

GOVERNMENT ART COLLECTION COMMISSIONS: NOW AND THEN

21 June – 9 September 2012



Whitechapel Gallery

With over 13,500 works of art spanning five centuries, the Government Art Collection is the most dispersed collection of British art in the world. Placed in offices and official residences, two thirds of the works are on display in British Government buildings in nearly every capital city. Dating from 1898, the Collection helps promote British art and history while contributing to cultural diplomacy.

The Government Art Collection is pleased that this exhibition is part of the London 2012 Festival at the Whitechapel Gallery.



Cover image: A detail of the façade of the Home Office, London, showing part of the coloured glass canopy and entrance icon created by artist Liam Gillick in 2003–06. Photo: Hugh Pearlman

Foreword

The fifth and final display of the Government Art Collection (GAC) at the Whitechapel Gallery focuses on commissioning. For over 60 years we have commissioned art for the major spaces of many new or refurbished government buildings in the UK but most often abroad and in partnership with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. The GAC commissions artists to create works to enhance a particular space or location. As you will see we have also commissioned for special occasions such as the Coronation of Queen Elizabeth II in 1953 and for the Collection in general.

For this exhibition we are pleased to reunite five paintings by **John Piper** commissioned in 1949 for the new British Embassy in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Also included are works which have been temporarily removed from their commissioned locations such as **Catherine Yass'** lightboxes (from the Ambassador's Residence, Paris) and **Donald Urquhart's** ink drawing (from the Consul General's Residence, Los Angeles). Works that are integrated in buildings, or are impossible to display in this exhibition, can be seen on the accompanying interactive touchscreen along with interviews by some of the commissioned artists.

As this display coincides with the London Olympic and Paralympic Games, we were keen to commission an artist to produce a work that resonates with the sporting theme and which also has a participatory element. We would like to thank **Mel Brimfield** (and her collaborators) for creating such an exciting and engaging work and all the artists who the GAC has commissioned over the years.

I hope you enjoy this exhibition.

Penny Johnson
Director, Government Art Collection

Made to Measure: Commissioning by the Government Art Collection

It is often the case that art [in public buildings] is considered expendable ... However, working with artists in the way the Government Art Collection (GAC) does to deliver commissions is a huge plus, a huge bonus ... it's admirable. We end up with a better building than if we had not commissioned artists.
Michael Wilford, architect
British Embassy, Berlin

The GAC began to commission works of art directly from artists 60 years ago as the result of the need for a more bespoke approach towards displaying art. Inviting an artist to create something specific rather than buying ready-made works helps to fulfil the GAC's role of promoting Britain and British art. At the same time the commissioning process presents artists with the challenge of developing their ideas and tailoring them to a specific space or location. Choosing the right artist has always been, therefore, a vital part of the project; selecting a commissioned work involves a gradual process from initial proposal to final sanction by the Collection's Advisory Committee.

In 1949 the Ministry of Works (the government department in which the Collection was located) decided to commission an artist to create works for the new British Embassy in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. The commission was awarded to **John Piper** whose five paintings are shown together here for the first time since they were dispersed in 1979. A prolific artist, Piper had a great deal of experience of working to



Three of five paintings by **John Piper** shown at the British Embassy, Rio de Janeiro, 1951 © Crown Copyright. Foreign and Commonwealth Office Photographic Archive

commission and his Neo-Romantic style seemed in tune with the Government's ideas of representing British heritage abroad. His five designs took as their starting point the Regency architecture of the spa towns of Bath, Brighton and Cheltenham, which in turn reflected the Neo-Classical architecture of the Embassy.

In 1953 the Ministry of Works commissioned more artists, many of whom, like Piper, had been Official War Artists and asked them to produce works that commemorated the Coronation of Queen Elizabeth II. The Minister of Works, David Eccles, was keen to show 'what our contemporary artists made of the great state occasion'. This project led to 35 works finding their way into the GAC by artists such as **Edward Ardizzone**,

Julian Trevelyan, Richard Eurich, Laura Knight, Carel Weight, and the two works on display here by **Edward Bawden** and **L.S. Lowry**. Lowry was somewhat bemused by his Coronation commission and in a letter to a friend revealed that he did not take up his allotted seat outside Buckingham Palace on time, nor did he make any drawings on the day. Instead he produced several sketches a day later but still with no idea of what exactly to paint. By August the work was finished and the artist was paid £100 for the painting (and its copyright). Lowry was then informed that the work was destined for the British Embassy in Moscow, where it remained until 2002 when it was displayed at 10 Downing Street at the time of the Queen's Golden Jubilee.

In 1974 a number of artists were approached to produce either fine art limited edition prints or original works for reproduction as multiple prints (or posters) that could then be used in many government buildings. Aside from **Eduardo Paolozzi** and **Tom Phillips**, whose work is represented in the exhibition, **Robyn Denny** and **William Scott** were also invited to produce multiples which were displayed in hospitals, universities and even post offices around the UK and overseas.

As a result of worldwide interest in his modern version of an 18th-century poetic garden at his home in Little Sparta, Lanarkshire, Scotland, **Ian Hamilton Finlay** was invited to create environmental works in many places. For the Ambassador's Residence in Bonn, Finlay produced a sundial based on one in his own garden, the inscription on the edge of the dial reads 'Dividing the light I disclose the hour'.

Paolozzi was again involved in the next significant commissioning project for the interior of the new



Ian Hamilton Finlay's *Sundial* commissioned for the Ambassador's Residence in Bonn, Germany, 1979 © Crown copyright

Queen Elizabeth II Conference Centre in Westminster in 1985–86. His work, a wall-based wooden relief of over 29 square metres, is sited in the Benjamin Britten Lounge in the Centre and takes as its starting point a song cycle by Britten, with words by W. H. Auden. Paolozzi described how it was intended to be seen and read from different distances and angles, remarking that 'close up one may think of the intricate



Stephen Cox's *Tribute Sculpture*, fouxir breccia stone with bronze letters, commissioned for the piazza at the British High Commission, Canberra, Australia, 1996 © Crown copyright

innards of a clock'. Other works commissioned for the building at the same time included a silk mosaic by **Lucienne Day** and wall hangings by **Mary Restieaux**, **Caroline Slinger** and **John Dugger**.

Commissioning continued over the next decade, working in partnership with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) – and occasionally with other commissioning agencies – including a project for the British High Commission in Bangladesh in 1990. In 1995 commissions for the new British Embassy in Dublin included *Island*, a reflective slate sculpture by **Susanna Heron** and *Window*, a wall relief that reflects on the shifts in boundaries between England and Ireland by **Brian Catling**. In 1996, **Stephen Cox** was commissioned to make a work for the piazza outside the British High Commission in Canberra. An elegant carved stone monolith, *Tribute Sculpture* was designed to honour those who had fought in the armed forces in the Asia-Pacific during the Second World War.

Since the late 1990s, in line with the general trend, GAC-commissioned art has mainly been integrated within the architecture of the building. This site-specific aspect of commissioning was strengthened by 'Better Public Building', an initiative started by the Labour government in 2000 to achieve high-quality design for all new public buildings. Whether or not the GAC works in tandem with other government departments, developers or the architects employed to design or refurbish the building, the aim is to place art at the core of the design strategy. It also helps to avoid what Michael Wilford, the architect of the new British Embassy in Berlin, described as art appearing as an afterthought, 'like a badge or trophies, stuck on the wall like mooseheads.'

In 1997 construction was already underway for a new British Embassy in Moscow, designed by Ahrends, Burton and Koralek. Construction had started by the time the GAC was approached by the FCO three years before the building opened. Due to the scale of the buildings, and in some instances challenging locations for displaying works of art, the only way forward was to commission site-specific work with a budget allocated by the FCO. Artists **Michael Craig-Martin** and **Langlands & Bell** were selected and invited to make links between Britain and Russia. Craig-Martin produced a tall oil painting of a torch, metaphorically shining a light out to the rest of the world from the Embassy's entrance hall. *Lighthouse* also includes several images which recur in Craig-Martin's work such as filing cabinets, chairs and globes, all of which further reflect aspects of the Embassy's activities. Langlands & Bell produced a pair of wall-mounted sculptural reliefs titled *Space / Object*, referencing the architectural plans for the Pushkin Museum in Moscow and the British Museum, its equivalent in London. **Alex Hartley** created an integrated glass piece for the window at the end of the main corridor providing an optical illusion that suggests a physical and poetic dimension beyond the walls of the embassy.

Also in 1997, a meeting was held between the FCO, the GAC and the architect Michael Wilford to discuss an art strategy for the new British Embassy in Berlin, the reunified German capital. Like Moscow, the embassy opened in 2000. **David Tremlett** was commissioned to create a pastel drawing directly on the large rear wall of the building. **Tony Cragg**, who had been living and working in Germany since the late 1970s, was also commissioned to create a new work. *Dancing Columns*, two twisting sculptures made by Cragg from local sandstone, create a focal point at the top of the stairs

and lead the eye through to the main concourse. Emphasizing cultural links between the UK and Germany, **Catherine Yass** created two lightboxes of photographs of the interiors of buildings designed by the German architect Erich Mendelsohn: the Einstein Tower in Potsdam, Berlin, Germany and the De La Warr Pavilion in Bexhill-on-Sea, UK. These lightboxes were similar to the pair in this exhibition, also by Yass, which were commissioned in 1998 by the GAC for display at the British Embassy in Paris.

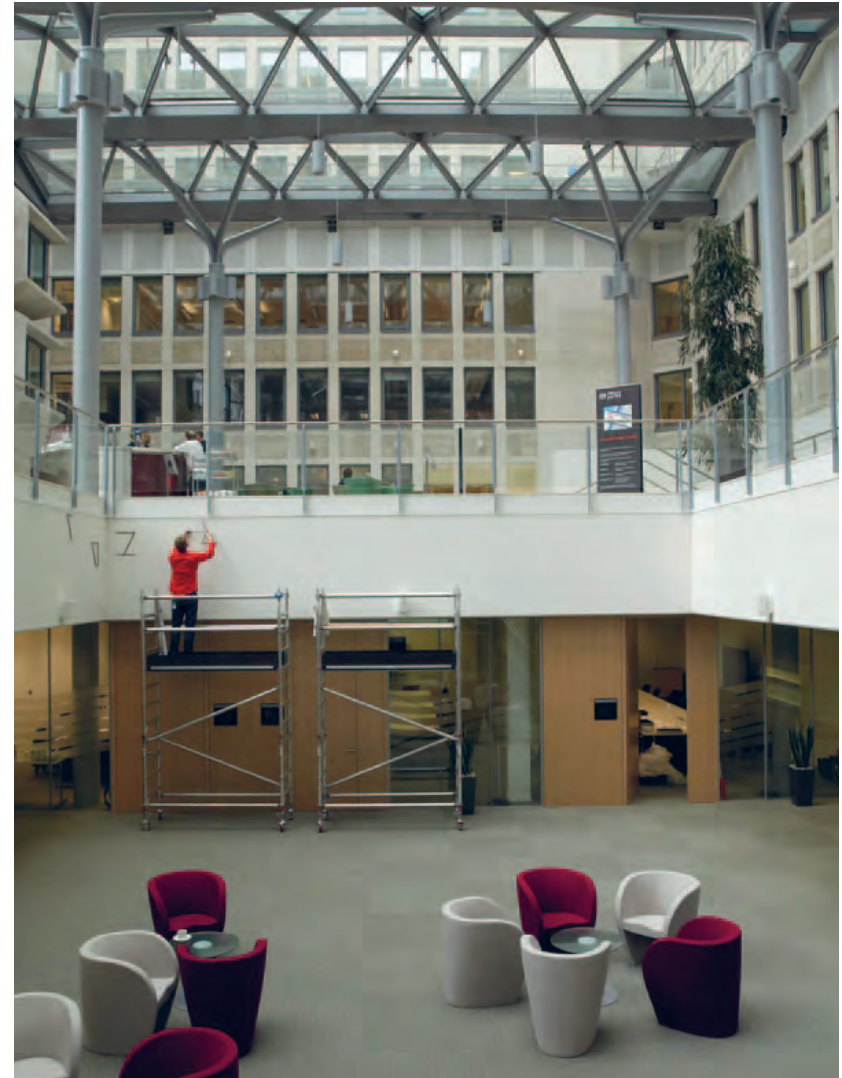
In 2002 the GAC began commissioning art for the first time in the public realm. Architect Terry Farrell had

Catherine Yass's lightbox *Embassy (evening)*, seen at an embassy function in 2007. Paris-based actress **Kristin Scott Thomas** talks to **Lady Westmacott**, wife of the British Ambassador in front of the work
© Crown copyright



been working for a decade on a masterplan for the site of the new Home Office building in Marsham Street, London. After proposals for the building had been criticised, the GAC was approached to select artists for what was soon to be a landmark building. After shortlisting, **Liam Gillick** was selected to work with Terry Farrell's team to enhance the façade of the building – his work, across five areas, included a coloured glass canopy, a new entrance icon, additions to the windows, sculpture with signage and a 'hidden' text applied to the glass that wraps the building. **Georgie Hopton, Roger Hiorns, Runa Islam, Emma Kay, Simon Periton and Gary Webb** were asked to create new works around the outside of the building which harmonised with it and with Gillick's own enhancements to the architecture. The production photograph by Runa Islam displayed in this exhibition was taken while she was making a short narrative film in Dhaka, Bangladesh for her commission. The GAC with the Home Office also commissioned **Toby Paterson** to make two murals for the entrance hall that reference Modernist architecture and design.

Having seen the success of the commissioned works of art at the Home Office, the Ministry of Justice approached the GAC to commission works for their offices in Petty France, London. The building, originally designed by Sir Basil Spence and formerly housing the Home Office, was undergoing a major refurbishment and after a selection process, four artists' proposals were accepted. In the building's contemporary glass and steel atrium, **Martin Boyce**'s brass frieze of tumbling letters creates a fractured narrative that refers to the modernist history of the building. Seen in the exhibition in a time-lapse film-clip, **Conrad Shawcross**'s towering spiral, revealed to be five stories high and, made of wood, strikes a distinctive note in



Martin Boyce installing his work *Paper Leaves and Concrete Trees*, a frieze of burnished brass letters and false air vents, at the Ministry of Justice, London, 2008 © Crown copyright



Lothar Götz installing *Round Trip*, one of 51 wall paintings at the Ministry of Justice, London, 2008 © Crown copyright

this ultra-modern space. Reflecting the triangular shapes of the glass roof, **Lothar Götz** made 51 wall paintings – each one acting as a marker to help people find their way round 13 floors in the four staircases of the building. Sited in the foyer, **Nathaniel Rackowe's** large-scale, kinetic sculptures are designed to activate the space and engage visitors.

Commissioned in 2002 to be part of the Collection rather than for a specific location, *The Pillared*

Room at 10 Downing Street is one of two diminutive, hyperrealist paintings by **Andrew Grassie**. This painting provides a rare, behind-the-scenes view and is one of a number of works that Grassie produced in this series. Grassie's works had been in high demand and the only way to ensure obtaining a work was to commission the artist directly.

In 2006 the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) of which the GAC is part, refurbished its headquarters on Cockspur Street, London. **Catherine Bertola, Simon Faithfull** and **Henna Nadeem** were commissioned to create works that could be applied to the glass-walled offices. Nadeem's works reference both nature and Islamic pattern, whereas Bertola's delicate designs are enlarged details from traditionally made lace curtains. Faithfull's disjointed drawings of urban east London cityscapes meander across the glass partitions and were made using a Palm Pilot, an early hand-held digital device.

Other commissions were taking place abroad. In 2006 **Jenny West** was commissioned to make a work for the atrium of the purpose-built British Embassy, Sana'a in Yemen. West's site-specific sculpture features over 1000 suspended plastic plumb bobs, echoing the minimalist sensibility of the Islamic-influenced architecture and, in her words, 'applying principles of geometry, repetition and symmetry'.

In Doha in 2007 **Jonathan Parsons** created *Let Me Count the Ways*, a series of acrylic panels incorporating coloured discs, revealing an interest in mapping and population densities in the area.

Certainly the complexity of many contemporary spaces under construction can be challenging for an artist.



Jenny West's sculpture *One Thousand Four Hundred and Forty to Zero* was commissioned for the British Embassy in Sana'a, Yemen, 2006
© copyright the artist

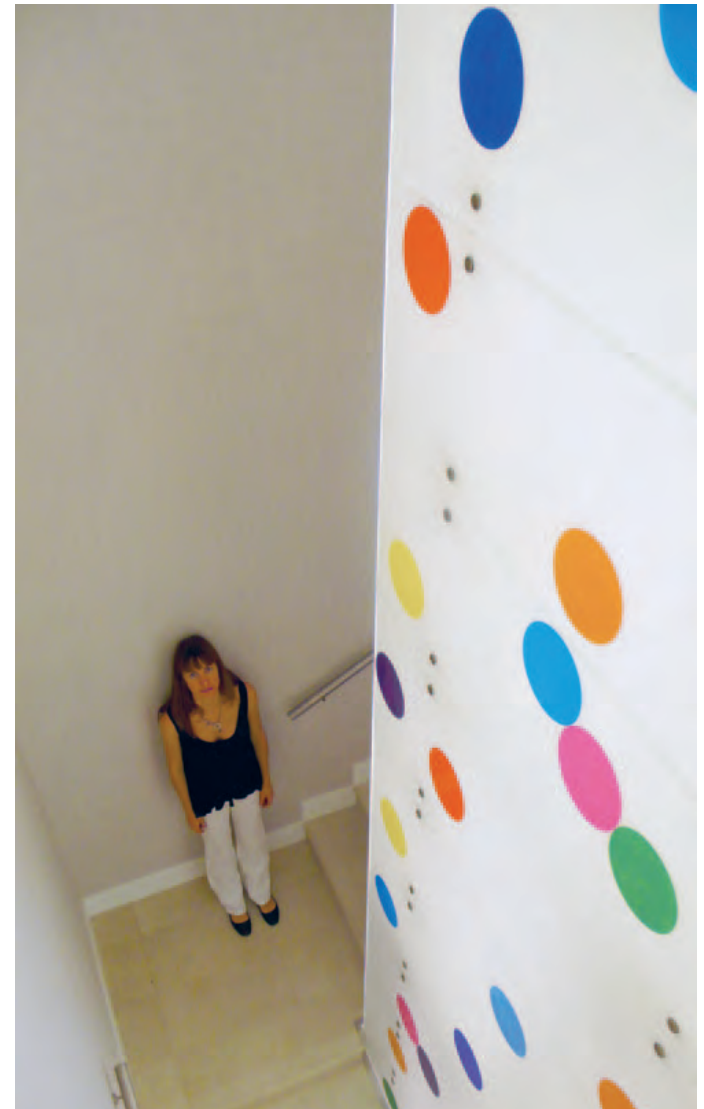
Marta Marcé, commissioned to produce work for the new British Embassy in Madrid in 2009, had to adapt her piece to fit a space still being built. Starting with the idea of a pool game, Marcé designed a pattern of colourful circles and lines that appear to bounce and criss-cross in different trajectories around the stairwell, animating it with movement. The fact that the stairwell was still under construction meant she had to be very flexible and, in her words, 'develop and build on the relationships with the architects and the fabrication company that installed the final work'.

Later in 2009 **Robert Holyhead** was commissioned to create a work for the main entrance of the British Embassy and UK Permanent Representation in Brussels, which was being refurbished. The work was to be sited on a glass wall and sliding door. The preparatory watercolour drawings he produced for the commission are on display in this exhibition. Although as a painter usually working on canvas he was surprised to be approached by the GAC in the first place, Holyhead felt the commission came from 'an understanding of my work and so the connection made sense'.

For the same building in Brussels, the GAC commissioned **Donald Urquhart** to produce an A-Z guide of Belgium. Having seen his alphabet guide to Paris, with its witty pen and ink drawing spelling out people and places associated with the French capital, an alphabet for Belgium seemed highly appropriate. Then in 2010, when the GAC was developing a new display for Los Angeles, Urquhart's work again seemed relevant and he was commissioned to produce the alphabet for the Consul-General's residence in the Californian city – the one included in this exhibition.

Produced especially for this exhibition in 2012 the year of the London Olympic and Paralympic Games, **Mel Brimfield's** prepared pianola is the most recent GAC commission. Brimfield's practice takes the viewer on a giddy ride around the world of performance art in all its various forms – from standup comedy to dance, theatre and political activism. 4'33" (*Prepared Pianola for Roger Bannister*) is an interactive sculpture that takes as its starting point the British athlete Roger Bannister's fourth-placed position in the 1952 Helsinki Olympics as well as the experimental music and performances of John Cage. A multi-layered score with echoes of everything from the British National Anthem to BBC TV's Ski Sunday theme tune has been composed especially for the project.

As the Government Art Collection holds its first exhibition in a public gallery, it seems fitting that Brimfield's work with its emphasis on interaction and audience participation, crowns sixty years of commissioning. Equally it is fascinating to see the range of unique works that have been produced for presentation in Government buildings in the UK and abroad over this period. While the site-specific nature of many of these works means that they cannot be brought back for this display, we hope that you will enjoy the interactive screen showing many of these commissions.



Marta Marcé with her manifestation *I am throwing the ball* for the staircase of the British Embassy, Madrid, 2009 © Crown copyright

Selected Commissions 1949–2012

- Key site-specific and special events
general commissions
- 1949 **John Piper** Ambassador's Residence, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
- 1952 **Adrian Daintrey**
- 1953 **Edward Ardizzone, Edward Bawden, Frederick Cuming, Richard Ernst Eurich, Donald Stuart L Friend, Molly Guion, Barbara Horridge, Brian A Keogh, Laura Knight, Osbert Lancaster, Laurence Stephen Lowry, Cathleen Mann, Paul Lucien Maze, Roland Pym, Leonard Rosoman, Kenneth Rowntree, Ebbe Sadolin, Edward Brian Seago, Feliks Topolski, Julian Trevelyan, Stewart J Waghorn, Carel Weight** The Coronation of Queen Elizabeth II
- 1969–70 **Thomas Rathmell** Welsh Office, Cardiff: Investiture of the Prince of Wales
- 1975 **Nigel Hall, Derek Hirst, Ben Johnson, Bert Kitchen, Norman Stevens**
- 1975–76 **Robyn Denny, Eduardo Paolozzi, Tom Phillips, William Scott**
- 1977–79 **Ian Hamilton Finlay** Ambassador's Residence, Bonn, West Germany
- 1982–83 **Mary Farmer**
- 1982–84 **John Maine** High Commissioner's Residence, Canberra, Australia
- 1985–86 **Kenneth Armitage** British Embassy, Brasilia, Brazil
- 1985–86 **Franta Belsky, Peter Collingwood, Lucienne Day, John Dugger, Eduardo Paolozzi, Mary Restieaux, Caroline Slinger** Queen Elizabeth II Conference Centre, London
- 1989–90 **Polly Hope, Sarah Tombs** High Commissioner's Residence, Dhaka, Bangladesh
- 1995 **Brian Catling, Susanna Heron, Susan Kinley** British Embassy, Dublin, Ireland
- 1996 **Stephen Cox** High Commission, Canberra, Australia
- 1998–99 **David Austen** British Embassy, Cairo, Egypt
- 1998–99 **Catherine Yass** Ambassador's Residence, Paris, France
- 1999–2000 **Michael Craig-Martin, Alex Hartley, Langlands and Bell** British Embassy, Moscow, Russian Federation
- 1999–2000 **Tony Cragg, David Tremlett, Catherine Yass** British Embassy, Berlin, Germany
- 2002 **Mark Edwards** Government Office for the East of England, Cambridge
- 2002 **Andrew Grassie**
- 2003–06 **Liam Gillick, Roger Hiorns, Georgie Hopton, Runa Islam, Simon Periton, Toby Paterson, Gary Webb** Home Office, London
- 2005 **Simon Periton** Deputy High Commission, Chennai, India
- 2005 **Chris Drury** High Commissioner's Residence, Colombo, Sri Lanka
- 2005 **Sonia Boyce** Office of the UK Permanent Representative to the EU (European Commission Offices), Brussels, Belgium
- 2006–07 **Catherine Bertola, Simon Faithfull, Henna Nadeem** Department for Culture, Media and Sport, London
- 2007 **Jenny West** British Embassy, Sana'a, Yemen
- 2007–08 **Jonathan Parsons** British Embassy, Doha, Qatar
- 2008–09 **Martin Boyce, Lothar Götz, Nathaniel Rackowe, Conrad Shawcross** Ministry of Justice, London
- 2009 **Marta Marcé** British Embassy, Madrid, Spain
- 2009–10 **Robert Holyhead, Donald Urquhart** British Embassy and Office of the UK Permanent Representative to the EU, Belgium, Brussels
- 2010 **Donald Urquhart** Consul-General's Residence, Los Angeles, USA
- 2012 **Mel Brimfield** *Commissions: Now and Then* at the Whitechapel Gallery, for the London 2012 Olympics

List of works

The works in the exhibition are listed here alphabetically by artist.

An interactive touchscreen presentation that includes interviews with several commissioned artists is on show in the gallery.

Interviews by Jared Schiller and John Wallace.

Presentation design by Mark Hume.

Edward Bawden
(1903–1989)
Troops in the Mall
pen, ink & watercolour
Commissioned for the
Coronation, 1953



Edward Bawden was commissioned to make this painting to commemorate the Coronation of Queen Elizabeth II in 1953. Known mainly for his work as a graphic designer, Bawden combines bold line and areas of bright colour to dramatic effect. In this characteristically stylised work, the serried ranks of red jacketed guards, circular swathe of spectators and dark canopy of trees combine to emphasise the pattern and pageantry of the great state occasion. Bawden lived in Great Bardfield, Essex from the 1930s to 1970 where he was an important member of an artist community. This group shared a love of nature as well as a concern with a sense of place and rigorously pursued figuration when many contemporaries were abandoning it in favour of abstraction.

Mel Brimfield (born 1976)
*4'33" (Prepared Pianola
for Roger Bannister)*
(detail)
mixed media
Commissioned, 2012



Collaborators
*Pianola Consultant
and Build*
Rex Lawson
Percussive Switch
Giles Walker
Letter Press and Print
Ryan Gillard

Composer
Paul Higgs
Producer
Keri Elmsly

Original Score by
Paul Higgs
with an excerpt from
Pop Looks Bach by
Sam Fonteyn © 1970
Cavendish Music Co Ltd.
Excerpt used by
permission of Boosey
& Hawkes Music
Publishers Ltd.

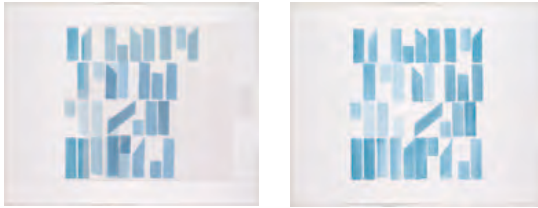
Brimfield's presentation consists of a prepared pianola (a self-playing piano), a 'ball run' system triggered by visitors to the gallery and related documents. *4'33"*, a 1952 composition by US experimental composer John Cage (1912–1992), is referenced in the title but not played. The actual score for the pianola takes as its starting point athlete Roger Bannister's performance in the 1952 Helsinki Olympics where he came fourth – the race that spurred him on to his sub 4 minute mile. The battle during the race for the lead, fragments of national anthems and echoes of theme tunes to British television sports programmes are all referenced. Brimfield's practice investigates performance art – from standup comedy to dance, theatre and political activism – and often relies on second-hand anecdotes or made-up stories that she further distorts creating a new fiction.

Andrew Grassie
(born 1966)
*The Pillared Room at
10 Downing Street*
tempera on paper
Commissioned, 2002



Intriguing views of unfamiliar spaces are the subject of two diminutive paintings commissioned from Andrew Grassie. In the work on display here, the interior of the largest State Room at 10 Downing Street, the office and residence of the Prime Minister is revealed. Within this meticulously worked painting, so close to perceived reality that it could easily be mistaken for a photograph, there are a number of finely observed, small details, including some randomly arranged furniture and a trestle table collapsed on the ornate Persian carpet. Grassie's painting depicts three works of art from the Collection displayed for Queen Elizabeth II's Golden Jubilee. One of these works is on display in this exhibition: Edward Bawden's *Troops in the Mall* (see page 23).

Robert Holyhead
(born 1974)
watercolours relating
to *Untitled (Brussels)*
Commissioned for the
British Embassy and
offices of the UK
Permanent
Representation to the
European Union,
Brussels, 2009



Robert Holyhead was commissioned to create a work to be manifested on glass at the refurbished offices of the British Embassy and UK Permanent Representation to the EU in Brussels. For this site-specific installation, Holyhead hand-painted blocks of colour which were then manifested in self-adhesive vinyl onto the glass. These watercolours are two of three drawings that Holyhead produced for the commission and reveal some of his preparatory thinking. With their simple stacked lozenge shapes, they have all the elegance associated with his precise almost architectural oil paintings. Holyhead has explained how he is interested in ‘the poise between different forms and a sort of fluidity between one form and the sharpness of another’ which has led him to produce works that are ‘precise and awkward at the same time’.

Runa Islam (born 1970)
First Day of Spring
(production still)
C-digital photographic
print
Produced during the
artist’s commission
for the Home Office,
London, 2005



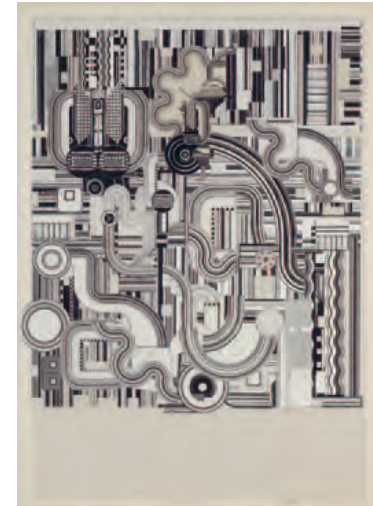
This production still was taken during the filming of Runa Islam’s *Elliptical Returns*, a short film, commissioned by the Government Art Collection to form the basis of an art work installed in the new Home Office in London. Produced in Dhaka, Bangladesh, the photograph depicts a moment of rest for a group of rickshaw drivers during the filming, many of whom were puzzled by Islam’s request to do nothing. Islam worked with other communities whilst making her film, including flower-sellers and food vendors. This image depicts both sides of the camera, those directing and those performing, highlighting the artificial, constructed process of filmmaking itself. Often creating moments of great significance from apparently mundane scenes, Islam’s work aims to blur the distinctions between art and cinema.

L. S. Lowry (1887–1976)
*The Procession Passing
the Queen Victoria
Memorial, Coronation
1953*
oil on canvas
Commissioned for the
Coronation, 1953



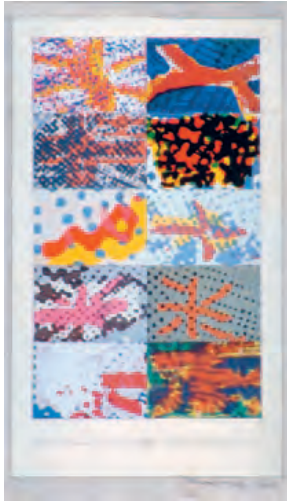
L. S. Lowry was one of a number of artists commissioned by the Ministry of Works under Sir David Eccles to record the Coronation of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II in 1953. On the grey rainy day in June, Lowry didn't reach his designated seat by the starting time of 6am and, despite a good view in front of Buckingham Palace, found it difficult to decide what to paint. A letter to a friend, David Carr, reveals that some 'excellent incidents took place round about' but that he only managed to make some drawings when he returned the next day. In the final composition, we share the viewpoint of the matchstick figures in the stands moving forward to get a better view of the top of the gleaming state coach as it passes the Queen Victoria memorial outside the Palace.

Eduardo Paolozzi
(1924–2005)
Selasa
collage on graph paper
Commissioned, 1975

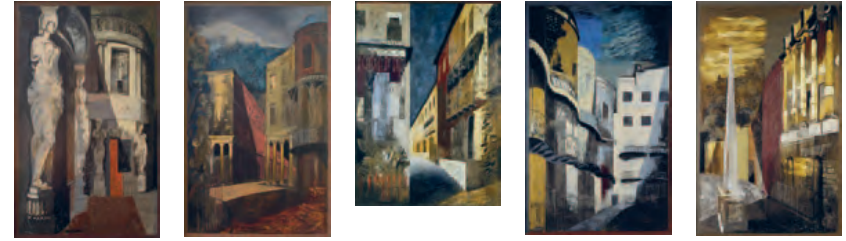


After being commissioned to produce *Selasa* (1975), a collage on graph paper, Eduardo Paolozzi made a screenprint from the original collage also titled *Selasa*, which was produced and distributed widely. *Selasa* derives its title from the Indonesian word for 'Tuesday' taken from the seven days of the week written in Indonesian inside one of the composition's circular motifs. It is likely that this motif was randomly sourced like much of the ephemera Paolozzi appropriated for use in his collages. Many of his compositions from the early 1970s originate from one particularly influential source – a 1927 German magazine, *Kosmos*. Struck by its rhythmic patterns, Paolozzi explored the relationship between light and sound, waves, linear repetitions and curved structures, while pursuing the correlation between music and drawing.

Tom Phillips (born 1937)
Ten Views of the Union Jack
 pencil, gouache and collage on paper
 Commissioned, 1976



Tom Phillips starting using flags in his work in 1973. He recalls a postcard that he bought while teaching in Kassel, Germany, that depicted Checkpoint Charlie along the Berlin Wall over which a Union Jack flag could be seen flapping in the wind. The fact that flags invariably fold or twist themselves into new shapes interested Phillips and, as a postcard reproduction, the offset lithographic process added a further layer of distortion. *Ten Views of the Union Jack* with its close-up views, unusual colour variations and magnified dot backgrounds is a later variation of Phillips' exploration of flag images, which he continued to produce throughout the 1970s. In later versions he had flag images made into cloth tapestries which, in a further twist, meant that his flags were turned back into the cloth objects they had once been.



John Piper (1903–1992)
Cheltenham: Montpelier Walk

Bath: Composite of Bath Street and Corner of Camden Crescent

Cheltenham: Composite of Houses in Priory Parade and Elsewhere

Brighton: Regency Square

Bath: Grosvenor Crescent
 oil on canvas
 Commissioned for the British Embassy, Rio de Janeiro, 1949

In 1949 the commission to create works for the wall panels of the new British Embassy in Rio de Janeiro, was awarded to John Piper. An extraordinarily prolific artist, Piper's work was highly appropriate for the Neo-Classical embassy, his five paintings reflecting the Regency architecture Piper had seen in the spa-towns of Bath, Brighton and Cheltenham. When describing how these romantic works relate to the specific British towns he visited, Piper commented on 'the emotion generated by them at one special moment at one special place'. A contemporary critic remarked on 'Mr Piper's hot colour – brilliant yellow façades and undulating balconies', saying that they 'have every appearance of fantastic stage settings from a land of make believe.' Others considered them the finest work Piper had produced.

The paintings were transferred to the new capital Brasilia in 1975 and this exhibition marks the first time they have been shown together since.



Donald Urquhart
 (born 1963)
An Alphabet of LA
 ink on paper in
 three parts
 Commissioned for
 HM Consul-General's
 Residence, Los Angeles,
 2010

After producing an A-Z guide to Brussels Donald Urquhart was commissioned again by the Government Art Collection to make a similar piece for the British Consul-General's Residence in Los Angeles. An elegant black ink drawing in three parts, *An Alphabet of LA* provides a witty satirical look at the characters and landmarks associated with the glamorous, artificial culture of Hollywood. Urquhart name checks Hollywood icons including Marilyn Monroe, Katherine Hepburn and John Wayne; animated characters Betty Boop and Marge Simpson, and landmarks such as Universal Studios. On one level the work reads like a children's primer yet underlying this is an exploration of the multiple stereotypes and identities that encapsulate Hollywood in the popular imagination.

Catherine Yass
 (born 1963)
Embassy (day)
Embassy (evening)
 colour transparency
 and lightbox
 Commissioned for
 HM Ambassador's
 Residence, Paris,
 1998–98



The Government Art Collection, in collaboration with the British Embassy, Paris, commissioned Catherine Yass to produce two light-boxes of the garden and rear façade of the Ambassador's Residence in the French capital. These new works would complement *British Embassy in Paris from the Gardens*, a mid-19th century painting from the Collection by an unknown artist, on display in the Residence. Yass has been creating light-boxes since the early 1990s. She photographs a subject twice, usually moments between each other and then superimposes two colour transparencies of the subject, one positive and one negative, to make a third image which is shown in a light-box. Playing with our sense of time and space, these images depict the Neo-Classical building framed by the foliage of a mature tree, the façade appearing like a ghostly apparition. Rising from the lawn in each image is the Collection's four-metre high sculpture by Shirazeh Houshiary.

Related Exhibition Events

The Story of the Government Art Collection

3 March – 2 September 2012

Pat Matthews Gallery (Gallery 4) (Free)

Rare items from the Collection's archives on display for the first time include papers details the loan of **Winston Churchill's** bust to the Oval Office in Washington; records of paintings hung under Prime Ministers from the first **Duke of Wellington** to **Margaret Thatcher**; and a World War II photograph of bomb damage to the State Rooms at 10 Downing Street.

Gallery Talk: Philippa Martin on New Wall Papers:

The Story of the Government Art Collection

Thursday 30 August, 7pm, Pat Matthews Gallery (Gallery 4) (Free)

A curator-led tour of the current archive exhibition looking at the changing history of the Government Art Collection.

Tours: Government Art Collection

Wednesdays 27 June, 25 July, Tuesday 21 August, 6.30pm
Government Art Collection, Queen's Yard, 179a Tottenham Court Road, London, W1T 7PA (Free, booking essential)

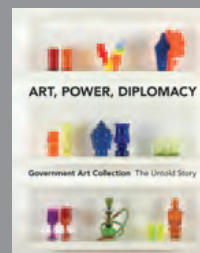
A chance to go behind the scenes of this world class collection of British Art.

Gallery Talk: Mel Brimfield and Adrian George

Thursday 2 August, 7pm, Gallery 7 (Free)

Join **Adrian George**, Curator: Collection Projects, Government Art Collection, in conversation with artist **Mel Brimfield**, discussing her sculpture *4'33" (Prepared Pianola for Roger Bannister)*, commissioned for the current exhibition and as part of the London 2012 Festival.

Further Information



Art, Power, Diplomacy

Government Art Collection,
The Untold Story

Scala Publishers, £20.00 paperback
ISBN: 978 1 85759 691 5

Available from the Whitechapel
Gallery bookshop and at
www.whitechapelgallery.org/shop
or from ACC Distribution:
(0)1394 389 950 or email
sales@antique-acc.com

Exhibition Tour

Works from all five exhibitions will tour to:

The Gas Hall, Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery

16 November 2012 – 24 February 2013

Ulster Museum Belfast 15 March – 9 June 2013

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Booking is essential for all events.

Book through the Whitechapel Gallery:

whitechapelgallery.org

tickets@whitechapelgallery.org

T +44 (0)20 7522 7888

www.gac.culture.gov.uk

www.facebook.com/governmentartcollection

Government Art Collection

At Work

3 June – 4 September 2011

Richard Of York Gave Battle In Vain selected by Cornelia Parker

16 September – 4 December 2011

Travelling Light selected by Simon Schama

16 December 2011 – 26 February 2012

12 from No10 selected by Downing Street staff

9 March – 10 June 2012

Commissions: Now and Then

21 June – 9 September 2012

This exhibition is a collaboration between the Whitechapel Gallery and the Government Art Collection

Whitechapel Gallery

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Admission free

Opening Hours:

Gallery, Bookshop and Café/Bar

Tuesday–Sunday, 11am–6pm
Thursday, 11am–9pm

The Foyle Reading Room

Tuesday–Friday, 11am–5pm

Whitechapel Gallery Dining Room

Tuesday–Saturday, 12–2.30pm
Wednesday–Saturday, 6pm–11pm
(last food orders 9.30pm)
Sunday, 12–3.45pm

Government Art Collection



Whitechapel Gallery



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