New acquisitions
Paul Bril to
Wendy Red Star
This guide provides all the display text in large print.

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Introduction

Text on panel:

New acquisitions
Paul Bril to Wendy Red Star

This exhibition presents more than a hundred prints and drawings recently acquired by the British Museum.

Over 3,000 works on paper have been added to the collection in the last five years, increasing the diversity of contemporary artists while strengthening the historical holdings.

The selection showcases some of the outstanding works that have not previously been displayed in the Museum. It demonstrates the remarkable variety of graphic art from the early 1600s to the Covid-19 pandemic, and the enduring importance of drawing and printmaking.
Title wall labels (foyer):

Nicolas de Larmessin (1632–1694)
Almanac for 1691, 1690
Etching and engraving with letterpress

Calendar or almanac prints were a staple of the French print trade, but because large-scale ones like this were made to be hung on the wall (and also ceased to be useful after the end of the year) relatively few have survived. This example is typical of the genre in its patriotic representation of French victories won by Louis XIV and his allies the preceding year: in this case in Flanders, Italy, Ireland and off the English coast. For example, at upper centre there is a vignette from the Battle of Fleurus (1 July 1690), while at lower centre is the naval Battle of Beachy Head (10 July 1690).

Funded by the Friends of Prints and Drawings and the Martineau Family Charity
2018,7001.1
Barbara Walker (born 1964)
Untitled from the series Shock and Awe, 2015
Charcoal and white paint

In her wider work Walker often uses the process of erasure as a means of drawing attention to overlooked histories. In this case she highlights the contribution of Black servicemen and women to the British war effort. Two figures are meticulously rendered in charcoal, the third has been obliterated – evoking the literal ‘whitewashing’ of their legacy.

Although no details survive regarding the sitters’ identity, they might have served in the Kings African Rifles which, despite their contribution to decisive campaigns in East Africa during the First World War, was quickly disbanded following the war’s end, and the service of its soldiers never formally recognised. This monumental drawing is the first work by Walker to enter the collection.

Purchased with a contribution from the American Friends of the British Museum
2019,7020.1
Inside first room, framed on wall left side:

Anonymous German
Broadside on the martyrdom of English
Carthusian monks, 1549
Engraving and letterpress

This was made to publicise to continental European Catholics the violence associated with the recently deceased Henry VIII’s conversion to Protestantism, and specifically the deaths of 18 Carthusians from the London Charterhouse who had refused to take the Oath of Supremacy to accept him as the Supreme Head of the English Church. Although the broadside is unsigned, it was likely printed in Mainz, Germany, a Catholic stronghold. Cheap broadsides were printed in large numbers but rarely survive – this is the only known impression.

Acquired with a contribution from the Friends of Prints and Drawings 2020,7021.1
Tanzio da Varallo (1575–1632/33)
An angel playing a lute, about 1631–32
Red chalk on pink prepared paper

This is a preparatory study for The Saviour with Musician Angels, a ceiling fresco painted by the north Italian painter in the church of S. Antonio Abate in Milan in 1631–32. It was one of his final works, painted at the peak of his artistic maturity, and shows the meticulous care with which he prepared even secondary figures. In the final fresco, this figure is only visible from the waist up, and yet Tanzio used this sheet to carefully explore the entire pose, focusing on challenging details, such as the positions of legs and arms.

Funded by the Ottley Group
2021,7044.1

Antonio del Castillo (1616–1668)
St Andrew, about 1661
Pen and red ink over traces of red chalk

Castillo spent his entire career in Córdoba in southern Spain and is perhaps best known for his free-flowing drawings in pen and in brush.
In the present signed drawing, strikingly drawn in red ink, St Andrew is identifiable thanks to the shape of the cross on which he rests. It belongs to a series of studies of single saints and Biblical figures in landscapes, perhaps made as ideas for paintings or as models for his pupils to copy. Although almost two hundred drawings by Castillo survive, this is only the second work by him in the Museum.

Presented by Jean-Luc Baroni
2021,7046.1

Wall cases running along left side:

**Simon Vouet (1590–1649)**
**Portrait of a man aged 75, 1634**
Black, red and white chalk, touches of pastel, on light brown paper

This superb drawing reveals the artist’s ability as a portraitist, vividly capturing the old man’s fierce gaze. Vouet made this portrait as part of a series depicting courtiers and servants at Louis XIII’s court, which was intended to amuse the king.
The sitter would have been immediately recognisable to this audience, but Vouet only noted his sitter’s age and not his name. The French artist’s use of coloured chalk for such court portraits echoes those made by François Clouet in the mid-1500s.

Presented by Jean-Luc Baroni in honour of Hugo Chapman
2021,7001.1

**Paul Bril (1553/4–1626)**
**Italian landscape with hill-top town and herdsman, about 1611–13**
Brush and grey wash over black chalk

The Flemish Paul Bril made his career as a landscape specialist in Rome. This is one of six surviving studies for landscape frescoes for the Palazzo Pallavicini-Rospigliosi, which were painted between 1611 and 1613 for Cardinal Borghese. The imaginary sun-lit Italian landscape is calm and idyllic. It is drawn entirely with brush, and light effects are modelled in subtle grey wash.
This project marked a turning point for Bril’s style: it was a departure from his earlier, dramatic views, towards a serene and pastoral representation of the countryside.

Funded by the Ottley Group
2021,7028.1

Cornelis Bloemaert (1603–1692)
Owl on a perch, about 1625
Etching and engraving

Cornelis trained with his father, the well-known mannerist painter Abraham Bloemaert in Haarlem, before he set off to Paris and then Rome. His owl prints, after paintings by his brother Hendrick, are among his most charming. The owl was historically associated with stupidity because it cannot see in daylight. This print shows a captive barn owl used as a lure for bird trapping. The moralising inscription below suggests that just as the owl attracts birds, the fool attracts folly.

Funded by the Friends of Prints and Drawings
2018,7039.1
Charles Parrocel (1688–1752)
Head of a bearded soldier, about 1740–50
Red chalk

The son of the artist Joseph Parrocel, Charles studied first with his father and then with Charles de La Fosse, before moving to Rome in 1712 as a scholar at the French Academy. He remained in Italy until 1721, when he returned to Paris and developed a successful career as a painter of battle and hunting pictures. He also served as a professor at the Académie Royale. This characterful head study may be a preparatory study for a painting, or perhaps made as an independent work.

Presented by Julie Gregory
2018,7067.1
Balthasar Sigmund Setletzky (1695–1771)  
after Johann Lorenz Haid (1702–1750)  
Allegory of the Augsburg Confession, 1730  
Engraving

This imposing engraving celebrates the second centenary of the Augsburg Confession, a document presented by the German princes to emperor Charles V, which established the principles of the Lutheran faith. The historic scene is illustrated in the cartouche at lower left, beside a townscape of the city. The open book at the centre symbolises the word of God, central to Lutheran doctrine, while the movement’s global spread is marked by the inclusion of a map of India on the left.

Funded by the Friends of Prints and Drawings 2020,7003.2

Romeyn de Hooghe (1645–1708)  
Funeral Procession of Paul Wirtz, 1679  
Etching

The German-born Wirtz or Würtz was a mercenary commander who fought for Holland in the third Anglo-Dutch war (1672–74).
He was honoured with a state funeral and was interred in the Oude Kerk in Amsterdam. Romeyn de Hooghe, prolific printmaker of political subjects, shows the winding procession, with the hearse car, on the way to the Oude Kerk, along with a portrait medallion of Wirtz below. This impression came with a letterpress invitation to the ceremony on 24 October 1679 (pictured at right).

Funded by the Friends of Prints and Drawings 2018,7084.1

Image caption:
Letterpress invitation to the funeral of Paul Wirtz, 1679.

Carl Friedrich von Rumohr (1785–1843)
Twelve studies of heads, about 1822
Pen and brown ink

A talented amateur artist from an aristocratic family outside Dresden, Rumohr had the means to pursue his interest in studying and writing about Italian art, especially Raphael whom he admired above all.
As a draughtsman, Rumohr’s main interests were landscape, portraiture and caricature. In this sheet it appears as if he has combined portraiture (such as the two heads on the left) with caricature. Both kinds of drawing are executed at speed, with great fluency and verve.

Presented by Charles Booth-Clibborn in honour of Giulia Bartrum
2019,7079.2

Attributed to Charles Gore (1729–1807)
The Bay of Naples, about 1777
Watercolour with touches of bodycolour over graphite

When acquired by the British Museum curator John Gere in the 1960s, this was attributed to William James Muller (1812–1845), although based on its style he knew it had to be earlier. He and his wife Charlotte subsequently tentatively identified it as an unfinished sketch by the amateur artist Gore who accompanied the future collector and author Richard Payne Knight, then aged just seventeen, on his 1777 tour of Sicily.
It is a view from Posillipo looking over the Bay of Naples towards the gently smoking volcano of Mount Vesuvius.

Presented by Charlotte Gere in honour of Kim Sloan
2018,7068.1

George Richmond (1809–1896)
Study after the Parthenon river god (Illiosos), 1823
Black chalk and white chalk on blue paper

Richmond and his friend Samuel Palmer were among many artists who came to draw the Parthenon marbles after their arrival in the Museum in 1816. They were then displayed in the temporary Elgin Room (named after the 7th Earl of Elgin from whom the marbles had been bought) designed by Robert Smirke. The river god’s cantilevered position on its plinth is also seen in Archibald Archer’s painting of the room in 1819 in the Museum’s collection, which shows the artist drawing the same figure.
Presented by David Bindman and Frances Carey
in memory of Karsten Schubert
2019,7063.2

**Image caption:**
Archibald Archer, ‘The Temporary Elgin Room in 1819’. Oil painting on canvas, British Museum.

**William Nicholson (1781–1844)**
*Portrait of a seated young man, 1833*
Watercolour and bodycolour, over graphite

This is the first drawing in the Museum’s collection by this Northumbrian-born artist who settled in Edinburgh in 1814 and went on to become a founding member of the Scottish Academy in 1826. Best known as a portraitist in oil and watercolour, the highly pictorial nature of the present work would suggest it was made as an independent work. It was given by David Solkin to mark the retirement in 2020 from the Museum of his fellow Canadian historian of British art, Kim Sloan.
Presented by David Solkin in honour of Kim Sloan 2021,7062.1

Anonymous British, published by George Thompson (active 1793–1839)
The Storming and Taken of Serringapatam by Lord Mornington May 4th 1799, 1800
Etching

This celebrates the successful British siege of the southern Indian city which ended the fourth Anglo-Mysore war (1798–99) with the death of Tipu Sultan. The key identifies the officer on horseback to right of centre as Richard Wellesley, Earl of Mornington, the older brother of the future Duke of Wellington, but an early owner of the print corrected this with the name of General George Harris who commanded the siege. Cheap prints of this kind were made in large numbers but rarely survive.

Funded by the Friends of Prints and Drawings 2019,7040.1
Anonymous French
Les journaux en mai 1815: Satirical print on the Freedom of the Press, 1815
Hand-coloured etching

This satire attacks the return of press censorship after Napoleon’s brief return to power in Paris after ending his Elba exile in March 1815. All but one of the French journals are shown harnessed to reins controlled by the disembodied hand of the ‘liberal’ police. The threat of prosecution explains why the names of printmaker and publisher are not given, but it is now known to be the work of an amateur called Lelarge who made four satirical prints in this period.

Funded by the Friends of Prints and Drawings 2018,7019.1
Anonymous British
Sequel to the Padlock, or the Road to Ruin, 1795
Hand-coloured etching

This is a satire against William Pitt and George III and the fierce suppression of political dissent in 1795. Pitt, burning the Bill of Rights, is descending into a grave while the king, wearing howitzers in place of boots, is about to follow him blindly. John Bull, the English Everyman, waves aloft the padlock that had locked his jaws. Soldiers desert rather than fight against their interests. The title also seems to allude to a successful play The Road to Ruin of 1792 by the political radical Thomas Holcroft.

Presented by Nicholas Knowles in memory of Ruth Whiting
2019,7073.1
Anonymous French
Le sucre aux raves: Satire on the French sugar trade, about 1808
Etching with engraving

The ‘sucre aux raves’ of the title refers to the kind of sugar refined from sugar beet rather than sugar cane. This process had been invented by the Prussian chemist Franz Karl Achard, and ensured Napoleonic France had sugar despite the British naval blockade of their plantations in the West Indies. The Prussian sits at upper centre, proudly holding a coffee pot and sugar-loaf, while around him merchants and agents profit from his discovery. The kneeling female figure may represent the plight of the blockaded French planters.

Funded by the Friends of Prints and Drawings 2018,7008.1
Samuel Palmer (1805–1881)
Sheepfold at Sunset, 1871
Watercolour with bodycolour

Alternatively known as Eventide and An Ancient Manor House, beneath ‘the Western Downs of Lovely Albion’, Palmer conjures up a rustic Arcadia from a blend of English and Italian elements. It was made during the most successful period of Palmer’s career, when he was exhibiting regularly and selling his works for good prices at the Royal Watercolour Society where he had been made a full member in 1854. This composition is related to one of his most successful prints, The rising moon, or, an English pastoral from 1857 (a proof of which Palmer donated to the Museum in 1872).

From the Joseph and Margaret Fitton Collection. Accepted in lieu by HM Government and allocated to the British Museum, 2019 2019,7029.1
Image caption:
Samuel Palmer, The rising moon, or, an English pastoral. Etching, 1857

Table case 1:

Claudine Bouzonnet-Stella (1636–1697)
Pastorales, 1667
Engraving and etching

When Jacques Stella died in 1657, his youthful niece and pupil Claudine became head of his Parisian workshop, with exclusive royal permission to make prints after his designs. This album contains the complete set of her rare series of Pastorales which became hugely influential for their blend of traditional pastoral subject matter in a fashionably classical idiom. The prints depend on drawings by Jacques dating from around 1655, and he also made sixteen small paintings of the same subjects (three of which are known).

Funded by the Friends of Prints and Drawings 2019,7068.1
Louise Gaillard (active 1770–1780)
La Dissimulée; and La Nonchalante, about 1770
Engravings

These two fashion prints are the work of Louise Borin who married the engraver René Gaillard and worked as a printmaker in her own right. She made at least thirteen prints, a mixture of fashion and theatrical costume subjects. The two examples are both based on designs by the German-born artist Johann Eleazar Schenau (1737–1806), who worked in Paris from 1756 to 1770. Although the compositions focus on the elegant costumes, the models are shown as playful and self-aware, perhaps to appeal to potential female print buyers.

Funded by Stephen Coppel in memory of Maria Francesca Gérard
2018,7049.1-2
Table case 2:

Baron Dominique Vivant Denon (1747–1825)
Portrait of William Hamilton, facing to the right, about 1791, and Portrait of Count Giuseppe Albrizzi, facing to the left, about 1790
Black chalk, pen and brown ink

Made during the French writer, diplomat and amateur artist’s stay in Italy, these portraits represent two leading political and cultural figures of the period. Denon may have encountered them at one of the Venetian salons of the charismatic Corfu-born writer Isabella Teotochi. In 1790 she was still married, unhappily, to her first husband, the patrician Carlo Antonio Marin. She and Denon were then lovers and remained so until his return to France in 1793. In March 1796, she would marry the Venetian statesman Count Giuseppe Albrizzi, portrayed here in the early 1790s, with whom she continued to host salons both in Venice and in their country villa near Treviso.

The other portrait is of the antiquarian Sir William Hamilton, the British Envoy to Naples, likely made when he visited Venice in April 1791.
Denon subsequently used the drawing to make an etching of his fellow diplomat. Hamilton was also a key figure in the British Museum’s history. The 1772 purchase of his collection of antiquities encouraged the Museum actively to collect work from ancient Greece and Rome. Hamilton served as a Trustee of the Museum from 1783 until his death in 1803.

Presented by Clare Lloyd-Jacob
2022,7004.1 and 2

**Samuel Gurney Cresswell (1827–1867) and Sir George Beck (1796–1878)**
**Designs for the Arctic Medal, 1855**
Pen and brown and black ink

In 2020 the Museum bought two albums with over 150 designs for coins, medals and seals by members of the Wyon family, as well as other British sculptors. The contents were largely assembled by William Wyon (1795–1851) and then continued by his son Leonard (1826–1891). The latter’s Arctic medal of 1855 is based on Cresswell’s design at the top.
Presented by the American Friends of the British Museum in honour of Philip Attwood’s retirement as Keeper of Coins and Medals 2020,7019.1-151

**Image caption:**

**Wall cases on right side (from back):**

**Dante Gabriel Rossetti (1828–1882)**
The Death of Breuse sans Pitié, 1857 retouched 1864–65
Watercolour and bodycolour on paper laid on linen heightened with scratching out and gum arabic

A lush, green landscape is the backdrop for a scene based on Sir Thomas Malory’s *Morte d’Arthur*, first published in 1485.
The legend of King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table was key to inspiring the enduring fascination of Pre-Raphaelite artists with medieval forms and subject matter. Rossetti invented this scene which shows the violent death of Sir Breuse sans Pitié, an enemy of King Arthur’s knights who escapes death in combat in Malory’s text.

The present work is one of a group of watercolours purchased by William Morris in the late 1850s, five of which are now in the Tate. Morris sold off the drawings in the 1860s. This one was purchased by the banker George Rae and retouched by Rossetti around 1864–65.

Accepted by HM Government in lieu of inheritance tax from the John Christian collection and allocated to the British Museum, 2019
2019, 7015.594
John William Inchbold (1830–1888)
View from the cliffs above of the bay at Filey, Yorkshire, 1871
Watercolour and bodycolour

The noted collectors of Victorian art and design Peter Rose and Albert Gallichan kindly allowed the Museum to choose one drawing from their house in Brighton before the rest were dispersed at auction (six ceramics from the bequest are on display in Gallery 47). This drawing was selected as the Leeds-born artist was hitherto unrepresented, and it is a superb and well-preserved example of his skills as a watercolourist.

Bequeathed by Peter Rose and Albert Gallichan 2021,7017.1

Max Beckmann and Marie-Louise von Motesiczky

A group of five drawings and three prints by the German Expressionist artist Max Beckmann (1884–1950) has been purchased by the British Museum.
Dating from 1924–25 to 1947, they were given by Beckmann to his former pupil and lifelong friend, the Viennese-born painter Marie-Louise von Motesiczky (1906–1996), whom he had taught in Frankfurt in 1927–28.

Beckmann first got to know the cultured and wealthy Jewish von Motesiczky family in Vienna in 1920. After the Anschluss in March 1938, Marie-Louise and her mother joined Beckmann in Holland where he and his second wife Quappi were already living in exile from Nazi Germany.

In 1939 Marie-Louise and her mother left for Britain where they settled permanently. Despite the physical separation between the two artists after 1939, their close friendship endured. Beckmann’s gift to his former pupil is an eloquent testimony to the bonds of friendship surviving the dislocation of war.

Purchased with support from the Marie-Louise von Motesiczky Charitable Trust, the David and Liza Brown Bequest Fund through the Art Fund, and the Oppenheimer Fund.

2021,7064.1-8
Max Beckmann (1884–1950)
Portrait of Marie-Louise and Mathilde (‘Quappi’) von Kaulbach, 1924–25
Lithographic crayon on tissue-thin transfer paper

An affectionate double portrait of two young women close to Beckmann. Marie-Louise von Motesiczky (shown left) introduced her friend Mathilde von Kaulbach to Beckmann and she became his second wife. ‘Quappi’, a pun on the German for tadpole ‘Kaulquappe’, was the nickname given to her by Marie-Louise. The drawing in lithographic crayon on transfer paper survives because it was never made into a lithograph.

Purchased with support from the Marie-Louise von Motesiczky Charitable Trust, the David and Liza Brown Bequest Fund through the Art Fund, and the Oppenheimer Fund.
2021,7064.2
Max Beckmann (1884–1950)
Self-portrait, 1922
Woodcut

Beckmann was deeply affected by the First World War, where he had volunteered as a medical orderly, suffering a nervous breakdown in 1915. In the post-war years his Expressionist style shifted towards an allusive personal language blending the visionary and the real. He became an internationally acclaimed artist and an influential teacher in the 1920s. Marie-Louise von Motesiczky was one of his pupils. All this changed after Hitler’s rise to power in 1933. His work was condemned by the Nazis as ‘degenerate’.

Purchased with support from the Marie-Louise von Motesiczky Charitable Trust, the David and Liza Brown Bequest Fund through the Art Fund, and the Oppenheimer Fund.
2021,7064.6
Joza Belohorsky (worked 1940s–died after 1968)
To be born, to labour, to die, about 1944
Soft-ground etching printed in sepia ink

The precise birth and death dates of this Czech artist are still unknown. He was born Josef Švasta at Rychnov nad Kněžnou and lived in Prague but left after the German Occupation and moved to Paris. He arrived in the UK as a refugee in 1939 just prior to the Second World War. During the 1940s he lived and worked in St Ives, Cornwall where this print was made.

It shows three megaliths (dolmens) from the area. A mother and her children are carved in the stone at left while labouring male figures in the right stone struggle to support a dead figure within the top stone. The dragon-prow of a Viking ship can be seen between the upright stones. The title is inscribed by the artist beneath the mount. In the late 1940s Belohorsky had a touring exhibition of his prints in the United States but shortly afterwards he fades from view.
Paul Bril to Wendy Red Star

Funded by the Friends of Prints and Drawings
2022,7011.3

Geza Szobel (1905–1963)
La sueur froide (Cold sweat), about 1940
From a suite of 19 drypoints and etchings, plus etched frontispiece

The Czech artist Szobel trained at the Fine Arts Academy and moved to Paris in the 1930s. After joining the Czechoslovak Army in France, he escaped as a refugee to Britain during the Second World War. Inspired by Goya’s etching series Disasters of War (1810–13), Szobel depicts atrocities committed by the Nazis against Jewish civilians in eastern Europe.

Produced under wartime conditions, the set from which this print comes is very rare. It is still not clear whether it was printed in Paris or in England, either by Szobel or by a professional printer. The etchings contain inky fingerprints in the paper margins and are printed with a heavy tone of ink left on the surface of the plate.
Each print is tipped to a window mount, probably cut by the artist himself. The set purchased by the Museum had previously belonged to Maurice Collis (1889–1973), a writer and former administrator in Burma (now Myanmar) who supported Szobel in London during the war. In 1943, Szobel held an exhibition of related drawings, and possibly prints from ‘La sueur froide’, at the Fine Arts Society in London. In an introduction to the catalogue, the critic Herbert Read expressed the hope that ‘wherever they are seen they will stir the conscience of humanity’.

Funded by the Vollard Group
2022,7010.1-20; 13 (item shown).

Jean Fautrier (1898–1964)
Sweet-Baby, 1949
Etching and aquatint printed from two plates in pink and violet

A leading proponent of ‘art informel’, Fautrier commonly worked with organic, heavily textured forms, which evoked the brutality of his experiences during the Second World War. Here the amorphous, foetal motif echoes one
found in his earlier painting Dépouille (1945); its title literally means, a ‘skin’ or ‘hide’; in another sense it is that of ‘human remains’. Like the print alongside, it was printed around 1960–62 by Jacques David and published by Edition Couturier, Paris.

Funded by the Vollard Group
2019,7095.7

Jean Fautrier (1898–1964)
L’Otage aux mains II, 1944
Colour etching and aquatint

Fautrier’s series Les Otages (Hostages) was made in response to atrocities committed by the Nazis in Occupied France during the Second World War. In 1943, Fautrier was arrested by the Gestapo in Paris and then released. He fled to a mental hospital in the suburb of Châtenay-Malabry, where he worked within earshot of the nearby woods where the Gestapo tortured and executed their victims under cover of darkness.
Fautrier’s *Les Otages* were described by the politician, critic, and writer André Malraux as ‘the most beautiful monument to the dead of the Second World War’.

Although Fautrier first made the plate in 1944, it was only around 1960–62 that it was printed in an edition of 50 by Jacques David and published by Edition Couturier in Paris. This is one of the additional proofs of 25 printed on cream Japan paper outside the edition. It is one of a group of 10 etchings by the artist recently acquired by the British Museum.

Funded by the Vollard Group 2019,7095.5

**Pierre Soulages (1919–2022)**

*Untitled, 1957*

Etching and aquatint

Soulages developed his gestural abstract ‘art informel’ style while working in Paris in the years after the Second World War and became known for his thick brushstrokes and prominent use of black.
This etching, one of his earliest prints, was produced in Paris at Atelier Lacourière and published by Berggruen. It was bequeathed to the Museum by the London-based architects Margaret and Richard Finch along with a group of British drawings by Bernard Meadows, Prunella Clough and Keith Vaughan.

Bequeathed by Margaret and Richard Finch 2022,7015.10

Modern Italian Prints

Shown in this run of cases and in frames on the adjacent wall is a group of Italian prints from the 1870s to the 1970s. With the support of an anonymous donor, the British Museum has built up its modern Italian print collection since 2000. In 2008, the British Museum presented ‘Italian Prints 1875–1975’, with an accompanying publication by Martin Hopkinson, the first major survey of Italian printmaking of this period to be shown outside Italy. A selection of later acquisitions was displayed in a ‘New Acquisitions’ exhibition in 2013.
Considerable additions have been made since then and the collection can now claim to be the most comprehensive outside Italy. The prints reveal much about Italian life and culture, whether rural or urban, political or social, and show how Italian artists responded to naturalism, realism and symbolism of the late 19th century well as to 20th-century modern movements, including Futurism, Metaphysical painting and Arte Povera.

Giovanni Fattori (1825–1908)
Cavallo sellato e mulo al barroccio (Saddled horse and mule with cart), 1875–80
Etching

Fattori, who trained at the Fine Art Academy in Florence, is regarded as the most significant Italian etcher of the late 19th century whose influence on Italian artists continued well into the 20th century. While he made commissioned paintings inspired by the nationalist fervour of the Risorgimento, his focus was on landscapes and rural life, particularly of Tuscany.
The British Museum has now a substantial collection of Fattori’s prints, many of them rare early states like this one.

Presented anonymously
2019,7014.10

Umberto dell’Orto (1848–1895)
La baita (The mountain hut), 1875–80
Etching

Dell’Orto was born and died in Milan. He first trained as an engineer before turning to painting. He was much influenced by the Milanese Scapigliatura, the bohemian movement in Italy that attempted to rejuvenate Italian artistic culture after the Risorgimento. Imbued with 19th-century romanticism, this movement turned to Italian rural life. Here Dell’Orto depicts a dilapidated mountain hut with a shepherd in tattered clothing resting with his goat. The etching sparkles with light. It is a proof of an early state with test marks in the margins. It is the first print by him to enter the collection.
Giuseppe Mentessi (1857–1931)
Il dramma nel giorno della sagra (The drama in the day of the festival – The funeral), 1894
Etching

Mentessi was born in Ferrara from a humble background. After studying at the Brera Academy in Milan from 1877 to 1881, he taught architectural drawing and geometry at the Brera for the rest of his career. Like Dell’Orto he came under the influence of the Scapigliati group through his friendship with the etcher Luigi Conconi. His work in the 1890s is characterised by symbolist overtones. Here the emotional drama of the funeral is emphasised by the manipulation of the surface tone of ink left on the metal plate.
Achille Lega (1899–1934)
I renaioli (Fishermen of the sands), 1916
Soft-ground etching in sepia-black ink

Lega has titled his print in Italian i renaioli meaning ‘sand-diggers’. Fishermen in small boats with long poles are stirring the shallow waters at low tide to trap fish and other sea creatures hidden in the sandy bottom. Lega applied a grainy textured ground to evoke the atmosphere of this age-old activity. He moved to Florence as a child where he trained at the Fine Art Academy and learnt to etch at the Scuola Libera d’Incisione. Lega spent his entire career in Florence inspired by the Tuscan landscape, its ancient buildings and rural life. Between 1917 and 1919 he became briefly associated with Futurism.

Presented anonymously
2020,7001.3
Roberto Marcello Baldessari (1894–1965)
A view of Venice (Punta della Dogana), 1914
Etching with plate-tone

Baldessari was brought up in Rovereto in Trento, Northern Italy. He received his training at the Accademia in Venice. The Punta della Dogana (now the art museum of the Pinault collection) is the old Customs House at the triangular tip of the Dorsoduro, across from St Mark’s. In 1915, the year after this etching was made, Baldessari moved to Florence where he joined the Futurists around Ardengo Soffici. His emerging interest in dynamic geometry would be fully realized in the Cubo-Futurist etchings he made in 1917–19, later printings of which are in the British Museum.

Presented anonymously
2022,7001.1
Lucio del Pezzo (1933–2020)
Untitled, 1956
Etching with plate-tone

Del Pezzo was born in Naples and later moved to Milan. This whimsical etching from 1956 is an architectural fantasy, with a gondola in the foreground suggesting a Venetian capriccio. It is a transitional work anticipating his abstraction in the 1960s when he produced playful geometric object-paintings and assemblages. The British Museum has a lithograph from 1969 in his later geometric style.

Presented anonymously
2022,7002.20

Arturo Martini (1889–1947)
La madre (The mother), 1915
Intaglio print from a clay plaque matrix

Martini was principally a sculptor who attended classes in Treviso and Venice and further studies in Munich with the academic sculptor Adolf von Hildebrand (1847–1921). Martini devised his own method of using a clay matrix for his prints.
After baking the clay, the incised lines were covered with a shellac and the handle of an umbrella was used to print. As the artist could only print three or four impressions before the clay matrix broke, his prints are very rare. He dedicated this impression to Joseph-Marie Lo Duca (1905–2004), the Italian-born art critic and film historian who published a book on Martini.

Presented anonymously
2022,7002.21

Giorgio de Chirico (1888–1978)
Gli archeologi II (The archaeologists II), 1927
Etching

De Chirico became preoccupied with mythological subject matter and classical sculpture after the First World War. It marked a shift from the Metaphysical paintings of eerie, deserted piazzas that had characterised his breakthrough work. Born and educated in Greece of Italian parents, he was steeped in the classical languages and history.
In Paris, where he mostly lived for a decade from the mid-1920s when this etching was made, De Chirico was greatly admired by the Surrealists.

Presented anonymously
2022,7002.19

Alberto Burri (1915–1995)
Untitled (Self-portrait), 1935
Linocut

Burri first came to attention in the 1950s for his works made from old sacking, tarred and burnt. Made when he was 20 years old, then a medical student, this early figurative work is a rare survival as he destroyed many of his works from this period. It is inscribed with the name of St Euphronius, a 5th-century ecclesiastic. Why Burri identified himself with this saint is not clear. Swept up by Fascism, Burri volunteered for Mussolini’s colonialist invasion of Ethiopia and was later captured by the Allies during the Second World War. It was in a prisoner-of-war camp in Texas that he found his subsequent direction as an artist.
Massimo Campigli (1895–1971)
Donne al tavolino (Women at a small table), 1952
Colour lithograph

Campigli became a leading figure in Italian art after the Second World War. His subjects are invariably of women engaged in ordinary activities, such as these two fashionably dressed friends chatting at a café table. Campigli’s style of wasp-waisted, doll-like figures is indebted to archaic statuettes and to Etruscan art which he closely studied. This lithograph was printed in Venice by Edizioni del Cavallino for Campigli La Ruche, a suite of ten lithographs published with a text by Jean Paulhan in Paris in 1952.

Presented anonymously
2022,7002.10

Framed on wall, right
Piero Dorazio (1927–2005)
Untitled, 1957
Colour lithograph

Dorazio was Italy’s foremost abstractionist after the Second World War. In the 1950s he made frequent trips to the United States and knew all the leading Expressionists in New York, including Mark Rothko, Robert Motherwell and Franz Kline. The energy and calligraphic freedom of this print executed in quick, all-over strokes of the lithographic pen reflects the impact of the Americans on him.

Presented anonymously
2022,7002.15

Getulio Alviani (1939–2018)
ekl, 1971
Screenprint on cardboard

Alviani, who was born in Udine and moved to Milan where he became friends with Lucio Fontana, first attracted attention in the 1960s with his optical-kinetic works.
He was included in the ‘Responsive Eye’ exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art, New York in 1965. This landmark international show focused on work creating a perceptual response in the viewer’s eye and mind. Here sixteen blocks arranged as a square have their closely spaced black and white lines turned in different directions to generate a pulsating, oscillating effect. Alviani also explored the interactions of colour in his work.

Presented anonymously
2022,7002.23

**Enrico Baj (1924–2003)**
The C.I.A. meeting in the wood, 1973
Colour screenprint with flocking and glitter

Baj pokes fun at the surveillance antics of the C.I.A. during the Cold War.
Born in Milan, Baj became known from the 1960s for his satiric attacks of grotesque, heavily decorated generals composed from found objects, including medals, shells, braid and other materials – an example, *Horatius Nelson Duke of Bronte* (1972), is in the British Museum collection. Here Baj uses unconventional flocking and glitter to underline the absurdity. It was included in ‘*Baj chez Baj*’, a portfolio of ‘mixed-media color prints’ printed in Milan by Multirevol in 1973.

Presented anonymously
2022,7002.18

**Table case 3:**

**Max Klinger (1857–1920)**
**Eine Liebe (A Love) Opus X, 1887**

Max Klinger’s suites of prints on love and death produced during the 1880s were his most successful artistic achievement.
Their technical sophistication and impassioned narratives were a major source of inspiration for contemporary printmakers as diverse as Edvard Munch and Käthe Kollwitz. The prints tell the tragic story of a woman who discovers passionate love, only to be abandoned and left to die in childbirth.

Funded by the Friends of Prints and Drawings 2018,7088.1-10

Table case 4:

Georges Rouault (1871–1958)
Juges (Judges)
Nu profil (Nude profile)
Les Trois Croix (The Three Crosses)
From the series Les Fleurs du Mal, 1936–38
Aquatint
In 1936, Rouault began a project for the art dealer and publisher Ambroise Vollard to illustrate *Les Fleurs du mal (The Flowers of Evil)*, a volume of poems on decadence and eroticism written by Charles Baudelaire which caused a scandal when first published in 1857.

This complete set of 12 jewel-like aquatints features annotations and instructions by the artist to his master printer, Roger Lacourière in Paris. It offers a rare insight into the process of conceiving and executing an ambitious suite of prints. These are undescribed working proofs before the edition of 250 and before the reduction of the plates.

The projected book however was never published and the aquatints were issued separately after Vollard's death by the printer in 1945.

Presented by Dr Frederick Mulder
2019,7044.1 (7), (1) and (10)
Second room, wall cases running along left side:

Sidney Nolan (1917–1992)  
Shed, 1948  
Transfer monotype

The Australian painter Sidney Nolan began to make images of isolated homesteads and mining settlements in the remote outback from around 1948. Here a single figure stands within the framework of a shed surrounded by spiky bushes and plants. Nolan was experimental in his use of materials and techniques. He picked up the ink transfer technique from the German refugee artists Klaus Friedeberger, Erwin Fabian and others he met in Melbourne in the 1940s. The image was created by placing the paper onto an inked surface and applying pressure by drawing on the back of the paper in pencil.

Presented in memory of Robyn Kay Battye  
2018,7082.3
Sidney Nolan (1917–1992)
Untitled; plant drawing, 1948
Transfer monotype; drawing on verso in pencil

Nolan made a series of monotypes of drought-resistant, spiky-leaved native plants in the late 1940s. This is one of four the Museum has recently acquired. The plant species include types of grevillea and casuarina (or sheoak). For more than twenty years the British Museum has consistently built up its Australian collection of modern graphic art. Additions continue to be made since its large survey exhibition ‘Out of Australia’ in 2011.

Presented in memory of Robyn Kay Battye 2018,7082.5

David Hockney (born 1937)
Mirror, mirror on the wall, 1961
Etching in black and red ink

Hockney had experimented with printmaking when he was a student in Bradford, but took it up in earnest at the Royal College of Art, London which he attended from 1959 to 1962.
He had run out of money to buy paint and realized that the printmaking department supplied all materials free of charge.

This etching joins a group of early Hockney prints which the Museum has been gradually building up over the years. The lettering above the mirror refers to the fairy tale ‘Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs’ and below it are the last lines of C.P. Cavafy’s poem ‘Mirror at the Entrance’.

In the poem a delivery boy stops to look at his reflection, to which the mirror responds:

‘Proud to have received upon itself/ that entire beauty for a few minutes’. Hockney explained that ‘the idea of making a mirror have feelings is a wonderful poetic idea that strongly appeals to me’. He would later make a major series of etchings inspired by the poet, Illustrations for Fourteen Poems from C.P. Cavafy (1966).

This print is from the edition of approximately 50 impressions, printed by Ron Fuller and Peter Matthews at the Royal College of Art.
Accepted by HM Government in lieu of Inheritance Tax and allocated to the British Museum 2018
2018,7028.2

The Bedroom, 1959
Graphite

Born in Norwich, Andrews studied in London at the Slade School of Art where he was taught by William Coldstream and Lucian Freud and was a contemporary of Paula Rego, Victor Willing and Euan Uglow. His first solo exhibition was at the Beaux Arts Gallery in 1958, and his second at the same venue in 1963, where this drawing was exhibited.

In 1958–59 Andrews lived in the communal studio building belonging to the Digswell Arts Trust in Hertfordshire. The trust provided accommodation and studios to artists for a modest rent.
This drawing possibly depicts his bedroom there, typical of the sparsely furnished bedsit so ubiquitous in post-war England and providing the setting for such dramas as Harold Pinter’s play *The Room* (1957).

This early drawing is the first work by Andrews to enter the collection.

Funded by the Vollard Group  
2018,7073.1

**Humphrey Ocean (born 1951)**  
**Skyliner, 1974**  
Graphite on paper

Resting amid foliage, farm debris and a rural outbuilding, a once-sleek-and-shiny Ford Skyliner, with its distinctive curved contours, appears past its prime. This drawing is typical of Ocean’s style of the mid-1970s when he made pencil drawings for the covers and inner sleeves of music records including 10cc’s *The Original Soundtrack* (1975) and Wings’ *Wings at the Speed of Sound* by Wings (1976).
It is one of seven works by the British artist acquired by the Museum in 2022. Although perhaps best known for his painted portraits, Ocean has frequently depicted cars in a variety of media.

Funded by the Rootstein Hopkins Foundation 2022,7008.1

Humphrey Ocean (born 1951)
Dot book 1, 1999–2001
Drawing book

Humphrey Ocean’s Dot Books are drawing books in which he records ideas, objects, logos and signs that have caught his eye. This example contains 89 ink drawings of subjects including cars, chairs, sports brand logos, cassettes, a bird table and a Cypriot figure in the British Museum. Chairs are a recurring motif for Ocean. In 2006 he made a set of six aquatints of chairs with master printer Maurice Payne in New York. One of the prints, Black Love Chair, was reproduced on the cover of Paul McCartney’s album Memory Almost Full (2007).
Presented by the artist
2022,7008.6

Humphrey Ocean (born 1951)
Westwood Park and No. 85 from SE22 Suite, 1997
Ink on paper

Named after the local postcode, Ocean’s SE22 Suite chronicles the area of south-east London in which he lives and works. Indicating a deep familiarity with the suburban landscape, Ocean’s ink drawings capture everyday details of the leafy, residential streets and hint at the lives of their unseen inhabitants. Cars sit patiently outside homes, heavy curtains line windows and neatly tended trees divide neighbour from neighbour. From the top of a hill, residences of a different type can be glimpsed in the distance.

Funded by the Rootstein Hopkins Foundation
2022,7008.3-4
Georg Baselitz (born 1938)
Hund (Dog), 1964
Soft-ground etching and etching

Baselitz first took up etching in 1964 when this print was made. A scholarship he was awarded that year enabled him to use the printmaking facilities at Schloss Wolfsburg in northern Germany. In this print the rounded, voluminous form of the dog emerges from a seemingly haphazard series of scribbles.

The soft-ground technique appealed to the artist as it allowed him to make his drawing on a sheet of paper placed face down on the metal plate covered with a crumbly ground. The resulting softened lines suited the ambiguous, indeterminate nature of the imagery which addressed post-war Germany’s unspoken experiences of the Third Reich. Here the dog cautiously approaches a memorial cross. Baselitz’s etchings were shown for the first time at Galerie Michael Werner, Berlin in November 1964.
The London-based German art dealer Karsten Schubert (1961–2019), in whose memory this print has been given, was a major supporter of Baselitz’s graphic work. In 2008, he gave to the British Museum a series of the Remix etchings of 2006 published by the London print dealer, Charles Booth-Clibborn.

Presented by Charles Booth-Clibborn in memory of Karsten Schubert
2021,7018.2

**Linda Karshan Gift**

The artist Linda Karshan has generously presented three drawings by Anselm Kiefer to the British Museum in memory of her husband Howard Karshan who died in 2017.

They are a welcome addition to the collection and join a major Kiefer drawing purchased by the Museum in 1983. Although the Museum’s holdings of post-war German drawings were completely transformed by the gift of Count Christian Duerckheim in 2014, no Kiefer was included.
Howard Karshan specified that these three drawings from his own remarkable collection should come to the Museum.

**Anselm Kiefer (born 1945)**

*Wege der Weltweisheit: Die Hermannsschlacht (The Paths of World Wisdom: Hermann’s Battle), 1976*

Lithographic pencil

The title refers to the battle between the Germanic tribes led by Arminius (later known as Hermann) against the Romans. The Battle of Teutoburg Forest (9 CE) established Germania’s independence and Hermann became a potent symbol for German 19th-century nationalists which the Nazis later exploited to promote their theories of racial superiority.

Here Kiefer depicts portraits of 18th and 19th-century figures – artists, philosophers, industrialists – as well as prominent Nazis who are mostly sourced from *Face of the German Leader: 200 Portraits of German Fighters and Pioneers across 2000 Years* (1937), a book which presented a pantheon of figures leading to National Socialism.
Kiefer made this drawing on the back of a letter to his friend ‘Johnny’, Johannes Gachnang (1939–2005), the influential curator and director of the Kunsthalle, Berne. The drawing relates to a series of paintings and large woodcut collages Kiefer made in the late 1970s and early 1980s addressing the transformation of German civilization by the Nazis.

Presented by Linda Karshan in memory of her husband, Howard Karshan 2019,7042.1

Anselm Kiefer (born 1945) Ein Schiff wird kommen (A ship will come), 1974 Watercolour and bodycolour

This image of a cruise ship in an idyllic northern landscape, showing the midnight sun reflected in the waters of a fjord, derives from postcards collected by the artist and photographs taken by him on a trip to the North Cape (Nordkapp), a popular tourist attraction in northern Norway.
Paul Bril to Wendy Red Star

The title is taken from the song ‘Never on Sunday’ sung by a Greek prostitute, played by Melina Mercouri, in the 1960 film of the same name, which Kiefer described as ‘a perfect kitsch song of the student revolution time.’

He continues: ‘You cry when you hear it…it’s about yearning, sehnsucht, longing. But the ship will never come, I’m convinced. You are always longing for something but it never arrives or it’s always different from what you are thinking of. So it’s about human nature in a vulgar, ironic way’.

Presented by Linda Karshan in memory of her husband, Howard Karshan
2019,7042.2

Anselm Kiefer (born 1945)
Kranke Kunst (Sick Art), 1975
Watercolour and bodycolour

This and Ein Schiff wird kommen (displayed here) are from a group of landscapes made in the mid-1970s which developed out of what Kiefer regards as the antagonism between art and nature.
Although the artist may wish to impose their own creative vision in order to obliterate the beauty of nature, this pursuit is doomed to failure as representational art inevitably leads the viewer back to the natural world.

The Norwegian landscape represented here is reminiscent of works by Edvard Munch (1863–1944), an artist whose images were considered ‘sick’ by the Nazis; hence the sore-like weals in the present work.

The title also references the infamous Entarte Kunst (Degenerate Art) exhibition held in Munich in 1937 where the Nazis displayed more than 650 avant-garde works confiscated from German public collections, deeming them to be ‘sick’ and therefore un-German.

Presented by Linda Karshan in memory of her husband, Howard Karshan
2019,7042.3
Childe Hassam (1859–1935)
Red Cross girl, 1917
Etching

Hassam made this etching in the year America entered the First World War. It is inscribed ‘Heroland’ at upper left, the name of a charity bazaar held at the Grand Central Palace, New York (24 November – 12 December 1917) in aid of American and Allied relief organisations. Described in the publicity as ‘The greatest spectacle the world has ever seen for the greatest need the world has ever known’, the event featured a ‘Red Cross Tea Room’ where women from charitable and educational organisations worked as waitresses, possibly including this girl.

Funded by the Friends of Prints and Drawings 2019.7033.2
Mabel Dwight (1876–1955)
The clinch, 1928
Lithograph

Working first as a painter and illustrator, Dwight began to make prints in her fifties. She preferred lithography to intaglio techniques and made prints that depicted everyday scenes of American life, often with an element of humour. Here, the viewer is situated in the packed audience at a movie theatre as a climactic scene from a romantic film plays out. Dressed up for the occasion, many enjoy the moment, while others doze and some strain to see as an early leaver obscures their view.

Funded by Hamish Parker
2018,7034.1

Mabel Dwight (1876–1955)
Queer fish, 1936
Lithograph

Queer fish is one of American artist Mabel Dwight’s most famous prints.
It was inspired by an encounter she witnessed at the New York Aquarium between a huge grouper fish and a portly man who were seemingly trying to outstare each other. Calling it a ‘psychological moment’, she later described the meeting: ‘The fish’s mouth was open and his telescopic eyes focused intently. The man, startled by the sudden apparition, hid his hat behind him and dropped his jaw also; they hypnotised each other for a moment – then both swam away. Queer Fish!’

Funded by Hamish Parker
2018,7034.3

**Martin Lewis (1880–1962)**
**Down to the sea at night, 1929**
Drypoint with sandpaper-ground

Born and brought up in Australia, Lewis moved to America in 1900 and established himself as a commercial illustrator in New York City. He took up etching in 1915 and taught the technique to his friend Edward Hopper (1882–1967). He later made his name with drypoints of New York scenes. This example is typical of his narrative style.
Framed like a still from a film and dramatically lit by the car’s headlights, the scene silently unfolds as we watch, uneasy, as the swimmers head down to the water.

Funded by Hamish Parker
2020,7031.1

Mary Weatherford (born 1963)
The bather, 2018
Spit-bite aquatint with chine collé

From a group of etchings that Weatherford made in 2018 at Crown Point Press in San Francisco, where she explored the aquatint technique. Based in Los Angeles, Weatherford is best known for her large-scale abstract paintings that incorporate neon lighting tubes and are characterised by expressive brushstrokes and often-vibrant colours. For her aquatints, she used large brushes to apply acid to prepared copper plates, creating layered marks of varying intensity through which light appears to shine.

Funded by the Vollard Group
2020,7005.1
Robert Motherwell (1915–1991)
Black sounds, 1983–84
Lithograph and letterpress with collage

Although best known as an abstract expressionist painter, Motherwell enjoyed working with paper and made many prints and collages. His prints with collage proved challenging to make, however, and required extensive experimentation. For this print, Motherwell worked in close collaboration with the master printers at Tyler Graphics in Bedford Village, New York. Lithography was used for the beige area and letterpress for the black. White torn and cut paper was collaged on top, echoing the abstract gestural marks in Motherwell’s painted works.

Funded by the Vollard Group
2022,7020.2
Richard Hunt (born 1935)
Prometheus, 1956
Lithograph

Hunt made this lithograph in response to the killing of Emmett Till (1941–1955), a 14-year-old African American boy from Chicago who was tortured and lynched after being falsely accused of harassing a young married white woman while visiting relatives in Mississippi. Till’s mutilated body was displayed by his family in an open coffin during the wake, photographs of which were circulated by the press.

As a metaphor for Till’s suffering, Hunt uses the Greek myth of Prometheus, who brought civilisation to humans by stealing fire from the gods.

Condemned by Zeus to eternal suffering, Prometheus was bound to a rock and his liver was eaten daily by an eagle, before growing back overnight.
This lithograph is one of only seven impressions, which were printed by the artist when he was a student at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. In the same year, Hunt, who was African American and from Chicago like Till, also made an iron sculpture entitled *Hero’s Head* in response to Till’s death.

Presented anonymously in honour of Noël Annesley
2022,7034.1

**Charles White (1918–1979)**
*Pope X, 1972*
Etching

One of several images relating to popes that the American artist Charles White made in the 1970s, including the painting *Black Pope (Sandwich Board Man)*, 1973, now in the collection of the Museum of Modern Art, New York. The ‘X’ in the title may refer to the rejection by some African Americans, including the civil rights activist Malcolm X (1925–1965), of the surnames given to their enslaved ancestors.
Printed in Los Angeles, this etching was published in an edition of 25 in sepia ink, although this impression is a trial proof in black ink.

Funded by Hamish Parker
2020,7008.1

**Martin Puryear (born 1941)**

*Phrygian (cap in the air), 2012*

Soft-ground etching with spit-bite aquatint, drypoint and chine collé

This print references a type of conical cloth cap worn in France during the Revolution and by other groups as a symbol of liberty. It is a motif that has appeared repeatedly in Puryear’s work as the subject for prints and large-scale sculptures. The cap became particularly significant to Puryear, an African American, after he saw a French engraving from 1794 depicting a Black man wearing one with the caption **Moi libre aussi** (I am free too).

Funded by James A. and Laura M. Duncan
2019,7093.1
Image caption:
Print made by Louis Darcis after Louis Simon Boizot, 1794 (2010,7014.1)

Table case 5

Sothiou and Andichurai from in the space we breathe, 2018
Two of nine screenprints

Derived from a group of self-portrait tintype photographs made by Saye in 2016–17, In the space we breathe explores the artist’s Gambian-British identity using references to traditional Gambian practices, and the process of coming to terms with traumatic experiences. In Sothiou, the artist holds sticks from the Salvadora persica tree, which are traditionally used for cleaning teeth and have spiritual meaning in some African faiths. In the second image, she holds an incense pot (an Andichurai) to her ear as if listening to stories contained within this domestic Gambian object.
Saye’s use of tintype, a 19th-century method of photography, connects the images to a time when the British Empire, which included The Gambia, was at its height.

Six of the photographs were shown in the Diaspora Pavilion at the Venice Biennale in 2017. In the same year, Saye died in the fire at Grenfell Tower in London. The screenprints were printed posthumously by the Studio of Nicola Green and Jealous Gallery, London. They were sold by the Victoria Miro Gallery to raise funds for the Khadija Saye Arts Programme run by the charity IntoUniversity, which aims to provide Arts-based educational support for disadvantaged young people.

Funded by Hamish Parker
2019,7084.1.1, 3
Table case 6:

Guerrilla Girls (formed 1985)
3 Ways to Write a Museum Wall Label When The Artist Is A Sexual Predator, 2018
Archive digital print

This print by the anonymous artists’ group, Guerrilla Girls, confronts how museums deal with works by male artists who are accused of sexual violence towards women.

No matter how much of a ‘genius’ these artists are meant to be, the Guerrilla Girls insist that they should be made accountable for their actions and museums should follow suit and deal with these issues in their label text. Inspired by a 2006 portrait of Bill Clinton by the American artist Chuck Close (1940–2021), here they offer three different ways to write a museum label for this work.

Close, famous for his large-scale portraits, was accused in 2017 of sexually harassing his models. He apologised but had several exhibitions of his work cancelled.
The #MeToo debate has recently called out several powerful male figures in the art world who have been guilty of sexual misconduct.

The Guerrilla Girls formed in New York City in 1985 with the mission of bringing gender and racial inequality into focus within the greater arts community. To remain anonymous, members don gorilla masks and use pseudonyms that refer to deceased female artists.

Presented by the Guerrilla Girls
2020,7011.1

Mark Dion (born 1961)
Thorny territory and The bestiary of museum visitors from Museum culture, 2020
From a portfolio of eight colour screenprints

Mark Dion has explored museum practices throughout his career, often through conceptual installations. In these prints, he uses the language of museums, including object classification, to highlight challenges facing museums and satirise their culture, from questions over what to collect to the behaviour of museum visitors.
The portfolio was printed and published by the LeRoy Neiman Center for Print Studies, Columbia University, New York.

Funded by the Vollard Group 2021,7012.1, 5

**Inside second room, framed on back wall, left**

**Emma Amos (1937–2020)**  
**American girl, 1974**  
Etching and aquatint

This ‘American girl’ is a self-portrait, made when the Women’s Liberation and Black Power movements were at their height in the United States. The thick white line around the figure was created by cutting the copper plate in two and running the separate pieces through the printing press together. The print was included in the portfolio ‘Impressions: Our World, Vol. I’, comprising prints by seven Black artists.
It was printed and published by the Printmaking Workshop, New York, which was run by the African American artist Robert Blackburn (1920–2003).

Funded by Margaret Conklin and David Sabel 2019,7013.2

Emma Amos (1937–2020)
Land of the Free, 1992
Colour monoprint and photo laser transfer with African fabric collage

Much of Amos’s work explores the history of Black people in the USA. In this ironically titled print, Amos places Native American and African communities firmly within the country’s history. Her own story, as the descendant of slaves, is represented by a photographic self-portrait. Amos was born in Atlanta, in the southern state of Georgia, where she attended segregated schools. She was later a member of ‘Spiral’, a collective of Black artists, and the feminist artist group the Guerrilla Girls.
Funded by James A. and Laura M. Duncan
2020,7004.1

Lobby area, framed on wall:

William Forsythe (born 1949) and the Forsythe Company Ensemble (Stiftung Forsythe)
Artikel 7, 2005–12
Charcoal

This drawing is from the performance-installation Human Writes. A project conceived by the choreographer William Forsythe and Kendall Thomas, a law professor at Columbia University, it premiered in Zurich in 2005 and has been performed at subsequent venues across Europe.

The piece charges the dancers to engage in writing passages from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) proclaimed by the United Nations. It consists of 30 articles which protect a variety of rights, among them Article 7: ‘All are equal before the law’.
The dancers were each given a table, white paper and materials such as charcoal and graphite with which to make marks. From copies of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, each chose an article or passage of an article to ‘write’. The audience roamed freely throughout the performance and responded to the dancers’ requests of help to make a mark with the physical motion of their bodies. The excessive demands of the piece forced the dancers to create marks by standing, kneeling, lying down or hanging by rope, sometimes with chalk gripped between their toes. At the end of each performance Forsythe would collect at least twenty of the completed sheets to archive as a record of the installation.

Presented by William Forsythe and Stiftung Forsythe
2018,7025.1

Catherine Anyango Grünewald (born 1982)
Colored Waiting Room, 2017
Graphite on paper

This drawing is based on a photograph of the segregated waiting room in the railway depot of Lake City, Florida in 1941.
Paul Bril to Wendy Red Star

Made with two textures of graphite that create a surface at once matte and shiny, it resembles a photographic negative. The image shifts with the light, requiring the viewer to move around the drawing to see the image in its entirety. It comes from a series, created for the 5th International Typography Biennale, Seoul, which reflects on the ways that typography has been used to limit bodily autonomy, in this case in Jim Crow-era America.

Anyango Grünewald is a Swedish Kenyan artist, currently Senior Lecturer in Illustration at Konstfack University of Arts, Crafts and Design in Stockholm. Her work often addresses the oppression of marginalised people, and she describes how ‘the process and labour invested in the work is a direct homage to the subjects, victims of violent domestic or institutional crimes’.

Two drawings by Anyango Grünewald were acquired with an Art Fund New Collecting Award, granted in 2018 to enable the acquisition of drawings by emerging artists.
They will be included in the exhibition ‘Drawing Attention: emerging artists in dialogue’ touring to York Art Gallery (27 October 2023–28 January 2024) Wolverhampton Art Gallery (10 February–6 May 2024) and Hartlepool Art Gallery (18 May–24 August 2024).

Funded by the Rootstein Hopkins Foundation 2021,7037.1

**Phoebe Boswell (born 1982)**
**Future Ancestors: Sentinel (red), 2021**
Graphite and watercolour with pastel

Boswell grew up in the Arabian Gulf, before moving to the UK where she lives and works. Her work spans different media, exploring questions of freedom, care, contested histories and imagined futures through a Black feminist and multifaceted diasporic lens. This drawing comes from a group of large-scale, semi-fictional portraits, which draw on an encounter with a group of fishermen near the artist’s family home in Zanzibar, Tanzania. Here they are recast as ‘Future Ancestors’, sentinels who have been off in search of a ‘New Place’.
Boswell notes that Zanzibar was historically a slave port and that her figures’ ‘knowledge of the sea, even though so absolute, so ancestral, so much part of their bodies… was an adapted skill which their forefathers had to learn’, a result of their subjection to ‘the worst of modernity’s cruelty’. The artist considers the series ‘a call to remember and also a call to arms. We need to know how resilient and adaptive we are in order for our imaginations to begin to envision a new place’.

Funded by the Rootstein Hopkins Foundation 2022,7031.1

Inside second room, framed on back wall, right:

The Cristea Roberts Gallery Gift

In 2021 Cristea Roberts Gallery presented a group of more than 40 prints to the British Museum.
This comprised series and individual sheets by some of the leading artists making prints today, many of which were published by the gallery. The gift includes work by artists such as Michael Craig-Martin (right), Dexter Dalwood, Jan Dibbets, Hamish Fulton, Richard Hamilton (in case at right), Marie Harnett (displayed opposite), Mimmo Paladino, Joe Tilson and Richard Woods.

Michael Craig-Martin (born 1941)
Deconstructing Seurat (turquoise green), 2004
Pair of colour screenprints

The composition of Georges Seurat’s Bathers at Asnières (1884, National Gallery, London) is here broken down into the basic elements of landscape and figure. Seurat’s painting was deeply significant for London-based conceptual artist Craig-Martin, who saw it as ‘a tribute to ordinary people, ordinary life, but presented at the scale and with the dignity of a great history painting’. The pair was published by Alan Cristea Gallery, London in an edition of 40.

Presented by Cristea Roberts Gallery
2021,7003.5(1-2)
Nigel Hall (born 1943)
Drawing 1595, 2012
Orange gouache and charcoal on stiff white Saunders Waterford paper

Here two vibrant orange ellipses contain two in charcoal, their blackness seeming almost to spill out and dust the surrounding paper. Hall studied at the West of England College of Art, Bristol (1960–64) and at the Royal College of Art, London (1964–67). Best known for his sculpture in steel, aluminium and polished wood, this drawing shows the artist’s preoccupation with balance, weight, and negative space. It comes from a group of five recently acquired from the artist.

Presented by the artist
2021,7019.5
Second room, wall cases running along right side (from back):

Richard Hamilton (1922–2011)
Self-portrait in a cracked mirror, 1985
Etching and aquatint

Hamilton made this etching in the Paris studio of the master printer Aldo Crommelynck during a break while working on one of his large Ulysses etchings. He picked up a broken mirror lying in the studio to make his self-portrait. His varying reflections in the slivers of glass result in a questioning self-portrait. After completing it he recalled that James Joyce had referred to a cracked mirror as a symbol of Irish art in the opening episode of *Ulysses*, his modernist epic first published in 1922. Hamilton dedicated this proof to his friend, Alan Cristea, the London print publisher.

Presented by the Cristea Roberts Gallery
2021,7005.7
Richard Hamilton (1922–2011)
A dedicated follower of fashion, 1980
Photogravure, engraving, open-bite, lift-ground and step-bite aquatint

The title comes from a pop song by The Kinks of 1966. The source image came from a small photograph that Hamilton had rescued from a wastepaper basket in the late 1960s. Working with the master printer Aldo Crommelynck in Paris, Hamilton elaborated his composition with exquisite layers of aquatint. The result is a gently ironic portrayal of a fashionably dressed young man in a double-breasted suit standing in the hall of his apartment, talking on the telephone. A contemporary screenprint spelling the word ‘ART’ hangs in the hallway.

Presented by the Cristea Roberts Gallery
2021,7005.1
John Golding (1929–2012)
Untitled, about 1960
Monotype

In 2021 the Mayor Gallery, London held an exhibition of works by the art historian and teacher John Golding. Entitled ‘Only Human’, the majority of the works on show (including this monotype) were made while Golding was teaching at the Courtauld. Despite being a scholar and the author of many influential publications from *Cubism: A History and an Analysis* (1959) to *Paths to the Absolute* (2000), he regarded himself primarily as an artist.

Born in Hastings, East Sussex, Golding’s parents moved to Mexico when he was a child. There he grew up meeting many artists, writers and filmmakers such as Leonora Carrington, Octavio Paz and Luis Buñuel. However, it was the work of the Mexican muralist José Clemente Orozco that resonated most deeply with him. After studying at the Courtauld in the 1950s, a distinguished academic career followed.
Golding was a renowned curator, collaborating on many exhibitions, including ‘Picasso Sculptor Painter’ (1994) and ‘Matisse Picasso’ (2002–3). However, he also managed to pursue a parallel career as a painter exhibiting regularly in the UK and abroad.

Funded by Rootstein Hopkins Foundation 2022,7003.1

John Golding (1929–2012)
Untitled, 1992
Pastel in blue and white acrylic and scraping

Last year the John Golding Artistic Trust who administer the artist’s estate invited the British Museum to select a group of his works for the collection. The gift charts Golding’s shift from early figurative etchings of Mexican subjects in the 1950s to his gradual move into abstraction, experimenting with collage and creating fields of colour in his large pastel drawings, one of which is displayed here.

Presented by the John Golding Artistic Trust 2022,7007.17
The Frink Gift

In 2018 the British Museum was given first choice of works on paper from the estate of the sculptor Dame Elisabeth Frink (1930–1993). This was the decision of Lin Jammet, the artist’s son. He wanted the very best examples of his mother’s graphic work to come to the Museum where she had been a Trustee from 1975 to 1989. Jammet died in 2017, but the estate facilitated the gift resulting in a group of 31 drawings and 45 prints. They cover the period from the 1950s, when Frink was a student at Chelsea School of Art, to the early 1990s when she was working up to her death from cancer at the age of 62.

Frink always insisted that drawings were a fundamental part of her creative process and regarded them not as mere studies for her sculpture but works of art in their own right. Not only do they capture her deep empathy for animals, particularly horses and birds, but they also demonstrate Frink’s ability to tackle universal themes, such as human vulnerability (as seen in her falling and spinning men), and man’s capacity for cruelty shown in her menacing ‘Goggle Head’ sculptures.
Paul Bril to Wendy Red Star

The gift greatly enhances the Museum’s holdings of Frink’s work and they join a collection rich in sculptors’ drawings ranging from Michelangelo to contemporary British artists such as Antony Gormley, Anish Kapoor and Rachel Whiteread.

Elisabeth Frink (1930–1993)
Spinning Man, 1959
Ink and wash

Frink’s series of spinning and falling men (1959–62) were directly influenced by seeing aircraft crashing in flames and their pilots falling out of the sky during her Second World War childhood in Suffolk. These images haunted the artist inducing nightmares that continued well into adulthood.

The figure of the spinning man also reflects the era of the space race and space exploration from the late 1950s, the helmeted figure resembling an astronaut revolving in zero gravity.

Provided to the British Museum in accordance with the wishes of the artist’s late son, Lin Jammet.
2020,7018.6
Elisabeth Frink (1930–1993)
Goggle Head II, 1967
Watercolour, graphite and wash

Frink created her series of sinister Goggle Heads between 1967 and 1969. They represent the face of evil and oppression with the capacity to perform acts of violence and brutality. The figures are based on an image the artist had seen in the press of General Mohamed Oufkir (1920–1972) during the violent, political disturbances in Morocco. He had allegedly arranged the ‘disappearance’ of the left-wing Moroccan politician Mehdi Ben Barka. Frink was struck by the large sunglasses worn by Oufkir which gave him an almost inhuman demeanour.

Provided to the British Museum in accordance with the wishes of the artist’s late son, Lin Jammet.
2020,7018.6
Fred Williams (1927–1982)
Guthega motif, 1975
Conté chalk on paper

This group of three works was inspired by a painting trip in January 1975 made by the Australian artist Fred Williams to the area of Mount Kosciusko, Australia’s highest mountain peak, in south-eastern New South Wales. Williams subsequently produced a series of paintings, drawings and gouaches inspired by the Guthega gully in his Melbourne studio. In this monochrome conté drawing on plain paper the diagonal cleft of the ravine becomes an abstracted, though recognisable, form evoking a timeless terrain.

Funded by Hamish Parker
2021,7023.2

Fred Williams (1927–1982)
Guthega IV, 1975
Gouache

Here Williams the colourist responds with dabs of vivid greens, violet and ochres.
The plunging diagonal line of the gully, with its ascending counterpart, reveals the formal structure underlying Williams’s compositions. The two drawings operate both singly and as a pair. Williams’s series of drawings, gouaches and paintings was retained intact as a group until 2020 when these two works were offered to the British Museum.

Funded by Hamish Parker
2021,7023.1

Fred Williams (1927–1982)
Guthega, 1976
Drypoint and engraving, with electric hand-engraving and roulette

In this related drypoint and engraving the dark, riven gully is set off by the textural marks made by vigorous use of the roulette tool directly on the metal plate. The three works shown here reveal how Williams tackled a motif by working simultaneously across the media in drawing, gouache and printmaking.
Through the generosity of the artist’s widow Lyn Williams, supplemented by further gifts by James Mollison, founding Director of the National Gallery of Australia, the British Museum has an outstanding collection of Williams’s work.

Presented by Lyn Williams
2019,7002.9

George Shaw (born 1966)
I Woz Ere no. 13, 2011
Watercolour

Best known for his faithful depictions in Humbrol paint of seemingly unremarkable and mundane suburban spaces, Shaw here depicts the backyard of the estate at Tile Hill in Coventry where he grew up. A wry reference to the phrase beloved by graffiti taggers (of the kind now barely visible on the weathered clapboard fence), the title also alludes to the artist’s deeply personal relationship with this particular place.

Presented by an anonymous donor
2019,7059.1
Stuart Brisley (born 1933)
State Occasion from The Museum of Ordure, 2020
Acrylic and graphite

This drawing shows a doubled image of Queen Elizabeth II looking out of the window of the royal carriage. Brisley worked from a press image showing the former head of state caught in a moment of private reverie. The relationship between the private and public lives of the powerful is a preoccupation of the artist’s work, one highlighted by the rituals of Queen Elizabeth’s state funeral last year.

In 2002 Brisley co-founded the ‘Museum of Ordure’, an ongoing project to explore the ‘curatorial value of human waste’.

Funded by Rootstein Hopkins Foundation 2020,7042.1

Cornelia Parker (born 1956)
From H to B and back again, 2021
Various pencils on acid-free graph paper
Parker works with a variety of mediums, using an enquiry into their materiality as a means to question our relationship with the world around us. This drawing was made using pencils given to the artist as a gift; Parker found herself testing their softness and hardness, describing the resulting drawing as ‘a sampler of sorts’. Made during lockdown imposed by the Covid-19 pandemic, the drawing is one of four acquired from the Drawing Room’s ‘Drawing Biennial 2021’, many of which responded to the crisis.

Funded by the Rootstein Hopkins Foundation 2021,7030.1

**Susie Hamilton (born 1950)**  
**Blind, 2020**  
Charcoal and pastel

This drawing was made during the Covid-19 lockdown. Hamilton was contacted by the hepatologist Peter Collins, who suggested images of Covid wards at his hospital might be of interest to the artist.
She was particularly drawn to the isolation of medics in PPE (Personal Protective Equipment), while the images also appealed to her preference for partly hidden figures. Through hoods, masks, visors and goggles, the doctors and nurses metamorphosed into hybrid creatures, who often resemble plague doctors of the past.

Funded by the Rootstein Hopkins Foundation 2021,7030.2

Michael Landy (born 1963)  
Family ruins 15, 2020  
Watercolour

Landy began his series Family ruins while working on an outdoor commission for the Museum of the Home, London. He had planned to travel to Ireland, his ancestral home, to undertake research for the project, but was prevented by the nationwide lockdown. Instead, he made a series of drawings of abandoned Irish crofters’ cottages using images found online. Landy is perhaps best known for his performance Breakdown (2001), in which he systematically destroyed all his possessions.
This drawing offers a further meditation on loss and belonging.

Funded by the Rootstein Hopkins Foundation 2020,7033.1

Philip Hughes (born 1936)
Craswall notebook, 17/10/20–22/1/21
Sketchbook

Hughes spent a period during the Covid-19 lockdown living in isolation at Craswall, a village in Herefordshire on the border with Wales. This sketchbook is filled with annotated landscape drawings made on his solitary walks on the edge of the Black Mountains and along the summit ridges. Watercolour was added later in his temporary studio in Craswall. Hughes is self-taught as an artist and the structure of landscape forms an enduring preoccupation. The artist generously presented this personal sketchbook together with a group of his etchings.

Presented by the artist 2022,7014.1
Gillian Wearing (born 1963)
Lockdown portrait 19, 2021
Watercolour

This is one of many self-portraits that Wearing made during the Covid-19 pandemic that reflect the anxiety, boredom and sense of isolation widely felt during the lockdowns. Returning to watercolour, a medium she had not employed since her student days, Wearing drew either from life, using a mirror, or from photographs.

Presented by the Contemporary Art Society, 2021/2022 with a contribution from the Rootstein Hopkins Foundation 2022,7001.1
Table case 7:

**Cristina Iglesias (born 1956)**

**Hanging corridors, 2008**

From a portfolio of eight prints with etching, drypoint, aquatint and Epson digital printing

Based in Madrid, Iglesias is known for her sculptural works incorporating hanging pavilions, latticework constructions, mazes and corridors. These prints are based on photographs of models for three installation works that were shown together at the Museum Ludwig, Cologne in 2006. To create the images for the prints, Iglesias drew on the photographs to emphasise specific details and shadows. The portfolio was published in Santa Monica by Jacob Samuel, who also did the intaglio printing.

Presented by Jacob Samuel in honour of Dr Benjamin Samuel
2019,7048.1.1, 4
Fiona Tan (born 1966)
Shadow Archive IV, 2019
Photogravure

From a series of four photogravures of an abandoned, dusty archive inspired by the Mundaneum, an institution founded by Belgian lawyers Paul Otlet and Henri La Fontaine to create a physical catalogue of all human knowledge. The pair worked on the project from 1910 until the mid-1930s but it was never fully realised. Born in Indonesia and now living in Amsterdam, Tan used computer software to create these photogravures, which were printed and published by Niels Borch Jensen in Copenhagen.

Funded by the Vollard Group
2019,7049.4
Table case 8:

Yinka Shonibare CBE (born 1962)
Thank you
Screenprint

Ian Davenport (born 1966)
Uplift
Digital print

From The Help Portfolio, 2020
This portfolio of 16 prints by 16 artists was conceived during the 2020 Covid-19 lockdown by Sue Arrowsmith, Christian Mathews, Dario Ilari and David Cleaton-Roberts.

The works in the portfolio cover a wide range of mediums, themes and imagery distinctive to each artist. Two of the 16 prints are shown here.

Yinka Shonibare CBE incorporates gold leaf in his print to illustrate a symbolic tulip that sits under the words ‘Thank you’. Ian Davenport’s colourful cascades of dripping paint resulting in puddles are transferred here successfully into print.
Each contributing artist nominated a charity affected by the virus, with all profits split equally between the charities. The project was proofed and editioned at Jealous Studio, London.

Presented by David Cleaton Roberts, Sue Arrowsmith, Christian Mathews and Dario Ilari
2021,7009.14
2021,7009.5

Freestanding block, front:

Wendy Red Star (born 1981)
Catalogue number 1950.76 from Accession, 2019
From a suite of 15 digital pigment prints on archival paper

Raised on the Apsáalooke (Crow) Reservation in Montana, Red Star’s work examines the intersections of her Indigenous heritage with 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. Many of them had been drawn by out-of-work commercial illustrators employed on the Works Progress Administration Project from the 1930s onwards.

Such objects remain a vibrant part of Crow culture, visible at the annual Crow Fair where nearly 50,000 people, including around 11,000 tribal members, congregate along the Little Bighorn River. By pairing images of the cards with photographs she took of similar objects in use at the Crow Fair, Red Star recontextualises the items, demonstrating their continued significance to Crow people. Similar material culture is stewarded in the British Museum’s collections, for example, an elk-tooth dress like the one featured in this print. Other items such as rawhide parfleche bags, similar to those visible in Catalogue number 1948.102 (right), are currently on display in the North America Gallery in Room 26.
Wendy Red Star (born 1981)
Catalogue number 1948.102 from Accession, 2019
From a suite of 15 digital pigment prints on archival paper

Funded by Guy Halamish
2021,7052.15

Wendy Red Star (born 1981)
Catalogue number 1949.72 from Accession, 2019
From a suite of 15 digital pigment prints on archival paper

Funded by Guy Halamish
2021,7052.1
Wendy Red Star (born 1981)
Catalogue number 1949.73 from Accession, 2019
From a suite of 15 digital pigment prints on archival paper

Funded by Guy Halamish
2021,7052.14

Freestanding block, left side:

Bruce Nauman (born 1941)
Violins/Violence, 1985
Drypoint

Working in a variety of media including neon, video and performance, the American artist Bruce Nauman creates unsettling, enigmatic works that often incorporate single words or short phrases. In this print, he uses scratchy drypoint lines to underscore the visual, verbal and aural interplay between ‘violins’ and ‘violence’. In the viewer’s mind, eye and ear, the words shift from one to the other like the artist’s flashing neons.
Freestanding block, back:

Cecily Brown (born 1969)
Untitled (Shipwreck), 2016
Gouache and watercolour

These three drawings are from a group of 32 by Brown exhibited at the Whitworth Art Gallery, Manchester in 2017–18 on the theme of shipwrecks. Brown often draws from Old Master sources. She began this series after a reproduction of Delacroix’s Christ asleep during the tempest (c. 1853, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, illustrated right). Delacroix had himself been influenced by Rembrandt, whose drawing Christ at the Sea in Galilee (c. 1652–6) is in the British Museum. By cropping the composition and heightening Delacroix’s already intense colouration, Brown was, in her words, ‘trying to figure out what Delacroix himself might have been trying to figure out’.
Funded by the Rootstein Hopkins Foundation 2019,7064.1

Cecily Brown (born 1969)
Untitled (Shipwreck), 2016
Gouache and watercolour

The starting point for this drawing was Théodore Géricault’s Raft of the Medusa (1818–19), the monumental painting in the Louvre. The iconic composition is here cropped and given an ominous red wash. Often working at the point where abstraction and figuration meet, Brown uses historical compositions such as Géricault’s to reflect upon the contemporary plight of people involved in perilous crossings of the Mediterranean due to the continuing migrant crisis.

Funded by Guy Halamish 2019,7064.2
Cecily Brown (born 1969)
Untitled (Shipwreck), 2016
Watercolour and charcoal

These three drawings are from a group of 32 by Brown exhibited at the Whitworth Art Gallery, Manchester in 2017–18 on the theme of shipwrecks. Théodore Géricault’s Raft of the Medusa (1818–19, Louvre, Paris, illustrated right), a seminal painting of French Romanticism, dramatised the aftermath of a shipwreck in which only 15 people survived aboard a makeshift raft. Brown’s composition places the spectator even closer to this scene of suffering than its related drawing (left), and implies a kind of cinematic zoom. Re-examining this maritime tragedy was a means for Brown to reflect on the desperate situation faced by those forced into dangerous crossings of the Mediterranean in our own time.

Presented by the artist in memory of Karsten Schubert
2019,7066.1
Freestanding block, right side:

Marie Harnett (born 1983)
This is your doing, 2020 (upper right)
Graphite on stiff yellowish paper

Perfect happiness, 2020 (middle right)
Graphite on drafting film

Without compare, 2020 (lower right)
Graphite on drafting film

Harnett is best known for her exacting, miniature-scale works based on film stills. The artist watches trailers without sound or colour to locate images for her source material. These are purposefully taken out of context; the artist instead is interested in their power to communicate intense emotion. In these drawings the stills are from an adaptation of Jane Austen’s Emma, directed by Autumn de Wilde (2020).

The first features the eponymous Emma and her protégé Harriet Smith, here played by Anya Taylor-Joy and Mia Goth.
In the second, a girl’s hands are shown raising a jelly mould from a mound of flour, ready to play a version of the Regency parlour game ‘bullet pudding’, often played by the Austen family at Christmas. The third shows Emma, her hair in rags, surrounded by recently extinguished candles – a common memento mori motif in the still-life tradition. An invitation to reflect on mortality is here juxtaposed with the character’s pensive expression.

Funded by Rootstein Hopkins Foundation
2021,7021.1
2021,7021.2
2021,7021.3
Marie Harnett (born 1983)
Cinema, Smoke, Leopard print and Harmonica
(upper to lower left) from Factory Girl, 2012
From a series of 5 hand-rocked mezzotints

Harnett’s images are taken from the film Factory Girl (2006, directed by George Hickenlooper) based on the life of Edie Sedgwick (1943–1971), one of Andy Warhol’s ‘superstars’ at his Factory studio. In the film she is played by Sienna Miller. The film’s chiaroscuro lighting, which illuminates lush furs and even individual hairs, is matched by the mezzotints’ velvety texture. The series was published by Alan Cristea Gallery, London.

Presented by Cristea Roberts Gallery
2021,7005.8.1–4
Find out more

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Discover the national collection of Western prints and drawings in the Study Room of the Department of Prints and Drawings. The Study Room is open to the public by appointment. For more information visit britishmuseum.org or email prints@britishmuseum.org.

Next in Room 90

La Superba: prints and drawings from Genoa 1500–1800

Gesture and line: four post-war German and Austrian artists from the Duerckheim Collection
5 October 2023 – 1 April 2024
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