

M

Gallery 3

What is Manchester Art Gallery?

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Manchester Art Gallery

G

Miniature and Dolls House Chairs various dates 1810 – 1930 Wood

1922 Gift as part of the Mary Greg collection to Platt Hall. Mary Greg collected everyday domestic objects in the late 1800s and early 1900s specifically to inspire people to consider everyday creativity and making in their lives.

I had a chair that was like someone giving me a hug.

Chairs can be competitive.

My mum had a small chair that I would sit on as a child; it was perfectly formed for me!

A chair can have its own migration journey.

Humans are territorial about chairs.

They are strange little things. They feel familiar and yet something isn't quite right.

It's not sitting pretty.

Fairy tales, Goldilocks, wedding chairs...

Quotations from a Collections Chat session, November 2022 as part of *Platt Hall Inbetween* which rethinks Platt Hall in its local context.

www.platthall.org/

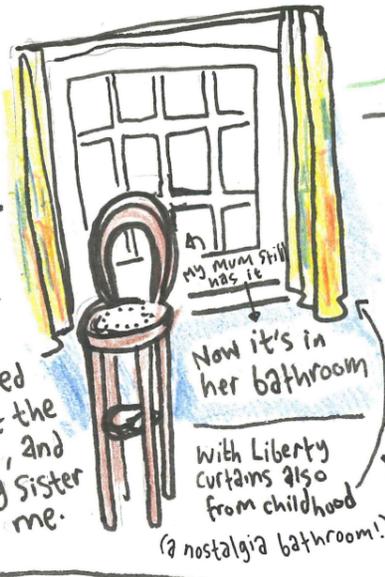
Today's Question is...

Do you have a favourite or memorable chair?

They can be very evocative, chairs...

Small Tall

Chair that I used to sit at the table on, and then my sister after me.



My mum still has it. Now it's in her bathroom with Liberty curtains also from childhood (a nostalgia bathroom!).

Chair that grandad sat in & smoked his pipe



Oh, I don't sit on it, I use it for clothes

I love chairs I've got loads of them.

My grandmother had this rocking chair... my mother has it now. She calls it her

such a seemingly strange question, but we all instantly had an answer...

Twizzling Chair on the ward, to sit in during the night shift



A soothing sit for aching feet

OWL CHAIR



It looks like it has owls in it, but it's just carvings

Artist's Impression

I feel a bit weird about it...

She was blind and we used to sit on her lap and rock in it



deadleaf chair

It's in my mother's room I can't resist going into her room to sit and rock in it.

Whether you had a good relationship or a bad relationship, the Chair Remains

great grandmother's bath chair

She only spoke Russian & nobody liked her. & she didn't like anybody either. She'd only let me near her as a baby.



I didn't like anybody either.

I think she lived in it...

one half of the Pew was mine, and one half was my sister's

A Pew cut in half in the breakfast room



Being allowed to sit in a chair was a luxury because it meant you were a GROWN UP



Sofa just big enough for two

My friend says it's ugly, but I really want one

oh my gosh! I've just realised My kids sit on benches too!

17th Nov 2022

Scribed by Laurie Pink

handling

- A chair has many points of vulnerability.
- The **Seat** is the **Strongest** Part



DONT HOLD ME BY MY LEGS!

object one

Theres a lot of design in chairs

OAK

You can see a gentleman Sat in it, like at the head of the table

helpful note
This is a Toy-sized chair

farmhouse vibes

I can really imagine a cat curled up in it...

It's got loads of wax on it...

It looks like a neglected chair, & that's how it's been damaged



It's proportions are very odd...

could it be a Snuggle chair?
or a nursing chair?



It's wood, but it's been done in a bamboo style

is it a Maquette?

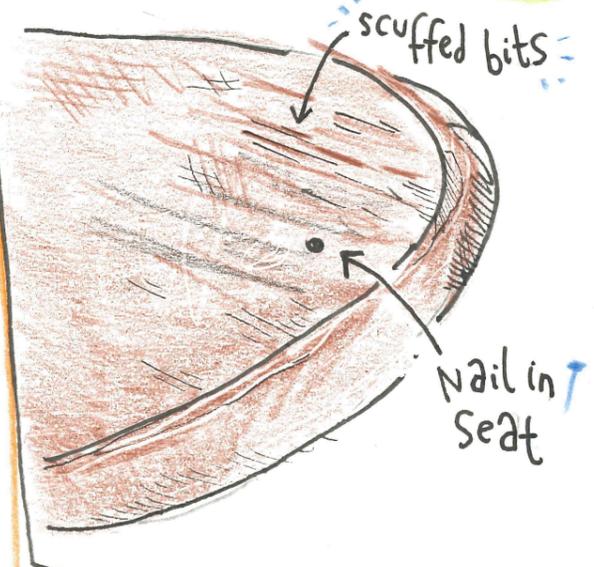
So much turning work could be for practise on a lathe (hence re-used wood)

is it a chair you'd like to own in a larger size?

Yes

A Story teller's Chair...

Made from something else?



scuffed bits

Nail in seat

Distressed look

It looks like it's been used, which is odd, as it can't be sat in...

Why IS it so worn?

Back struts have lines drawn to look like curves

VERY WIDE

17th Nov 2022

Object Two

Scribed by Laurie Pink

"A chair absolutely defines its space"

Two Chairs together

Jack & the Beanstalk
A Chihuahua & a Bigger dog



all dogs are bigger than me

it looks like a church chair

"It's so miniature, it's odd."

The back part reminds me of those chairs you have at weddings



There's something not quite right about it...

Hand made / mass production crossover?

How does it smell?

kind of musty

More like books than wood

"I've not heard that phrase before!"

Which is why they so often feature in horror films, I suppose



Does it look wrong because we know chairs so well?



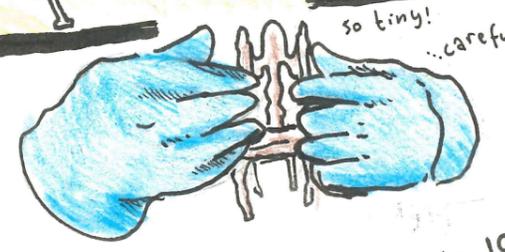
I'm going to check my chairs at home now!

Mis-matched legs look wrong until you see... The chair I'm sitting on is the same!

Alice in Wonderland
Things from the imagination that aren't quite right...

Miniature things are Not Quite Right
...There's something spooky about them...

(Dolls houses HUGELY fashionable in 1920s)





Ira Aldridge 1882

James Northcote 1746-1831

Oil on canvas

Liz, Curator: I'm really interested to know what you make of this painting. In the time I've known it (nearly 30 years) it's always been introduced as the first artwork acquired by the Royal Manchester Institution as evidence of their progressive attitude in a time when slavery had not yet been abolished. That feels like a heavy load for one artwork to carry down the centuries.

Nikita, Curatorial Trainee: You're right, the painting may carry a great load. Yes it is the first painting in the collection - they purchased it in 1827- but what does that mean for people now, the ones living, learning and growing up with this painting at the heart of a collection of objects that belong to the people of Manchester today? What did it mean for James Northcote to choose to paint this black man, performing as a black man, a character written by Shakespeare?



Dead Powder Series: Yellow 2019

Nicola Ellis 1987 -

Powder-coated steel

Matthew Pendergast, Castlefield Gallery Curator: Tell us a little about Ritherdon, because that's where you are now.

Nicola Ellis, artist: They are a family-owned manufacturer of steel enclosures, you know, metal boxes that contain various things, street-side electricals, meter-box covers...

Matthew: When I explain it to people I tell them it's where the internet lives.

Nicola: Ha, ha, yeah! The point was to spend some time on site here to properly try to understand the ecosystem of the factory. Spending time somewhere where you wouldn't normally is a great way to gain perspective on other areas of your life.

Gift of the Manchester Contemporary Art Fund: Christian Anderton, James & Katie Eden; Pablo Flack; Mark Garner; Mark Hawthorn; Thom Hetherington & Sophie Helm; Alison Loveday; Jeremy & Jane Roberts; Howard Ratcliffe; Andy Spinoza, Martyn Torevell and David Waddington 2019, 2021.2



No. 14/73 1973

Jeremy Moon 1934-1973

Acrylic paint on canvas

Kate, Curator: I enjoy the way you respond to this painting as an artist, how it was made. I looked up the name for the shape Moon repeats - it's a rhomboid. I've always thought of this painting, and hard-edged abstraction more generally, as being about control. As we chat, I'm starting to see it differently now.

Sarah, Visitor Services Assistant and artist: It is much more painterly than I expected. I am surprised to see all the debris caught in the paint and a little flub to one of the taped lines - something I couldn't bear to leave in my own work! He allowed the hand of the artist to be an integral part of the overall composition, giving the painting a more human and intimate quality when up close. This work is most definitely a painting with distinct painterly qualities - unlike many other hard-edged paintings I have seen.

Purchased after the artist's death in 1974 from his memorial exhibition at the Rowan Gallery, London. 1974.1



Spice Box 1728
Anne Tanqueray 1691-1733
Silver

Spice boxes were introduced from France to London as fashionable dining accessories made by Huguenot silversmiths working in Paris and London in the early 18th century.

Huguenots were Protestants like Anne Tanqueray's father, David Willaume, forced to leave France in 1685 due to persecution by the Catholic majority. Huguenot goldsmiths revolutionised English silver with innovative designs and techniques like casting, intricate engraving and cut-card work.

Gift of Mr and Mrs Assheton Bennett. They collected domestic silverware - and enjoyed using it, rather than just keeping it for display. 1957.585



Jug and beaker from a lemonade set 1938

Eric Ravilious 1903-42

Josiah Wedgwood & Sons Ltd

Billy, Gallery Officer: What do I think when I see that? Lots of hard work. When my allotment was all overgrown I actually went to buy a scythe and when I priced it up I was gobsmacked! £300 at B&Q, I'm not kidding you.

Hannah, Curator: Which of these tools would you use then?

Billy: Hoe. That's the most common item I'd use. Sometimes for best plot competitions people will trim it up to perfection - I was very regimented with my lines, but not edging. That spade would break your back - the handle's too short. My handles were really tall. The rake I'd use for when I did potatoes, just for tidying up.



Lilac and Guelder Rose 1932-37

Gluck 1895-1978

Oil on canvas

Meg, Learning Manager: The frame is interesting, why is it painted the same colour as the wall?

Hannah, Curator: Yes, the frame is a 1980s knock-off, so we felt free to paint it. But it's based on Gluck's signature design - she wanted the picture to look like it was floating out of the wall. Don't know what happened to the original.

Meg: I understand this artist liked to be known as just 'Gluck' which seems quite unusual for the 1920/30s?

Hannah: You're right, you don't get many visual artists who do it at any time. She was just fighting gender-pigeonholing.

Bought anonymously from the artist's solo show at the Fine Art Society and donated secretly by the artist's mother when she was not on good terms with her daughter. 1937.732



The Hireling Shepherd 1851

William Holman Hunt 1827-1910

Oil on canvas

Louise, Learning Manager: I don't know what the dynamic is between those two. Her body language isn't very comfortable.

Margaret, Volunteer Guide: Some people think that they're sort of flirting with one another. And then on some tours, people think that she's pushing him away. It's ambiguous. He has a death's head moth in his hand, so it feels sinister.

Janet, Curator: The sheep are rolling around and suffering from bloat because they have been eating apples and corn, so the hired shepherd has not done his job.

Purchased from the artist by naturalist WJ Broderip in 1852; lent by him to the Manchester Art Treasures Exhibition in 1857; in the collection of Newcastle Lead Manufacturer James Leathart by 1865; purchased from Tom Leathart for £1,250. 1896.29



The Seine near Port Marly 1903

Gustave Loiseau 1865-1935

Oil on canvas

Purchased from the Parisian art dealers Durand Ruel and Sons who helped to stage the Modern French Paintings exhibition at the gallery in 1907-08. Like a buy-one-get-one-free offer, Manchester purchased works by Boudin, Loiseau and d'Espagnat and was given works by Maufra and Moret. This work, at £50, was the least expensive of the purchases. 1908.3



Shepherd's Crook about 1880

Presumed English

Wrought iron

Katy, Learning Manager: Why do you think they made the end of the crook twirly? I don't think it had a function, do you? Maybe as it was something shepherds carried every day, they wanted it to look more decorative? I wonder if shepherd's crooks were like status symbols, the curlier the hook, the cooler you were?

Emma, Learning Manager: Do you think the local blacksmith made it to show off his skill?

Katy: Yes, it is a real skill to manipulate the molten iron into that curl - I imagine they had very simple tools and equipment. I wonder if the shepherd paid for the crook with a leg of lamb!

Emma: I like the idea of a locality where people with different skills support each other and add to each other's quality of life. There is art in that.



Noli me Tangere 1966

Ian Davidson 1936-

Bronze

Helen, Visitor Services Assistant: I want to touch it because it's really organic. I like the fact it is egg shaped, like a cell, connected to nature. It feels like the start of something, or even the end.

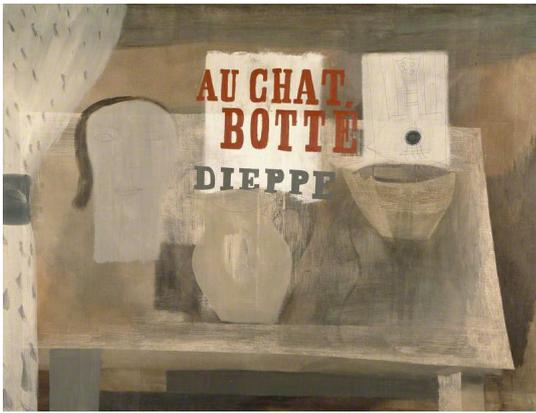
Meg, Learning Manager: It reminds me of those bits of fruit that you don't get round to eating and they go slightly gnarly. It's got the same name as a plant – the Himalayan Balsam.

Helen: You see these plants all over the riverbanks in the UK. If you touch them, the seed pods explode.

Meg: Its name also translates as 'touch me not'. A phrase spoken in the Bible by Jesus when Mary recognised him.

Helen: It's like the gallery is putting things out on display and you are tempted to touch them. But that will ultimately cause their decay.

Meg: A unique sculpture is almost the opposite of plants which can continue to reproduce and seed themselves and continue forever unless climate change makes that impossible.



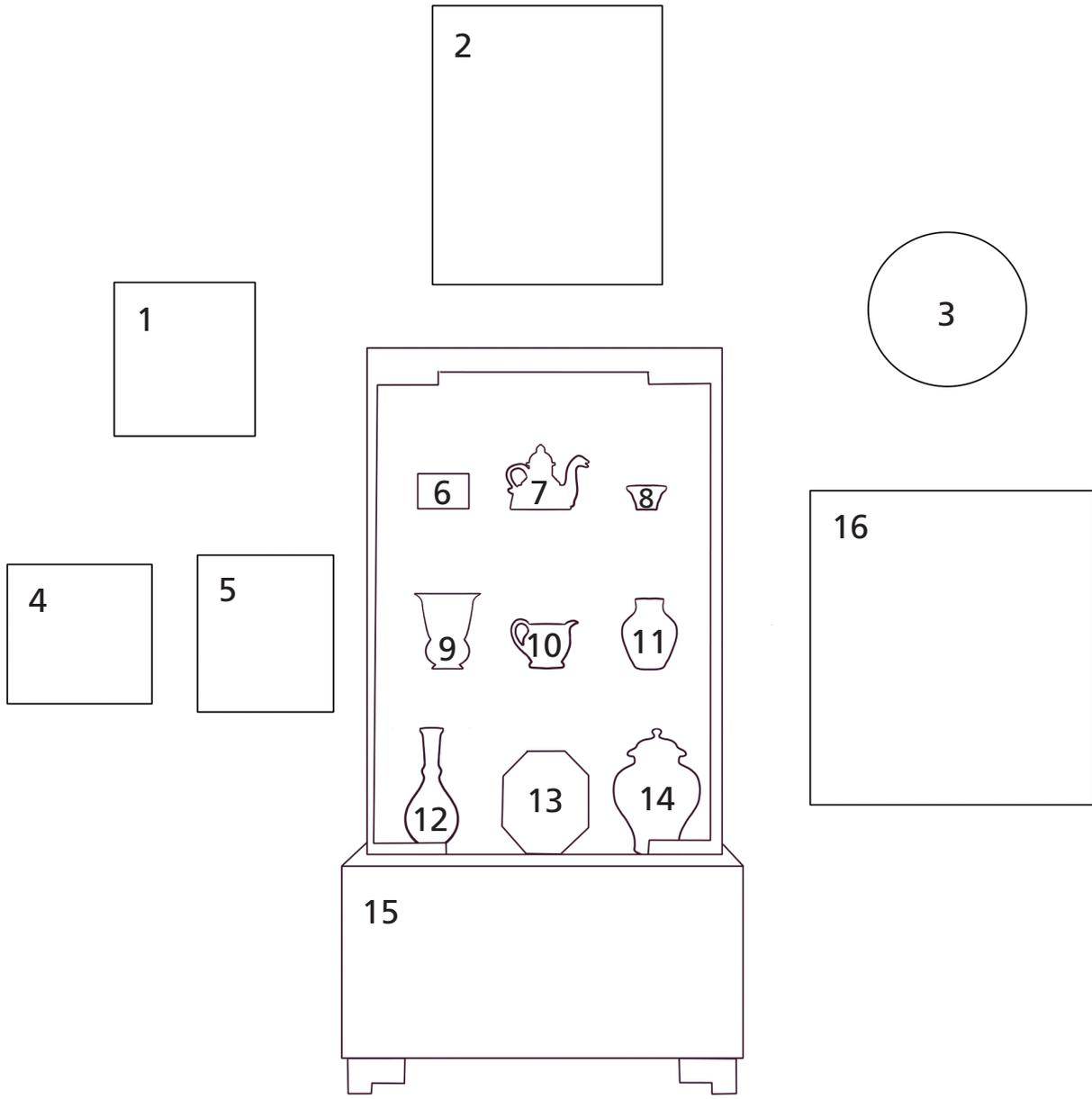
1932 (Au Chat Botté) 1932

Ben Nicholson 1894-1982

Oil and pencil on canvas

Hannah, Curator: Did you say it's like a mirror ball? Bit grey for that, isn't it?

Shay, Technician: Well, the painting's muted palette is just one characteristic - a painting like this has many layers of interwoven signs, symbols and visual devices that work together to create meaning. Threads of meaning assemble in our minds into an experience and so we establish a relationship to the painting. This experience is not fixed, it is highly mutable and remains fluid because we provide its substance ourselves. But it's not the only way of looking at a painting. Stand quietly and gaze. Watch the painting. Listen with your eyes and the painting may speak, you might see what the artist put there.



1.
My Mother
 date unknown
 Fanny Sugars, 1856-1933
 Oil on canvas
 1933.17

2.
Lydia Becker
 1885-90
 Date unknown
 Susan Isabel Dacre, 1844 - 1933
 Oil on Canvas
 1920.1

3.
Charger
 1875-82
 Possibly made by Nur Muhammad
 Mumbai, India
 Tin glazed earthenware
 1918.265

4.
Head of a Young Woman
 100-300 AD
 Egyptian
 Tempera on linen
 1947.147

5.
Girl with Beret
1951
Lucian Freud 1922-2011
Oil on canvas
1952.278
6.
Spiky Spiky Bowl
2015
Ikuko Iwamoto 1971 -
Slip cast and hand moulded porcelain
2017.14
7.
Camel shaped teapot
1740-50
English
Slip cast stoneware
1923.447
8.
Libation cup
1675-1725
Dehua, Fukien Province, China
Blanc-de-chine porcelain with moulded decoration
1917.538
9.
Bon Accorde vase
1907
Designed by Walter Crane 1845-1915
Pilkington's Royal Lancastrian Pottery, Salford
Lustre-glazed earthenware
1964.136
10.
Manchester Order of Oddfellows jug
1860-70
Pountney and Company, Bristol
Transfer printed pearlware
1982.130
11.
Vase
1912
Decorated by Richard Joyce 1873-1931
Pilkington's Royal Lancastrian Pottery, Salford
Lustre-glazed earthenware
1920.144H
12.
Vase
1890-95
Designed by Lewis Foreman Day
Manufactured by Maw and Company
Lustre-glazed earthenware
1983.207
13.
Pill slab
1680-1705
Lambeth, London
Tin glazed earthenware
1923.321
14.
Jar about
1650
China
Porcelain
1947.570
15.
Cupboard & Display Cabinet
1907
James Henry Sellers 1861-1954
Satinwood with parquetry veneer
1995.1
16.
Portrait of an unknown model
about 1918
Amedeo Modigliani 1884-1920
Oil on canvas
1995.35



My Mother date unknown

Fanny Sugars 1856-1933

Oil on canvas

Hannah, Curator: Did we choose it because it complicates the picture of Manchester's 19th-century artists? Fanny Sugars is hardly remembered, although she exhibited with the Manchester Society of Women Painters and shared a studio with other women artists. She's one of the unknowns. But really didn't it go to our hearts because it's her mother?

Kate, Curator: I think those are both great reasons! A public collection ensures objects continue to exist. Only by being displayed can they be known and then have a hope of being remembered. So hopefully Fanny Sugars can be an unknown no more! Many portraits serve to commemorate or immortalise the sitter. This painting feels more private and personal. It reminds me how much I miss my mum.



Lydia Becker 1885-90

Susan Isabel Dacre 1844-1933

Oil on canvas

Meg, Learning Manager: Lydia Becker was quite a pioneer of women's rights, convening the first meeting of the Manchester Women's Suffrage Committee in January 1867. Why do you think it is so important to teach about women like her on the school curriculum?

Christine, Volunteer Guide: Current school history teaching would have us believe that feminism started and ended with Emmeline Pankhurst. The history taught in schools is written by men and features predominantly male achievers. Successful women have been written out. The few women mentioned are seen as anomalies leaving us a dearth of role models. Quite aside from that, I love this painting because here is a woman in her middle years who is strong, intelligent but nevertheless feminine.



Charger 1875-82

Possibly made by **Nur Muhammad**

Mumbai, India

Tin glazed earthenware

Collected for Thomas Horsfall's Manchester Art Museum in Ancoats by Caspar Purdon Clarke, Curator at the Victoria and Albert Museum, during an official collecting tour of India in 1882. When the Manchester Art Museum transferred to the management of the City Council in 1918, 'The Horsfall Collection' came with it. 1918.265



Head of a Young Woman 100-300 AD

Egyptian

Tempera on linen

Louise, Visitor Services Assistant: This is a really lovely piece from the later period of ancient Egypt – after the Romans had invaded and put their influence onto everything. In this era there was a lot less preservation of the body and it was more about creating an accurate picture of the dead person as a portrait, rather than on a tomb. It's a variation on the death mask. The wealth of the individual would have affected the quality of the linens and the gauze.

Meg, Learning Manager: So is it an accurate depiction of their face?

Louise: Yes, but also they would have wanted an idealised image of themselves, so that they were 'perfect' in the afterlife. So this person is young, good looking, with good hair and in their prime.

Meg: In a way it is what portrait artists have been doing for centuries, making people look how they imagine they should look. There is some dispute in our catalogue about whether the person is male or female.

Louise: I think it is definitely a girl due to the hairstyle and earrings.

One of about 30,000 antiques bequeathed by George Beatson Blair, cotton merchant. Due to lack of storage, only 500 pieces were acquired. 1947.147

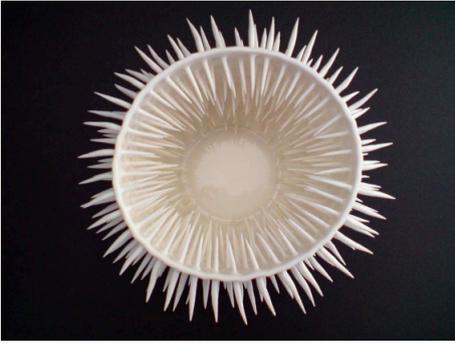


Girl with Beret 1951

Lucian Freud 1922-2011

Oil on canvas

Purchased for £100 from Freud's exhibition at the Hanover Gallery, London W1, for the Rutherston Loan Scheme in November 1952. Charles Rutherston began the scheme in 1925, giving his modern art collection to the gallery for loan to schools and colleges. 1952.278



Spiky Spiky Bowl 2015

Ikuko Iwamoto 1971 -

Slip cast and hand moulded porcelain



Camel shaped teapot 1740-50

English

Slip cast stoneware

Margaret, Volunteer Guide: Is it to use or is it the decoration or what would you do with it? I wouldn't use it, I'd put it on a shelf.

Hannah, Curator: Yeah, I'd be so scared of chipping those camels lips.

Haroon, Volunteer: I'd give it one test pour to see if it would work. Teapots aren't amazingly engineered. They're not anywhere near as good as they should be. So after one test pour, I think it would have to go on the shelf as well.

Meg, Learning Manager: Was it very common to have a camel or animal shaped for teapots at the time?

Janet, Curator: It was an innovation. And the shape comes about as a result of the technical innovation of the material that the tea pot was made from. Tea drinking was rapidly increasing and it was very fashionable drink. So there was demand for tea pots. There was also a great passion for all things from the east. So China porcelain, which was a pure white ceramic, was the most desirable kind of porcelain.

And at that time, it only came from China because Europeans hadn't yet mastered how to make porcelain. This is the nearest that the Staffordshire potters could get to porcelain and this was an innovation. It was basically made from stoneware, so clay that had calcium flint in it. They're still in production. I'm guessing the fact that the design has survived and is still being reproduced maybe means that it's not about the pour after all.

Part of the Greg Collection of English Pottery given by Thomas Greg in 1904. Gift made permanent by Mary Greg after his death. Thomas Tylston Greg was the grandson of Samuel Greg, Styal Mill's owner, who inherited the Hillsborough Estate, a large sugar plantation in Dominica in the West Indies which Samuel's paternal uncle John Greg had originally bought. The Gregs supplied the enslaved Africans on the estate with clothing and blankets made at Quarry Bank Mill. 1923.447



Libation cup 1675-1725

Dehua, Fukien Province, China

Blanc-de-chine porcelain with moulded decoration



Bon Accorde vase 1907

Designed by Walter Crane 1845-1915
Pilkington's Royal Lancastrian Pottery, Salford

Janet, Curator: What does the Bon Accorde vase signify?

Angela and Barry Corbett, Archivists for the Royal Lancastrian / Pilkington Pottery: In 1904 Britain and France signed an Entente Cordiale, an agreement to improve relations between the two countries and end disputes about their respective colonies. This vase, designed by Walter Crane, was shown at the Franco-British Exhibition in 1908. Crane designed 12 vases for Pilkington's from 1904 to 1910.

Janet: Crane was a leading designer of the time, but didn't Richard Joyce, one of Pilkington's most skilled artists and designers, actually paint it?

Angela and Barry: Yes, Joyce lived in Prestwich and walked across the fields to the Pilkington factory at Clifton Junction.

Janet: Mrs Ormerod gave a number of vases to the gallery in 1964. Where did they come from?

Angela and Barry: Pilkington's was first managed by William Burton who acquired pieces of pottery during his employment, as did many of the staff. Mrs F C Ormerod was William Burton's daughter and kindly gave pieces to the gallery in 1964 so that they could be seen rather than being hidden away. The firing of the glaze has not worked perfectly and this may be why the piece was acquired by Burton. It is still a rare and attractive vase.



Manchester Order of Oddfellows jug 1860-70

Pountney and Company, Bristol

Transfer printed pearlware



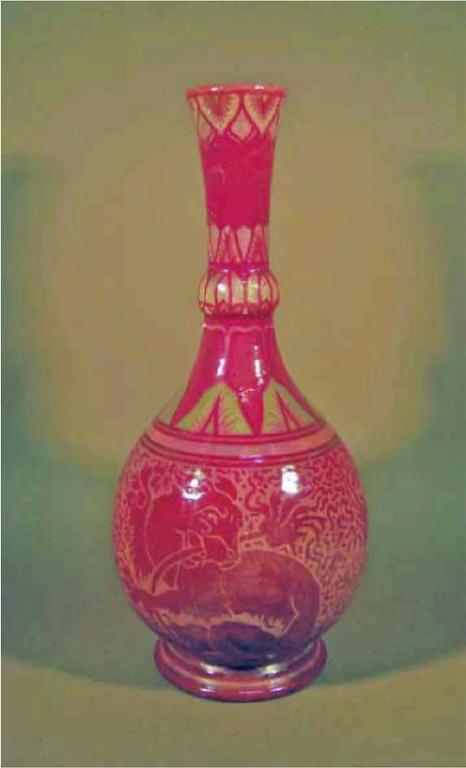
Vase 1912

Decorated by **Richard Joyce** 1873-1931

Pilkington's Royal Lancastrian Pottery, Salford

Lustre-glazed earthenware

Gift of Edward A Eason, a Manchester businessman. 1920.144H



Vase 1890-95

Designed by **Lewis Foreman Day 1845 - 1910**

Manufactured by Maw and Company

Lustre-glazed earthenware

Purchased 1983.207



Pill slab 1680-1705

Lambeth, London

Tin glazed earthenware

Janet, Curator: To use it, you rolled the pills on the back. It was awarded to you when you finished your apothecary apprenticeship - like the 17th-century equivalent of a degree certificate.

Hannah: Oh! So the whole time I thought you rolled the pill mixture on the fancy side, but it was on the back?

Janet: Yes - ours doesn't look like it's ever been used because tin glaze is very fragile and the minute you... It's extremely fragile. In theory they were useful objects but in practice they were just decorative and hung on the wall.

Part of the Greg Collection of English Pottery given by Thomas Greg in 1904. Gift made permanent by Mary Greg after his death. Thomas Tylston Greg was the grandson of Samuel Greg, Styal Mill's owner, who inherited the Hillsborough Estate, a large sugar plantation in Dominica in the West Indies which Samuel's paternal uncle John Greg had originally bought. The Gregs supplied the enslaved Africans on the estate with clothing and blankets made at Quarry Bank Mill. 1923.447



Jar about 1650 (wooden lid added later)

China

Porcelain

One of about 30,000 antiques bequeathed by George Beatson Blair, cotton merchant. When he died, the gallery was given 6 months to select works for the collection. Due to lack of storage, only 500 pieces were acquired. 1947.570



Cupboard & Display Cabinet 1907

James Henry Sellers 1861-1954

Satinwood with parquetry veneer

Jenny, Curator: I love that we have furniture by a local designer. Sellers' work has an elegance and integrity that parallels our 18th-century furniture. He was born in Oldham and he practised as an architect with Edgar Wood, another Manchester man.

Patrick, Visitor Services Assistant: So it displayed treasured curios in someone's home?

Jenny: Yes! It belonged to Mr and Mrs Norton who lived in Birtles Hall in Over Alderley. After a house fire in 1938, Sellers was commissioned to rebuild the interior of the hall, which included this cabinet. It would be great to imagine what might have been shown in it!

Patrick: I love the fact that we now display an object used for displaying a collection of objects itself. Very meta.



Jar about 1650 (wooden lid added later)

China

Porcelain

One of about 30,000 antiques bequeathed by George Beatson Blair, cotton merchant. When he died, the gallery was given 6 months to select works for the collection. Due to lack of storage, only 500 pieces were acquired. 1947.570



Portrait of an unknown model about 1918

Amedeo Modigliani 1884-1920

Oil on canvas

Meg, Learning Manager: We went through quite a process trying to work out what to put up here. We had lots of options. In the end we put this up. What went into the decision?

Jonathan, Visitor Services Assistant and artist: We get an awful lot of requests from visitors for this painting. The curators have responded to the demand for the painting and it's back on display. But it does also feel perfectly suited here and complements the other paintings on display. It broadens the conversation about curation in general and who makes decisions about what goes on the walls.

Meg: It also fits physically into this space and conceptually with the other images of women.

Jonathan: Particularly with the Egyptian Head. Modigliani was very inspired by African and Egyptian art. It's also a nice conversation with the Lucien Freud painting as all three portraits are of unnamed people. Modigliani said 'When I know your soul, I will paint your eyes'.

Meg: I feel there is a coldness to this portrait without eyes.

It feels like he doesn't know the person, yet it has been suggested to be a portrait of his partner Jeanne Hébuterne. But that makes sense – perhaps he felt he didn't know her well enough, and do we ever really know someone totally?

Jonathan: Modigliani is renowned for being a heavy drinker and drug user. I think people claim it was to mask his tuberculosis. It also plays into the myth of an artist having a bohemian lifestyle. But you don't get that sense in this portrait. To me, it's quite serene.



Azar and Regina, Waiting on the Tenth Floor, Ancoats 1987

Lesley Young 1942 -

Oil on canvas

Venessa, Artist: When I looked at this, it just made me feel sad as in 1987 these two women of colour in Manchester might not have felt that welcome... They look kind of insecure like they are shrinking to me.

Ruth, Learning Manager: I've always seen it as two people who've become friends, perhaps on a course and are supporting each other... They could be in an appointment waiting room and my own interpretation is that Regina is supporting Azar through a difficult meeting.

Urdu translation: I live in Longsight / Can you read Urdu? Two calm looking girls. In this picture.



Manchester Civic Week pin 1926

Unknown designer and maker

Brass

If it be asked why Manchester is holding a Civic Week, the answer simply is: She is holding it because she has something to show and something to say... Manchester's dealings are with the world, and the world has a right to know what we are doing and how we are doing it.

Lord Mayor of Manchester, James Henry Swales, in the forward to the 'Manchester Civic Week' pamphlet published by The Manchester Guardian, 2 October 1926



Patch box about 1790-1815

Staffordshire

Enamelled metal with transfer print

Gift of Harold Raby 1958.262



Any Wintry Afternoon in England 1930

Christopher R W Nevinson 1889-1946

Oil on canvas

Hannah, Curator: I want to ask you why you're so keen on it - isn't it a cliché that it's all football and rain in Manchester?

Dwight, Visitor Services Assistant: It struck a chord with me because of the football, satanic mills, factories, the grey industrial landscape and his Cubist painting technique. Is it clichéd? Maybe. Is it satire? Probably. Is it relevant today? Most definitely. Our environment and people's health were severely affected by the burning of fossil fuels during the Industrial Revolution and we are still living with the consequences today. Air pollution is still a problem and has started one of the big debates of our time.

Wallpaper about 1984

Laura Ashley 'Decorator Collection'

Hannah, Curator: It wasn't actually used in Wythenshawe Hall then?

Clare, Curator at Manchester Art Gallery in 1984: Well the pattern was, just not this particular version. Laura Ashley copied a design which had been on the wall of the library for 200 years and was discovered in the 1980s underneath a Victorian wallpaper. The original wasn't flat like this, it was flocked - that is powdered wool was sprinkled over the surface, which had adhesive printed onto it. This gave it a velvety effect.

Hannah: Does pillaging the past for designs like this give a falsely rosy view of history?

Clare: You could say that but designers have always looked to the past. Indeed when galleries like this were set up, it was partly to improve design, providing somewhere that designers, as well as artists, could visit for inspiration.



Dancing with Culture 2022

Anthony Amoako-Attah 1989-

Kiln formed and screen printed glass

Janet, Curator: Please tell us how you chose the title?

Anthony, artist: Life determines how you dance or interact with your culture...if not practiced your cultural identity fades. It's about practicing your culture within another society.

Janet: Your sculptures celebrate Kente cloth, which originated in Ghana over 400 years ago. How do you print the complex patterns and many colours of Kente so precisely?

Anthony: I use screen-printing with stencils to apply the colours. I use Computer Aided Design to develop the pattern and then transfer this onto the screen for printing. I use glass powders when printing. The glass powder is applied in a calculated motion so that it creates a texture like woven material. The printed glass is then fired in the kiln.

Janet: How do you get the glass to look so flexible?

Anthony: I slump the glass after printing. It is done by heating the glass over a mould to create a sense of movement.

Janet: Why did you choose the motto carved into the Princess Street side of the gallery building?

Anthony: Because traditionally Kente is often used to illustrate proverbial sayings or to mark life events.

Janet: Why is representing Kente in glass important?

Anthony: It's about bridging the gap between Ghanaian art and the contemporary glass world as well as re-crafting history through a new medium. My work seeks to position black identity in the glass world...I think I might be the first black person from Africa to have a PhD in contemporary glass.



Gold watch 1835

Thomas Ollivant
Manchester

Nina, Volunteer Guide: This reminds me of my grandfather... It's exquisite. It makes you think of time passing and how precious time is.

Emma, Learning Manager: I was thinking about when Manchester Art Gallery was formed and the industrial revolution and time becoming this measured thing that it wasn't before...

Meg, Learning Manager: It's bizarre to think it's permanently stuck at 18 minutes to 5. It's never going to go any further forward in time or back, because we won't ever use it as a watch.

Kate, Curator: Manchester has a history of being a centre for making precision instruments, the skills and knowledge of which came from immigrants. Our entire city is built on such skills and knowledge. It enabled us to develop the skills, to build the machines we needed for the industrial revolution.



A Cheetah and a Stag with Two Indian Attendants about 1764

George Stubbs 1724-1806

Oil on canvas

Meg, Learning Manager: So we know lots about this painting including the moment it is depicting when a cheetah was pitted against a deer in Great Windsor Park. But until recently we didn't know anything about the men in the painting.

Hannah, Curator: Yes, a researcher* has found through court transcripts from 1764 that one of the men is called John Morgan, an animal handler, who came from, Bengal, India with George Pigot (at the time the Governor of Madras). He is actually named as a 'lascar', a name given to Indian seamen.

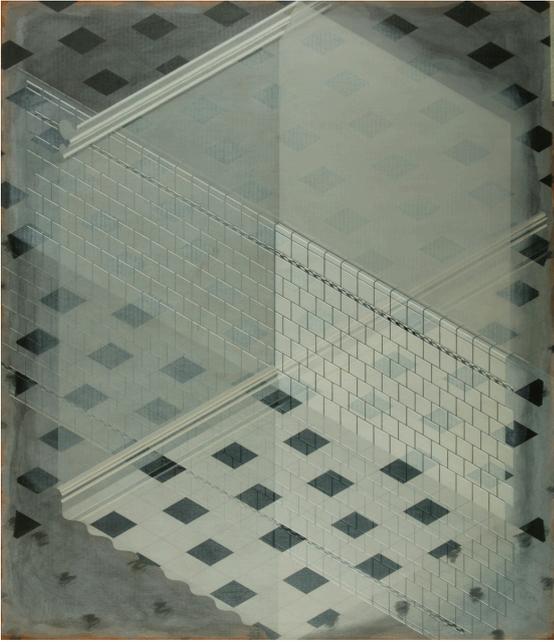
* Mark Sorrell A zebra, a tigress and a cheetah: New Light on George Stubb's exotic animal subjects, *The British Art Journal*, Autumn 2014

Meg: It's uncomfortable that there has been more research about the animals depicted than the humans in the painting. Even knowing the name of the cheetah – nicknamed 'Miss Jenny'.

Purchased at auction when sold by the Pigot family for £220,000 in 1970, the highest price ever paid for a British painting at the time. The money came from Dept of Education and Science (£110K), Art Fund (10K), Individual donations (£40K), Rates fund (£60K). 1970.34

Hannah: It's taken a long time for research to focus on the people. We have information on the landscape and the animals. It's great that there are now a wide variety of digitised documents available including sources you might not think to look at. The fact that this painting is in a public collection helps.

Meg: Stubbs has paid a lot of attention to the people in the painting, but all the notebooks he kept have been lost from this time, so we can't tell which one is John Morgan or even if he used a model. So still a lot of questions and uncomfortable truths about this painting.



A Corner of the Bathroom 1973

Victor Newsome 1935-2018

Acrylic paint on panel

Helen, Visitor Services Assistant: It's a space that is devoid of any personal objects that you might find in a bathroom and it has a reflective quality of space beyond the corner. For many people the bathroom is a creative space, where people can have the beginnings of an idea.

Patrick, Visitor Services Assistant: Yes, Agatha Christie used to write in the bath. Ed Sheeran, Pharrell Williams and Shigeru Miyamoto, creator of Donkey Kong, got ideas in the bathroom, too.

Helen: I like the lines. I like the structure. I like the balance. It's an empty space; a space in which you are often at your most vulnerable. Maybe the shadows, the darker bits at the edges, these are the darker recesses of the mind. It's almost like a brain, isn't it? It's like a corner of the mind, where we are at our most creative.



India House 1912

Adolphe Valette 1876-1942

Oil on jute

Ruth, Learning Manager: I really like the lighting ... I think late at night in Manchester you'll see this sort of lighting still along the canal.

Natasha, Curator: I think it's really interesting, the whole mythologising of the city, which has happened in the past and still happens today. In 1912, it would have been very smoggy, very polluted, a lot of inequality. But here Valette romanticised this view...

Lesley, Volunteer: I've got a reproduction of this in my hall. It was also my bus route to school. Winter on Oxford Road. It makes me feel nostalgic thinking about the journey with my friend who I met on the school bus, who's still one of my greatest friends and she still lives in Manchester.



Coppélia light 2015

Designed by **Arihiro Miyake**

Manufactured by Moooi, Netherlands

Polished steel wire, 54 LED lights housed in polycarbonate tubes

The lights are powered by a low voltage current that runs through the metal frame without the need for any additional wires. This approach would not have been possible with traditional incandescent bulbs, which require a much higher voltage.

Miyake says:

“I wanted to create a lamp that you can only create with LEDs. Each LED is connected by two wires - one is positive and one is negative - and these wires create the structure and the shape of the lamp itself.”

Purchased in 2015 for the lighting collection because it is an internationally acclaimed re-interpretation of the classic chandelier from Ferriss Ltd, Manchester for the exhibition Modern Japanese Design. 2017.7

