

Contemporary meets  
historical in an exhibition  
of new acquisitions at the  
British Museum

*New acquisitions: Paul  
Bril to Wendy Red Star*

30 March – 10 September 2023  
Room 90

Images available at: <https://bit.ly/3zeoQDm>

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Discover works of art from the 16th century to the present from Europe, North America and Australasia in a new show at the British Museum titled *New acquisitions: Paul Bril to Wendy Red Star*.

The exhibition will run from 30 March to 10 September in Room 90 and will showcase prints and drawings acquired by the Museum over the past five years. *New acquisitions: Paul Bril to Wendy Red Star* will feature work by some of the best contemporary artists as well as works from well-known artists from the past several centuries. This exhibition highlights the focus on the British Museum's collecting of contemporary graphic works while also including major additions to its historical holdings.

Highlights include an early 17th-century study for a fresco by the Flemish artist Paul Bril (1554–1626), a leading landscape painter in Rome in the 16th and early 17th century. The acquired piece marks a turning point in his style by moving away from his earlier dramatic views towards a serene and pastoral view of the countryside.

From 17th-century Rome to the contemporary; the exhibition covers an impressive range of artistic periods and styles. The exhibition includes prints from 2019 by the Apsáalooke (Crow) artist Wendy Red Star (born 1981), whose work examines how her indigenous heritage has been impacted by colonialist structures and institutions. In 2016–17, when she was artist in residence at the Denver Art Museum, she located catalogue cards documenting with carefully drawn watercolours the museum's holdings of Native American material culture, including moccasins, leggings and elk-tooth dresses as inspiration for her work. Similar material culture is in the British Museum's collections, for example, a traditional elk-tooth dress featured in one of the prints.

*From H to B and back again* by Cornelia Parker (born 1956), was made during with the COVID-19 pandemic and features a playful patchwork of different pencil gradients. Parker uses a variety of different mediums in a playful way, using an enquiry into their materiality as a means to question our relationship with the world around us. Also featured are works made during and in response to the COVID-19 pandemic by British artists Gillian Wearing (born 1963), Michael Landy (born 1963), Susie Hamilton (born 1950), Yinka Shonibare (born 1962) and Ian Davenport (born 1966).

Other highlights include 19th-century drawings by British artists Samuel Palmer (1805–1881) and Dante Gabriel Rossetti (1828–1882); the French painter Simon Vouet (1590–1649) and the Italian artist Tanzio da Varallo (1575–1633); prints by Claudine Bouzonnet Stella (1636–1697), one of the few 17th-century women printmakers; and a diverse selection of more recent works by artists such as Elisabeth Frink (1930–1993), Anselm Kiefer (born 1945), Michael Craig-Martin (born 1941) and Khadija Saye (1992–2017), a Gambian-British artist who died in the fire in Grenfell Tower, London.

Overall, the selection shows the creative possibilities of working with paper and the enduring role of printmaking and drawing, whether large-scale drawings or artist notebooks.

Hugo Chapman, Simon Sainsbury Keeper of Prints and Drawings said:

*The exhibition demonstrates the extraordinary range in subject, date, geography and style of prints and drawings added to the British Museum's collection over the last five years. The immediacy of works on paper means they have always allowed artists to address the most pressing issues of the day: whether in a print from the 1540s documenting Henry VIII's savage persecution of English Catholics, right through to the isolation and introspection brought about by the covid lockdown.*

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#### **Notes to Editors:**

*New acquisitions: Paul Bril to Wendy Red Star* runs from 30 March to 10 September in Room 90 at the British Museum.

Open Saturday – Thursday 10.00–17.00, Friday 10.00–20.30. Last entry 90 mins before closing.

[britishmuseum.org/exhibitions/new-acquisitions-paul-bril-wendy-red-star](https://britishmuseum.org/exhibitions/new-acquisitions-paul-bril-wendy-red-star)



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#### **Further information**

Contact the Press Office:

[communications@britishmuseum.org](mailto:communications@britishmuseum.org)

High resolution images and caption sheet available at: <https://bit.ly/3zeoQDm>

Exhibition webpage: <https://bit.ly/3lSa0PK>