossetti during a trip to Paris in 1849 visited the Louvre, disliking much of what he saw ('slosh', a quality he attributed to the paintings of Joshua Reynolds – 'Sir Sloshua' – which the Pre-Raphaelites loathed), with some notable exceptions, including the *Concert champêtre*. He wrote to his brother William Michael in a letter of 8 October that it was 'so intensely fine that I condescended to sit down before it and write a sonnet. You have heard me rave about the engraving before, and I fancy have seen it yourself. There is a woman, naked, at one side, who is dipping a glass vessel into a well; and in the centre two men and another naked woman, who seem to have paused for a moment in playing on the musical instruments'. The sonnet was first published in the short-lived Pre-Raphaelite journal *The Germ* in 1850 ('A Venetian Pastoral, by Giorgione; in the Louvre'), but it became much better known when republished, in a significantly altered form, in Rossetti's *Poems* of 1870:³

3. Pater certainly knew this later version of the sonnet; whether he also knew the version in *The Germ* is unknown, though possible.

Water, for anguish of the solstice:—nay,
But dip the vessel slowly,—nay, but lean
And hark how at its verge the wave sighs in
Reluctant. Hush! beyond all depth away
The heat lies silent at the brink of day:
Now the hand trails upon the viol-string
That sobs, and the brown faces cease to sing,
Sad with the whole of pleasure. Whither stray
Her eyes now, from whose mouth the slim pipes creep
And leave it pouting, while the shadowed grass
Is cool against her naked side? Let be:—
Say nothing now unto her lest she weep,
Nor name this ever. Be it as it was,—
Life touching lips with Immortality.

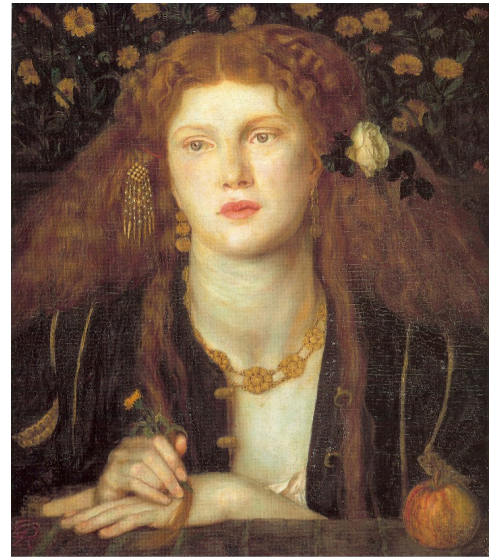


Fig. 3. Dante Gabriel Rossetti, *Bocca Baciata*, 1859, oil on panel, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

Rossetti became increasingly interested in producing paintings inspired by Venetian Renaissance masters, especially Titian, starting with *Bocca Baciata* in 1859, another response to the search for the magic of Venetian colour.

During the 19th century critics became increasingly worried by the combination in the *Concert champêtre* of clothed male figures and unclothed female ones (contrary to received opinion, female nudes are actually comparatively rare in Renaissance art). There is still scholarly disagreement about the question of authorship, a dispute initiated in the 19th century. Joseph Archer Crowe and Giovanni Cavalcaselle, in their *History of Painting in North Italy* (1871), a notable and influential English-Italian collaboration, were scornful of the quality of the picture, partly perhaps for moral reasons: 'we stand on the verge of the lascivious'. They denied Giorgione's authorship, finding in the work 'slovenly design, fluid substance, and uniform thickness of texture, plump, seductive, but unaristocratic, shape', and attributed it to a minor imitator of Sebastiano del Piombo. Walter Pater strongly disagreed with this negative appraisal, calling the work the 'beloved picture' in the original periodical version of his great essay 'The School of Giorgione' published in the *Fortnightly Review* (1877). When the essay was revised in 1888 for inclusion in his influential book



Fig. 4. Edward Burne-Jones, *Le Chant d'Amour*, 1865, watercolour, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

The Renaissance, 'beloved' is watered down to the less exciting 'favourite'. The loss of the original word is unfortunate: Pater loved this painting which he saw himself in Paris – Pater always prefers to write about works of art he had actually seen – just as it had been loved too by Rossetti, whose sonnet echoes throughout this essay and which, along with its fellow poems published in *The Germ* about other works of art, lies somewhere near the heart of Pater's whole aesthetic programme.

Pater's characterization of the 'Giorgionesque', inspired in part by Rossetti, continues to shape our sense of the character of the *Concert champêtre* and of this kind of painting generally. For Pater this term embraced both paintings from the Renaissance attributed, rightly or wrongly, to Giorgione and works of later periods, not least his own, that could



Fig. 5. Édouard Manet, *Le Déjeuner sur l'herbe*, 1863, oil on canvas, Musée d'Orsay, Paris

be linked with these earlier works, transhistorically. Typical ingredients included music, water, armour with its sheen, shimmering golden light, beautiful landscape, with a mood that was melancholic, unfathomable, creating in a sympathetic viewer 'exquisite pauses in time'. A good example of such later Giorgionesque art would be Burne-Jones' *Le Chant d'Amour* (1865) in the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, with its emphasis on beauty and erotic melancholy.

The most famous 19th-century response to the *Concert champêtre*, Manet's *Déjeuner sur l'herbe* ('The Luncheon on the Grass', 1863, Musée d'Orsay, Paris, originally called *Le Bain*, 'The Bath'), is of a very different stamp.⁴ We don't know whether Manet intended to be provocative – sensibly he usually refrained from speaking about his own work, leaving it



Fig. 6. William Etty, Copy of the Louvre *Concert champêtre*, on display (far left) with works by George Frederic Watts in the exhibition *Preraffaelliti: Rinascimento Moderno*, Museo Civico San Domenico, Forlì, 2024

to others, including his friend the novelist Zola, to defend it – but provoke he certainly did. What was found shocking included the combination of a female nude and a lightly clad female bather with the men in aggressively modern dress at a picnic (of course the men in the *Concert* also wear contemporary 16th-century dress, but we do not know if this shocked any of its original viewers, while the passage of time and the lyrical style have softened any such effect). The result is not so ‘Giorgionesque’ in Pater’s sense as the Burne-Jones, with none of the melancholy, and a less subdued eroticism, though the landscape setting retains some elements of pastoral. Zola defended the painting from its critics by telling them to ignore the subject and concentrate on the combination of colours, light and dark, textures and flesh. This defence in fact relates to another claim Pater makes in his essay: ‘In its primary aspect, a great picture has no more definite message for us than an accidental play of sunlight and shadow for a few moments on the

4. For Manet’s imitations of the Old Masters and their significance see Michael Fried, *Manet’s Modernism, or The Face of Painting in the 1860s*, University of Chicago Press; 1996, 23-184; see also T. J. Clark, *The Painting of Modern Life: Paris in the Art of Manet and his Followers*, Princeton University Press, 1986.



Fig. 7. William Etty, Copy of the Louvre *Concert champêtre*, 1830, oil on canvas, 73 x 92 cm, on loan to York Art Gallery from a private collection (without frame)

wall or floor: is itself, in truth, a space of such fallen light, caught as the colours are in an Eastern carpet, but refined upon, and dealt with more subtly and exquisitely than by nature itself’.

Among the many excellences of Pater’s essay is the subtle and sceptical analysis of the ‘science’ – I use this word in inverted commas – of attribution. In Pater’s words ‘the accomplished science of the subject has come at last’ in the form of the ‘new Vasari’ – a phrase used four times and taking on increasing savour of irony in the periodical version. Vasari’s *Lives of the Poets* was the major source of information about Italian Renaissance art, which helped to create a canon of artists, and by the ‘new Vasari’ Pater meant Crowe and Cavalcaselle, who in their book of 1871, six years before Pater published his essay,

de-attributed so many Giorgiones. Pater's essay, along with others in *The Renaissance*, did much to provide the intellectual groundwork for Aestheticism in painting, and to explore the interchange between the art of the Italian Renaissance and the artmaking of Pater's own time, what Wilde immediately grasped as 'The English Renaissance of Art' in a lecture he gave on his American tour. So, given that the Louvre was never likely to lend the original, Etty's copy of the *Concert champêtre*, appropriately owned by the Eastlakes, fully earned its place in the exhibition at Forlì.

Further Reading

Francis Haskell, 'Giorgione's *Concert Champêtre* and its Admirers', *Journal of the Royal Society of Arts*, July 1971, 543-565 (reprinted in *Past and Present in Art and Taste: Selected Essays*, 1987).

Beatrice Bertram, 'Redressing William Etty at the Royal Academy (1820-1837)', PhD dissertation, University of York, 2 vols, 2014.

Sarah Burnage, Mark Hallett, and Laura Turner, eds, *William Etty, Art and Controversy*, York Museums Trust, Philip Wilson Publishers, 2011, especially 61-72, 154-195.

Elizabeth Prettejohn, *Modern Painters, Old Masters: The Art of Imitation from the Pre-Raphaelites to the First World War*, Yale University Press, 2017, especially 'On Beauty and Aesthetic Painting', 210-237.

COLLECTOR'S CORNER: AN INTERVIEW WITH ART COLLECTOR, ANTHONY SHAW

by Benjamin Hilliam, e-Bulletin Editor

The Centre of Ceramic Art (CoCA) has been home to the Anthony Shaw collection of modern British studio ceramics since 2015. A collection of international significance, it contains works by over 80 artists including radical and innovative figures such as Gordon Baldwin, Ewen Henderson, Gillian Lowndes, Bryan Illsley, and Sara Radstone. In this interview, Shaw talks about his life as a collector, his collection, and his recent exhibition at the Gallery entitled *Seeing with Another Eye*.

Q. Beyond collecting, you have pursued a career as a couturier. Could you tell us how that has influenced your interest in ceramics?

My work as a couturier is all about the hand made, and working with a variety of textiles that express different qualities. This is very similar to choosing ceramics which are likewise very expressive. Clay is great at expressing feelings and the character of the artist. It resonates differently depending on the method used to work it.

Q. You have been collecting now for over 50 years, could you tell us about how your taste has developed over time?

I have only realized much more recently, what and why I was collecting. The main change was meeting Gordon Baldwin and Ewen Henderson in 1976, who opened up the great possibilities of working clay as a medium. They were not restricted to pots and pottery. Over time I have realised that it is not important how something looks, but rather the feelings it expresses.



View of the Anthony Shaw Collection at York Art Gallery. Photo: Benjamin Hilliam

Q. What considerations guide you to make a purchase?

I usually know the artist, so I am immediately interested if the work continues to ask questions of them. Each time a little more is exposed and more can be discovered. I never think what I am going to do with the work. If it is the right one, space for it will come later. I find it less and less easy to judge from images. I need to be with the work and be moved by the feelings it expresses.

Q. Do you remember your first significant purchase?

The first purchase of all my main artists has been significant and I can remember each one. When the collection was going to come to York, I felt it needed larger works that matched the space. Marit Tingleff was shown with Alison Britton at Marsden Woo in the

2009 show *Unforeseen Events*, because Alison had always wanted to have an exhibition with her. I knew nothing of Marit, but on entering the Gallery, I saw one of her gigantic dishes at the back. I knew immediately that this should be in the collection. We had it in the *Final Selection at Billing Place*, and as large as it is, it still worked very successfully. It started a relationship with Marit that included her husband, the sculptor Per Inge Bjørlo, and her daughter, Tyra Tingleff, the painter.

Q. You have previously stated a preference for being referred to as a ‘custodian’ rather than a ‘collector’. How has this changed your approach to your collection?

I have felt, almost from the beginning, that I didn’t own the collection. It has to do with making acquisitions. I feel it is a great privilege to be allowed to buy work from an artist. I think the best work is a self-portrait and very personal to them. I have to ask whether it might be available, as each time I feel I am taking a part of the artist. This also gives emphasis to needing to promote the work and the artist.

Q. Is there a favourite piece in your collection?

Many favourites! It has to do with how I found the work, who it is by, and ultimately how successful it is. I don’t buy what I know, apart from my relationship with the artist. It has to be their quest in finding out about themselves. We are both learning from it. I have to have met the artist. It is all about them and whether I believe they have something original to say, and are willing to lay themselves open, and not hide behind a fashion, mask or style.

Q. What are your thoughts on future trends in ceramics?

There have been cycles in terms of trends in ceramics. The early years of studio ceramics was centred on throwing, particularly standard ware. The early Art School courses focused on hand building. This was my period also. Next came slip casting and now 3D printing. With these, we are moving away from the natural qualities of clay. The latter also



Various views of the Anthony Shaw Collection at York Art Gallery, including Marit Tingleff's dish, *Turquoise - Square Series*, in the bottom left image. Photos: York Museums Trust

requires working out what you are trying to make before you start. I have no interest in ever more complex forms that look like plastic and express little to no feelings.

Q. If you were to name one emerging artist who should be on everyone's radar, who would that be?

I don't think there should be a single artist on everyone's radar, except if they are collecting to invest. The most sought after artists are not the most interesting. They are not demanding and simply provide the decorative object. I think you should choose work that moves you, and suggests it can be many things. Not knowing, for the artist as well as the collector, is very important – the best way to learn about yourself and your own reactions.

Q. Your latest exhibition at the Gallery is entitled *Seeing with Another Eye*. Can you tell us about the idea behind its creation and what you hope visitors will take away from it?

It gives the history of the collection, from the pots in the family, early pot purchases and then the burgeoning of hand built sculptural works. Producing my new book has made it very apparent that the collection is in two parts. I don't buy pots now, as I find them too self-contained and limited in their ambition.

Ewen Henderson made tea bowls later in his life, because he often fired a large single work and had lots of space for the bowls. They are magical because he was inspired by his larger sculptures, using remnants of clay from them. His response each time lifted them above simply being pots.

I hope visitors can see how I have learnt from the collection, and how it has changed. For each, a journey is important.

Seeing with Another Eye, curated by Shaw, is now open at the Gallery in CoCA 2 and is accompanied by a publication of the same name.

NEW EXHIBITION

THE ART OF WALLPAPER: MORRIS & CO.

by Helen Walsh, Curator of Ceramics at York Art Gallery

This autumn, York Art Gallery welcomes a major touring exhibition from Dovecot, the world-renowned tapestry studio in Edinburgh. Celebrating the work of the UK's most successful pattern designer, William Morris (1834-1896), the displays showcase original examples of his iconic wallpaper designs from the Sanderson Archive. Shown alongside historical early wallpapers and papers by designers working within the later Arts & Crafts Movement, the exhibition places Morris' designs within the context of the change in taste witnessed during the 19th century.

Probably best known today for his wallpaper and textile designs, Morris was also a radical Socialist activist, campaigner, and poet whose beliefs expressed through his writing remain as powerful today as they were in his lifetime. His views on industrialisation and on the negative impact of machines on workers' physical and emotional wellbeing, as well as the conflict he saw in 'useful work versus useless toil', informed the way that he and his partners ran their very successful businesses manufacturing wallpaper, textiles, furniture, and stained glass.

The Art of Wallpaper is curated by Mary Schoeser, a leading authority on textiles, and is based on her extensive research of the Morris archive, which is now owned by Sanderson. It features over 100 original wallpapers, as well as printing blocks, revealing intriguing insights into wallpaper design and production processes. The original wallpapers by Morris form the focal point of the exhibition, showing how his pioneering influence brought wallpaper to the forefront of domestic interior design.



From top left (clockwise): *Lion and Dove* (detail), 1900, designed by Walter Crane, block printed by Jeffrey & Co.; *Compton* (detail), 1896, Henry Dearle for Morris & Co.; *Acanthus* (detail), 1875, William Morris for Morris & Co. Images all courtesy of Sanderson Design Group

Morris was born into an affluent family at their country home, Elm House in Walthamstow, London. His environment contributed to a romantic preoccupation with forests, gardens, flowers, and birds, which soon combined with an interest in medievalism. In 1853, at Oxford University, he met his lifelong friend, the painter Edward Burne-Jones. Both took inspiration from the renowned art critic John Ruskin, and through Burne-Jones' association with the Pre-Raphaelites, Morris was introduced to Dante Gabriel Rossetti. While in Oxford, Rossetti introduced Morris to Jane Burden, who the latter married in 1859.

A key moment in Morris' life was commissioning the architect Philip Webb to design his and Jane's first marital home, Red House. Morris and Webb shared the view that a house should be integrated within the surrounding landscape. Morris' career as a designer was triggered by building Red House, as he was appalled by the over-elaborate products and furnishings available at the time. Together with the help of his friends, Morris decorated his house in the medieval style. In 1861, six of them decided to turn their enjoyable domestic hobby into a commercial enterprise by creating medieval handcrafted items for the home. The result was the founding of Morris, Marshall, Faulkner & Company, colloquially known as 'The Firm'.

In order to set Morris' designs in context, the exhibition explores earlier wallpaper fashions and illuminates the type of domestic and international high-end papers which he encountered in his youth. The 19th century had seen a proliferation of fanciful, ornate, naturalistic wallpaper patterns following technical innovations such as the availability of continuous rolls of paper in 1830. By the middle of the century, British manufacturers were producing 19 million rolls a year. Though wallpaper was now more affordable, designs still lagged behind. The British Reform Movement rebelled against multi-coloured ornamental decoration, viewing them as old-fashioned. Their move towards simplified and stylised designs, as seen in the work of architect-designers A.W.N. Pugin and Owen Jones, had an important influence on Morris.

Held in London in 1862, the Great Exhibition hosted 28,000 exhibitors from 36 countries including Thailand, China, and Japan. Simultaneously, Japan opened its first European Embassy

in London. The 1862 exhibition proved to be the catalyst for artists and designers such as James McNeill Whistler and Christopher Dresser, who created works of art in response which became known as Japonisme. Taking advantage of this trend, manufacturers began block printing Japanese-style wallpaper designs. Dresser was the first European designer to visit Japan in 1876-77 and, as an official representative of the British Government, he exchanged the best examples of European design for their Japanese equivalence. His 1882 book, *Japan, its Architecture, Art, and Art-Manufacturers*, did much to advance European enthusiasm for Japanese style, influencing Morris and many others. With the awareness of the Reform Movement's simple, stylised designs and the influence of Japanese art and culture, Morris' pattern designs become easier to read.

The Arts & Crafts Movement was conceived and founded on the principles of Morris and Ruskin. Both were great protagonists of the decorative arts, the benefit of toil, the satisfaction of hand craftsmanship, the beauty of nature, and the tactile sensation of materials. This movement represented a backlash against the worst aspects of the Industrial Revolution. The exhibition ends with an inspirational quote from Morris: 'Have nothing in your house that you do not know to be useful, or believe to be beautiful.'

The Art of Wallpaper: Morris & Co. opens on 27 September 2024 and runs until 23 February 2025.

NEW FRIENDS' TRUSTEE

An introduction to the Friends' newest Trustee

by Nicholas Dunn-McAfee

I am a doctoral researcher at the University of York. My PhD, supported by the Arts and Humanities Research Council, explores the art, poetry, and formal innovations of Pre-Raphaelite painter Dante Gabriel Rossetti. I have a broad interest in the relationship between (and entanglements of) word and image and have taught undergraduate courses in both English Literature and History of Art. I previously read English at the University of Oxford and have been a Visiting Scholar at the University of Delaware.



Before academia, I worked in political consultancy, public policy, and corporate communications in Westminster, Brussels, and the devolved administrations. I specialised in environmental, social, and governance issues – as well as taxation and international trade.

If I am not looking at art or reading poetry, I am likely thinking about it, talking about it, or making plans to do it. I am delighted to be serving on the committee. York Art Gallery is, for many York residents, their main source of art and culture. Belonging to the 44% of the city below the age of 34, I hope I can bring an additional perspective to the committee, and be part of its important work supporting one of York's finest institutions.



Front and back cover photos courtesy of York Museums Trust:
Francis Cotes, *The Honourable Lady Stanhope and the Countess of Effingham as Diana, and Her Companion*, 1765, oil on canvas, York Art Gallery