

18

**Art and medicine:
complementing
patient records
with medial
illustrations**



28

**Using arts
archives to
create more arts
archives: the Thomas
Pitfield effect**



39

**Li Yuan-chia
(1929-94):
Chinese artist
and innovative
curator**



Archives and Art Issue

Voices from the British Art World:
National Life Stories' Artists' Lives
Page 33



Archives & Records
Association
UK & Ireland

CONFERENCE 2018

Grand Central Hotel, Glasgow
29th – 31st August 2018

Welcome to ARC Magazine October 2017

Welcome to *ARC magazine's* first edition of 'Archives and Art', and I could not have picked a better issue to be in charge of for my first time as joint editor. Art and archives is perhaps not a traditional association. How often has a document been dismissed as not as visually appealing in favour of more conventional artwork? However the response to the subject matter was overwhelming and this is reflected in the fascinating and diverse articles in this issue. When reading through the submissions, it highlighted that art can be found in a variety of archive collections. From special repositories and county record offices, to the more traditional galleries or museums, they can contain artwork as part of their collections as well as the papers of artists who worked in a range of mediums.

This brings with it various challenges, which have been addressed by our contributors. Such as how do you catalogue multi-medium collections? Or how do you value them?

The articles also show the education and outreach benefits of not only using art in archives for reaching new audiences, but also for inspiring users to engage with archive collections by producing art.



It appears that art is everywhere in archives even when it is 'hidden' in unlikely places.

Thank you to everyone who submitted an article and I hope you enjoy the issue!

Ceri Brough
ARC Editor

ARC Magazine is the monthly publication that is published by the Archives & Records Association (UK and Ireland)
Prioryfield House
20 Canon Street
Taunton
Somerset
TA1 1SW
Tel: 01823 327030

ARC Magazine advertising enquiries to:
sam@cabbell.co.uk
or phone Sam Rogers on 0203 603 7943.

Send articles/comments to:
arceditors@archives.org.uk

ARC Magazine design by Glyder www.glyder.org

Front cover: Voices from the British Art World:
National Life Stories' Artists' Lives

DISCLAIMER

The Archives & Records Association (UK and Ireland) cannot accept responsibility for views expressed by individual contributors to ARC Magazine. It is a medium for informing members of news, information and ideas relevant to the profession, including archive conservation. It is not an official guide to procedures, concepts, materials or products.

Association News

- 3 Editorial
- 4 Opening Lines
- 5 Collecting Matters

Features

- 6 TownsWeb Archiving Digitisation Grant 2017 winners revealed

Archives and Art

- 7 Welcome
- 7 The cold case of Van Gogh's ear
- 10 Archiving the artist: The DACS Foundation Art360 project



- 12 Art in archives: Conservation and valuation
- 14 Cotmania at Leeds Art Gallery
- 16 Creative Destruction: The National Gallery of Ireland Refurbishment Reveals Hidden Treasures
- 18 Art and medicine: complementing patient records with medial illustrations
- 19 The David King collection
- 22 Animal analogies: creative signatures from the Churchill Archives Centre's collections
- 24 'I love beauty of every kind': The archive of Claude Muncaster
- 26 The Archives of the Western Friendly Medical Club



- 28 Using arts archives to create more arts archives: the Thomas Pitfield effect
- 30 Exile art in the archive: The papers of Margarete Berger-Hamerschlag
- 33 Voices from the British Art World: National Life Stories' Artists' Lives
- 34 'Joe Bach' and his journey from Poland to the Swansea Valley
- 36 Art into textiles
- 38 Maps and art: A new inspiration
- 39 Li Yuan-chia (1929-94), Chinese artist and innovative curator
- 40 Inspiring new art through our collections

opening lines



Glasgow School of Art's Archives and Collections, comprising the school's institutional records, deposited archive collections, textiles, plaster casts, artworks, architectural drawings, objects and furniture, were housed in the Mackintosh Building at the time of a devastating fire in 2014. My colleague Susannah Waters wrote an article for ARC a year after the fire about the immediate evacuation, triage and drying of the collections. I thought it might be good to bring you up to speed with our progress since then.

Very early on, we needed to confirm the losses and damage to the collection, as well as the anticipated costs for recovery and conservation, in order to reach a settlement with the insurer. For some areas of the collection this was straightforward, but in other areas the collection was virtually inaccessible or distributed across the country, requiring innovative, remote and theoretical approaches to the appraisal.

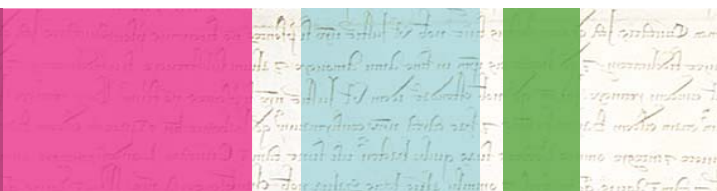
We were also being inundated with enquiries from GSA's Restoration Project team and the architects who were

preparing to restore 'the Mack'. Never could we have anticipated the use to which the archives would be put in the aftermath of the fire! The researchers used comprehensive records of the governor's, secretary's and treasurer's meetings to pinpoint changes and modifications to the building; inventories and receipt books to understand the composition, quantities and suppliers of materials; the photographic collection to identify lighting mechanisms, clocks, layouts etc.

Although unaffected by the fire, the archives had been moved and piled up in a warehouse outside Glasgow, making the management of enquiries extremely challenging! The Archivist and Curator were able to compensate for this by producing a listing and assembling a mini-reference collection on site for researchers. The turning point came when we secured space in The Whisky Bond, a creative hub just north of the city centre. This allowed us to re-assemble the collection, re-organise the materials and (crucially) open the service back up to the public.

Conservation began as soon as we got our budget approved, the immediate priority being the plaster casts, as most of them were housed in the Mackintosh building and were in the contractor's way. We moved the small casts off site and strapped up and boxed the large casts so they could be manoeuvred out of the way on pallets when required. Following conservation trials and stabilisation, we moved eight damaged casts to the conservator's studio; three were too big and fragile to move, so were treated on site. Not ideal, arguably unprecedented, but the flexible contractor understood the collection's significance.

Our next priority was textile re-packaging. While the collection itself had survived the fire, all the packaging was destroyed by water, meaning the collection had been largely disassociated from its ID numbers, and inaccessible, piled between sheets of acid-free tissue! Following a detailed reordering and measuring exercise, followed by research and consultation into the latest storage solutions, the textiles are now well on their way to being back in an accessible state. The remaining conservation and re-packaging of paper, objects and furniture is scheduled for 2018 and 2019.



Another major activity this year has been a review of how we manage our data. The experience of the fire and subsequent lack of physical access to the collections, coupled with the increased interest therein, helped focus our thoughts on the various systems that we use to track, catalogue, publish and manage the collection. We began a comprehensive review of available archive management systems, and have kick started a migration project which will enable us to rationalise all our data into one system. This will not only improve our service to users, but will prove essential as we plan and manage the big move back into the Mack in 2019.

Meanwhile, art education, the School's primary purpose, goes on. Despite the condition of the building, the events of 2014 have reinvigorated interest in the potential of the archives and collections to support teaching, learning and research. As a result, the archives and collections are attracting ever-growing numbers of visitors and enquiries.

To stay up to date with the Recovery Project, see our blog at www.gsaarchives.net/blog

Polly Christie

Glasgow School of Art

Collecting Matters

Q: What does every archivist and Andy Warhol – a leading figure in the pop art movement - have in common?

A: Boxes!

And not just boxes but Time Capsules.

Triggered by an office move - sound familiar? Andy Warhol began filling the same-size brown cardboard boxes with every day things he accumulated from 1974 until his death in 1987.

The 610 boxes include flyers, junk-mail, fan-letters, gallery-invitation cards, unopened letters, solicitations for work, LPs, a lump of concrete, thousands of used postage stamps, birthday cake, pizza dough, packets of sweets and - unsurprisingly - unopened Campbell's soup tins: <http://uk.phaidon.com/agenda/art/articles/2013/february/22/the-fascinating-story-behind-andy-warhols-soup-cans/> And then there are toenail clippings, dead ants, and a mummified foot - remember Sir Henry Cole's rat at The National Archives UK? www.flickr.com/photos/nationalarchives/3182090357/ According to the US painter's assistant, the Time Capsules were not random but selected; and while they are the "keystone of the archives collection" at The Andy Warhol Museum (the Warhol) they also form his largest serial artwork: www.warhol.org/art-and-archives/

So the archive is the art.

But more than that, Warhol used Time Capsules as the inspiration for other works.

So the archive inspires art.

And appropriately, Warhol sealed the boxes and prescribed when they should be opened - and some of them in front of paying audiences!

So the archive is the past; and the archive is theatre.

And visitors to *the Warhol* can engage in the artistic process by assembling their own virtual boxes using the Unboxed app: www.warhol.org/unboxed-a-new-app-at-the-warhol/.

So the archive becomes personal.

the Warhol tells Andy Warhol's story through his art and his archives but it can tell so many more, and as the museum boasts on its website: "you'll always see something different each time you visit." www.warhol.org/art-and-archives/

So going back to that opening question: What does every archivist and Andy Warhol have in common?

A: Lots more than just boxes!

Cathy Williams

The National Archives UK



Archivist Cassandra Pickavance amongst the collections at the digitisation grant winning institution, Dorset History Centre. Image courtesy of Dorset History Centre

TownsWeb Archiving Digitisation Grant 2017 winners revealed

After receiving over 100 applications from local authority and business archives, libraries and museums (a new record), TownsWeb Archiving (TWA) has announced the winners of its 2017 Digitisation Grant.

This year's winner is Dorset History Centre with its project to preserve the deteriorating Graham Herbert Collection; a unique 7000-strong collection of photographic negatives taken by the eponymous local Weymouth photographer between 1953 and 1983. Dorset History Centre wins the primary grant of £5000 funding, provided in the form of TWA digitisation services.

On hearing of her application's success, Cassandra Pickavance, archivist at Dorset History Centre and lead applicant, said:

"We are delighted to have been awarded the funding from TWA to save the Herbert collection from being lost due to the irreversible deterioration of the negatives. We look forward to continuing to share the fantastic images of our recent past in outreach activities with a wide range of people."

Last year's esteemed judging panel returned once again to assess the 2017 applicants - featuring Archives and Records Association (UK & Ireland)'s Chief Executive, John Chambers; HLF-appointed Expert Advisor, Claire Adler; and Senior Digitisation Consultant at TownsWeb, Paul Sugden.

Speaking on the winning Dorset History Centre project, Judge Claire Adler said:

"The urgent need to digitise these photographs was eloquently communicated as well as the need to record and reinterpret a way of life which is currently changing in Dorset. The images have already been used with people with learning disabilities and I was delighted to see that they will be using the images to engage with communities across the region. I wish them every success with their project."

The 2017 runner-up prize of £2000 went to Birmingham Museums Trust, to support their project to digitise the Birmingham History Trade Documents Collection. The collection offers an unmatched insight into the city's commercial history, featuring trade catalogues, advertisements, correspondence and other documents.

TownsWeb Archiving plans to offer the Grant funding again in May 2018.

Readers can watch the winners announcement and find out more about this year's successful projects here: www.townswearchiving.com/2017/07/video-digitisation-grant-2017-winners-announced/

Ryan Kyle

TownsWeb Archiving

Welcome to the Archives and Art special issue of *ARC magazine*

What do we mean when we use the expression ‘archives and art’? The answer to that question probably depends on who you ask and is as varied as the contents of this special issue of *ARC magazine*. Many archivists will have been tasked with finding something ‘nice’ amongst the papers they care for. In my experience, such searches are often prompted by a fairly superficial desire to provide decoration, perhaps for a blog, a tweet or a display. The impulse to decorate a page of writing is well established and, whether it is strapwork on a medieval charter or a child’s doodle in a notebook, it is usually possible to produce something that is visually pleasing. However, as the articles that follow demonstrate, ‘archives and art’ is far more complex - and interesting - than simply looking for pretty pictures.

There are many challenges to be faced, whether that’s caring for and cataloguing works of art in archive collections, or highlighting the hidden art that may otherwise be missed when producing and consulting finding aids. Work on the materiality of archives takes us in different directions and might even challenge what we think of as an archive as we engage with creators, academics and users from outside ‘traditional’ groups. Increasingly, archives are being viewed as a resource for artists as part of their creative process. This presents us with opportunities, but also the need to develop new techniques for outreach work in order to engage with those who have very different vocabularies and approaches to research. I have appreciated the chance to learn how the contributors to this issue have responded to the challenges that they have encountered, and hope that you’ll enjoy reading about a vibrant area of our sector.

Richard Wragg

The National Gallery (UK)

The cold case of Van Gogh’s ear

Last year, my first book *Van Gogh’s Ear-The True Story* was published. It is a forensic investigation into one of the most infamous incidents in art history - the night Vincent van Gogh cut off part of his ear. I had long been intrigued how this event in his personal life is known the world over and has come to define the painter. Because of this drama, Van Gogh’s art has been interpreted through the prism of his perceived madness.

The incident took place in a small provincial backwater in a town not so far away from where I live in France and in 2009, personal circumstances gave me the time to look into the story further. Finding the truth took me seven years.

There are hundreds of books on Vincent van Gogh that look into the time the artist spent in Arles - the most prolific and the highest point of his creative activity. Arles is also where he had his dramatic first breakdown and his mental health began its inexorable decline, which resulted in his suicide fifteen months later. Yet, nothing was clear in the story of the ear - with conflicting accounts of what had taken place. However, I had a unique perspective. Like the artist, I am also a foreigner - an outsider - who understands what life is like for someone who comes from another place to settle in Provence. The issues he confronted in 1888, or the things he found strange, were similar to my own experience when I moved here more than 30 years ago.

Soon after beginning my initial reading, I realised that mistakes had crept into the story and had been repeated by scholars. These were small details, obvious to someone who lived locally, but numerous enough to make me wonder ‘what else might be wrong?’ I soon realised that I had to ignore every other writer and go back to primary sources, if I were to unravel what happened to Van Gogh in 1888, a year that began with such promise for him and ended so tragically.



Bernadette Murphy showing the Dr Rey drawing of Van Gogh's injury. ©LionTV

I had never used any foreign archives before, which proved difficult at first; in particular, decoding nineteenth-century French handwriting was challenging. Living more than an hour's drive from Arles, luckily, I had access to digital technology. I could take hundreds of photos on a visit to the archives which I could examine in detail later. I also had access to his letters, which had recently been published on the internet.

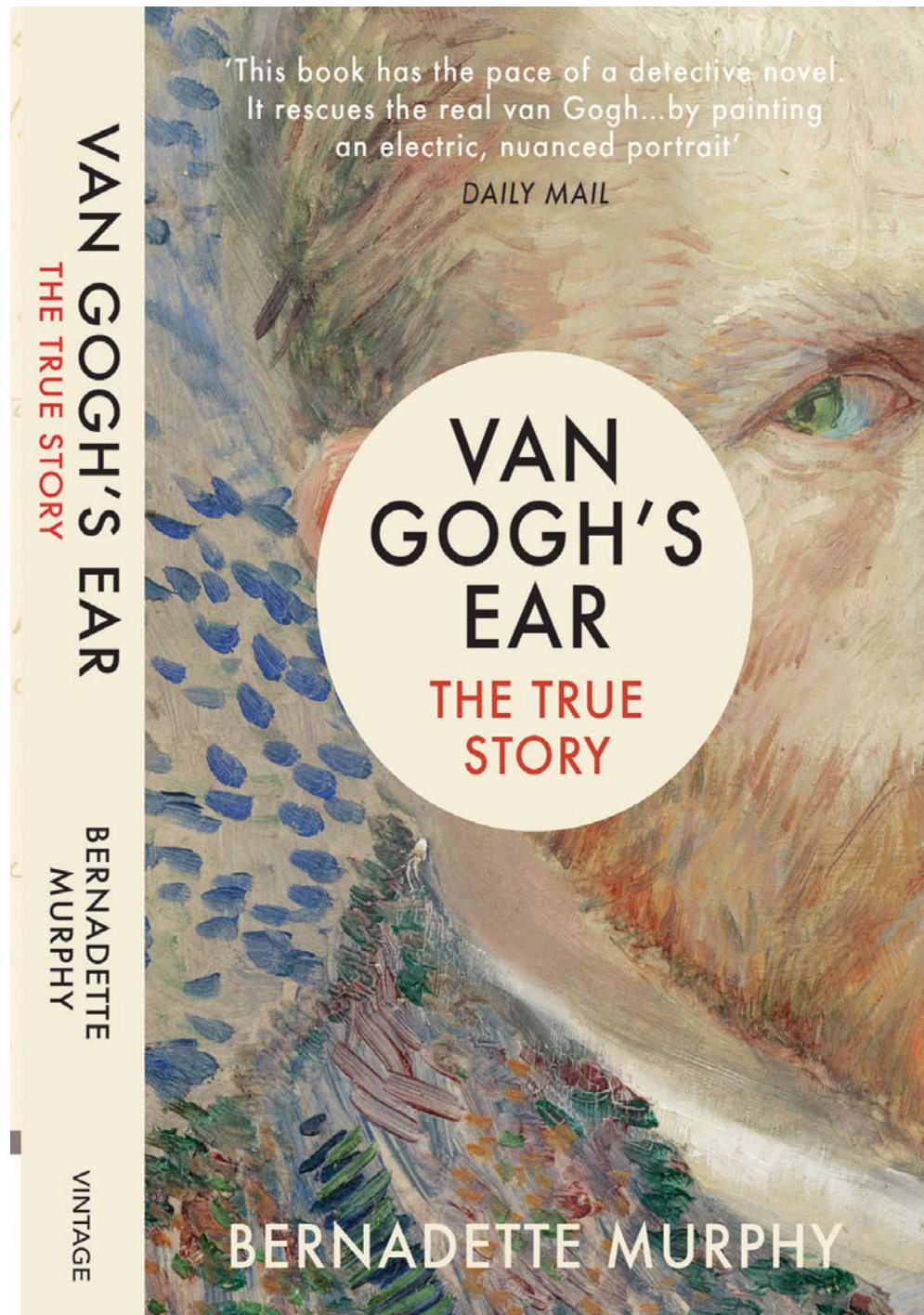
My first task was to recreate the town that Van Gogh lived in 1888, which had changed radically since his

death. By chance I came across two early aerial photos which, once scanned, provided rich details of the city which was heavily bombed during the Second World War. These images and the few extant street-plans, enabled me to reconstruct the area of the city Van Gogh would have known. Nonetheless, understanding what the city looked like would only provide me with superficial knowledge. Vincent found himself living amongst a tightly-knit group in Arles and many of the characters whose faces he immortalised on canvas form part of this network.

To understand who these people were and their relationship to one another, I compiled a database of the inhabitants - now almost 16000-strong - of Arles in 1888. This allowed me to flesh out the lives of people Van Gogh knew and identify - in some cases for the first time - his models and the people he saw on a day-to-day basis. In particular it helped me to identify and understand why some of his neighbours signed a petition to get the artist out of town.

The book truly bears homage to the importance of primary research. Even if local knowledge were essential, archives allowed me to understand Van Gogh's life and art in nineteenth century Provence. I cast my net very wide, contacting institutions in many countries (Holland, UK, Denmark, Israel, Australia, the USA as well as France). I read endless local newspapers, studied costume, undergarments, police reports, technical data, architecture, prostitution, garden plantings, maps, lighting, hospital reports and legal papers. *Van Gogh's Ear* also required extensive medical, anatomical and psychiatric research. Often unable to go to an archive personally, I could correspond through the magic of the internet, using every source I could think of, including directories, censuses and occasionally genealogical sites to find descendants.

Thus *Van Gogh's Ear* can be read on two levels; placing the reader in the heart of an exciting fast-paced investigation, which is nevertheless based on solid academic research. By looking in places no-one had previously thought of, I made a major find, definitively answering my main question: 'What exactly did Vincent do to himself on 23rd December 1888?' The conclusive document - in French - was lying overlooked in a library archive in the USA. The importance of this small piece of paper was such that an exhibition at the Van Gogh Museum in Amsterdam was created around its discovery in 2016 (*Vincent van Gogh: On the Verge of Insanity*).



Front cover of *Van Gogh's Ear - The True Story*. ©Vintage/Penguin/RandomHouse

To the many archivists, curators and librarians who were kind enough to share their specialist knowledge and time with me please know that I could never have achieved *Van Gogh's Ear* without your skills. This is a thank-you note to you all!

Bernadette Murphy

Van Gogh's Ear- The True Story (Chatto & Windus) is now available in paperback (Vintage- Penguin Random House). *The Mystery of Van Gogh's Ear* is also a film documentary co-produced by the BBC, Arte and PBS.



Archiving the artist: the DACS Foundation Art360 project

Consultant archivists Victoria Lane and Judy Vaknin discuss their work with the DACS Foundation on a three-year project to develop and sustain the archives of 100 leading British artists.

At the DACS Foundation, we are archivists who work primarily with artists' archives. Our interactions with artists and their archives have also revealed that the legacy of an artist often lies beyond the traditional notions of 'the archive'.

Perceptions of the relationship between the artist, the archive and the artwork have transformed in the decades since Jacques Derrida gave his lecture 'The Concept of the Archive: A Freudian Impression' at the Freud Museum in 1994. He provided a critical framework in which interpretations of the archive and practices based on these could be explored. The focus on the process, as well as the product, encouraged a shift in the way artists' archives can be seen to provide a multitude of perspectives and contexts to the finished works.

We have been greatly encouraged in recent years by the growing support for art archives, firstly by The National Archives' Archiving the Arts



Interior shot of Peter de Francia's house. Art Archive Consultancy.

initiative that closed in 2016, and now the DACS Foundation Art360 programme. The programme also assists these selected artists and artists' estates with legacy planning. It is a wonderful initiative that is already ensuring that artists' archives are preserved and managed. As a result of the project, artists and artists' estates are recognising the value of archival material that they had previously regarded as by-products and insignificant accumulations of paperwork!

As part of Art360, we have worked with Alix MacSweeney, the widow of Peter de Francia, a highly significant artist of the post-war period who died in 2012. De Francia's archive is a wonderful record of his life, work and relationships. There is fascinating correspondence with Sir Kenneth Clark and his great friends John Berger and Renato Guttuso, as well as three plan-chests full of his astounding drawings. However, it was evident that De Francia's archive did not just begin and end with his correspondence, diaries, lectures, photographs, and other primary sources,

“In recent years there has been growing support for art archives.”

fascinating as they were. The house itself formed part of the archive - his collection of objects, books and the way items were arranged on shelves, the artworks on display by artists he knew and admired, the items he chose to have on his desk and the quality of light coming into his studio. Of course, the practical obstructions to preserving this physical legacy are prohibitive, but it was clear that a record should be made, in film or photography, of the house itself and the objects and artworks within it. We concluded that this record should then form part of the archive.

A similar broader view of the significance of contextualities of the art, artist, their spaces and archive has informed our work with Barbara Steveni. Her art has actively sought to reposition the role of the artist within a wider social context, including government and commerce, while at

the same time playing an important part in the history of conceptual art.

When Steveni was working on transferring the archive of the Artist Placement Group (1966-1988), which she initiated and ran, to Tate Archive in the early 2000s, she realised that she was so embedded in the history, memory and fabric of the archive that she saw herself as part of it, or rather an embodiment of the archive. This initiated a series of performance-based artworks called 'I AM AN ARCHIVE'. This series of works has interrogated the construction of the identity of the artist and challenged the myth surrounding the past as dead or finished by re-enacting the archive through lived experience and events activated by memory, storytelling and conversations.

We started work on Steveni's later archive with her assistant, the artist, Melinda Bronstein. This led to a collaborative exchange between the four of us that questioned the nature of archives and archiving. The conversations, some of which we have recorded and filmed, reveal the limitations of the document as evidence of the activities and emotional life of an individual. Steveni's whole life, home and self are implicated as an archive and these contextual sites can be used for developing potential, creative archival practices. Other intangible layers of relationships, anecdotes, problems that do not reside in the fixity of the documents, can be discovered and add further contexts to understand the archive and the artist.

The DACS initiative is an excellent way in which working artists or their estates can engage with their archives and makes them useful. We hope this will lead to new ways of working with artists' archives. Further details of this phenomenon can be found in our book 'All This Stuff: Archiving the Artist': www.libripublishing.co.uk/Products/ProdID=122

Victoria Lane and Judy Vaknin

Art Archives Consultancy

Art in archives: conservation and valuation

How much are your archives worth? For most Archivists this is only an occasional, if a rather uncomfortable question. How much is the original artwork in your collection worth? That is perhaps even rarer, but potentially more difficult to answer. We rightly consider archives irreplaceable and invaluable and the question of financial value is not normally uppermost in our minds. Most archive services have little directly to do with the commercial market in manuscripts on a daily basis. UK National Archives (TNA) monitors this market and notifies repositories of items within their collecting remit. Our figures consistently show that only around 50 of the 300 active collecting institutions surveyed by our annual 'Accessions to Repositories' survey are active in the market in any given year. James leads this monitoring activity and in his role as Cultural Property Manager is in the unusual position of having to think about and give advice to government, grant-awarding bodies and the archives sector around the issue of value, evidential and financial quite a lot of the time.

A more common encounter with the idea of commercial value comes with the need to estimate insurance values, whether for archives in situ or to facilitate loans for exhibition. As part of sales monitoring we maintain a database of prices realised on the open market. The core traditional use of this information has been to support our advice to grant awarding bodies on purchase cases. We are also happy, as part of our offer to the archives sector, to give institutions information on comparators to inform bidding and fund-raising activity. By extension, this evidence of open market price can be used to inform an estimate of value for insurance purposes in line with the Government Indemnity Scheme criteria, i.e. a reasonable estimate of the price at auction if the item came on the market at the time of the loan.

Thankfully, for much of the domestic manuscript market evidential and financial value are closely related and firmly based. There are clear areas

www.archives.org.uk



James and Emilie studying works by Terence Cuneo at The National Archives. Photo by Boyce Keay

of premium, such as overseas interest and literary and celebrity papers but outside these areas prices are largely predictable. James works with colleagues in the exhibition and loans team including Emilie to ensure insurance values of TNA documents loaned for exhibition reflect current market prices for comparable material.

Since public records are extra commercium comparators are sometimes difficult to find. The process is complicated further by the fact that documents requested for exhibition are often the very celebrity and iconic items where the premium is largest and most difficult to predict. Then of course, there is visual appeal. Only a small percentage of our holdings are original artworks, but they constitute a growing part of requests for exhibition, indeed exhibitors seem sometimes more familiar with items from our artistic holdings than we are ourselves, particularly if the artistic value outshines their significance in administrative history. It is of course a delight for us to see those gems highlighted and more widely shared as interest for artists such as Terence Cuneo (1907-1996) resurges.

Cuneo was commissioned by the government to create a series of works illustrating the efforts of the resistance during the Second World War, which make for striking snapshots of history and propaganda. Does this political context give them added value over privately commissioned works?

As a selection of these works will be travelling to other institutions for upcoming exhibitions, the loans team conservators at TNA have consolidated flakes and cracks in the paint and will mount and frame them in-house.

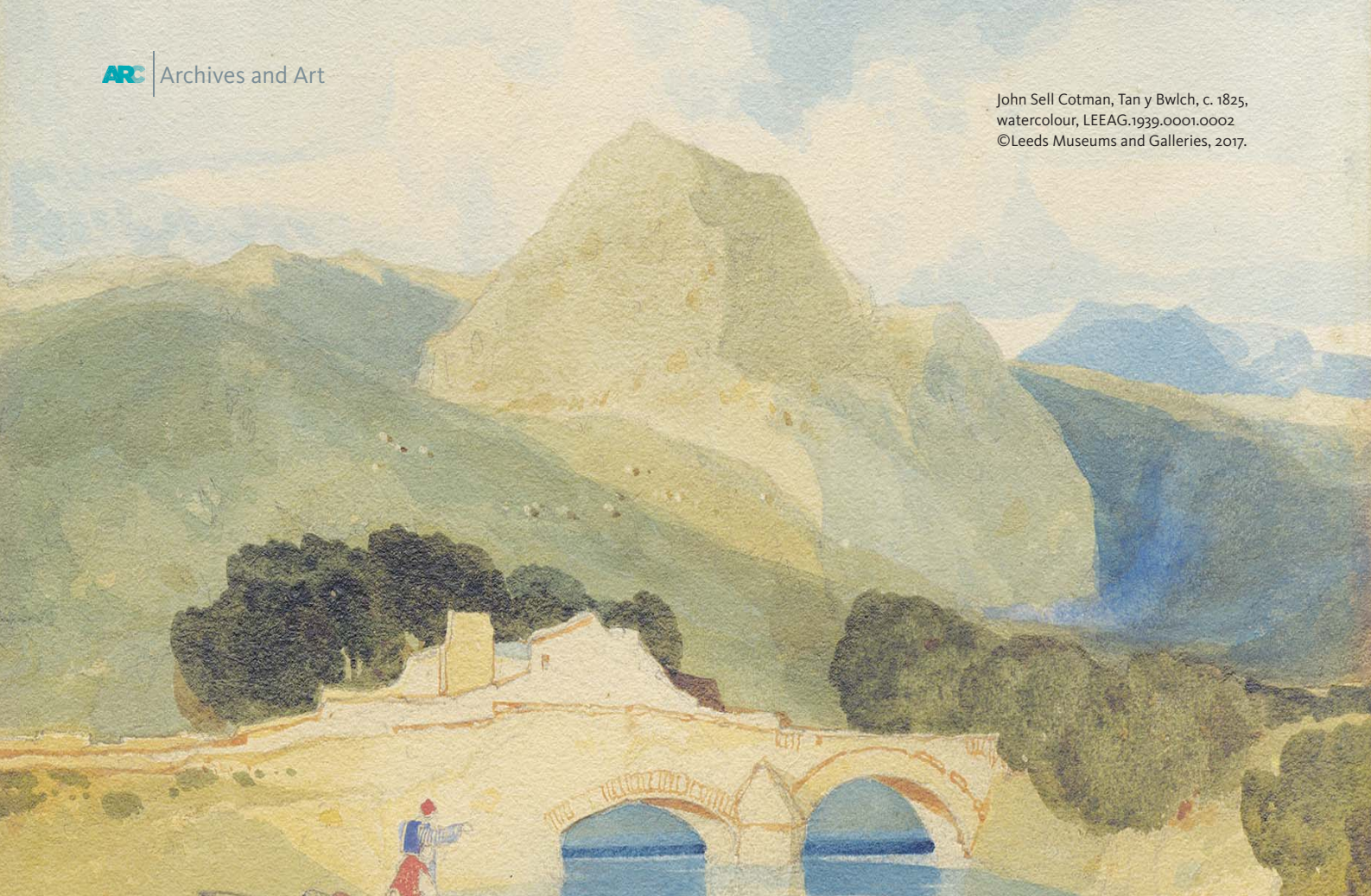
Our treatment of loaned works ensures each document or artwork is looking its best - without interfering with a piece's historicity - and most importantly, will withstand handling, travelling and being exhibited over the course of several weeks.

Estimating insurance values for Cuneo's works sent for exhibition remains relatively straightforward, since well-established artists like him have precedents in the art market, as fluctuating as it may be. This is not always the case, as less publicly known artists prove more difficult to track down. We are for example currently working on works by Austro-Hungarian artist Imre Hofbauer (1905-1989), commissioned by the Post Office Savings Department to create publicity posters. In a further complication, some of these artworks are hand-coloured prints, a state that places them on the spectrum between original works and prints or posters.

As we develop our exchanges with other public and private institutions through our loans programme - both nationally and internationally - and work towards promoting the full variety of our archives, questions surrounding the valuation of artworks will continue to arise and make for engrossing discussions and collaborations between our departments and institutions. We hope over time to develop a body of evidence as reliable as our database of prices realised for manuscripts to inform future loans of art in archives, which the sector as a whole can draw on.

Emilie Cloos and James Travers

The National Archives (UK)



Cotmania at Leeds Art Gallery

Project Archivist Jane Speller explores the making of *Re-thinking John Sell Cotman*, a major Leeds Art Gallery project, culminating in an exhibition, *Shelter from the Storm*, in the newly refurbished Leeds Art Gallery, which re-opens to the public in October 2017 after a closure of two years.

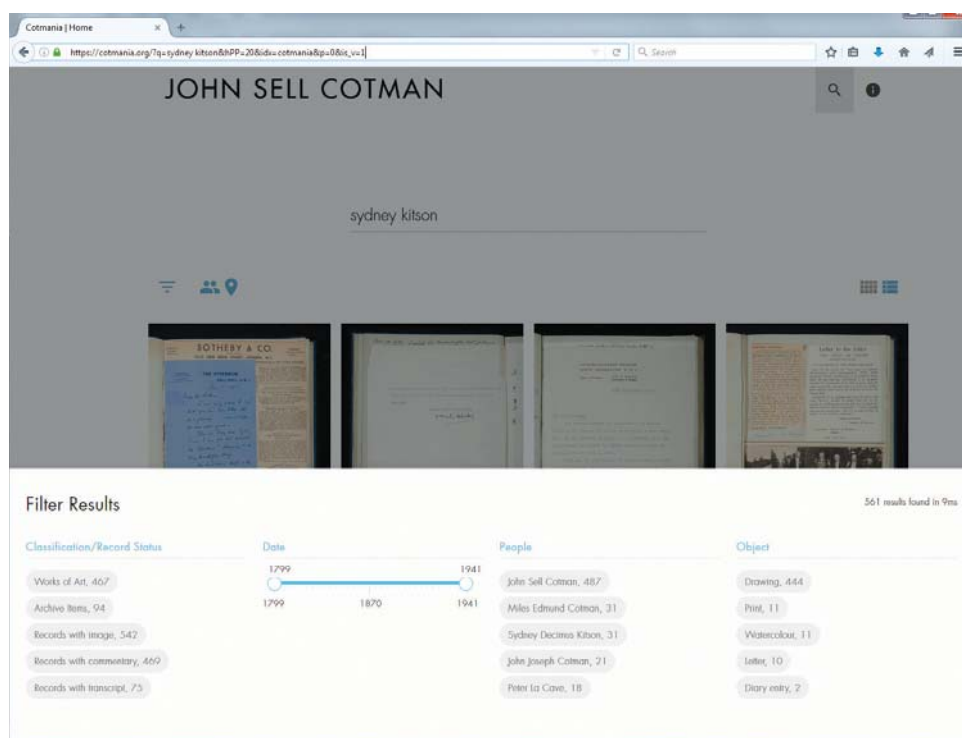
Funded by the Esmée Fairbairn Collections Fund, one of the aims of the *Re-thinking John Sell Cotman* project was to introduce new audiences to the Leeds Art Gallery's important collection of John Sell Cotman (1782-1842) watercolours and drawings and the archive of Cotman biographer Sydney Decimus Kitson (1871-1937). In addition to the archivist, the project harnessed the expertise of the Project Manager and Assistant Curator of Fine Art, Theodore Wilkins, and Harewood Professor Emeritus of Fine Art at the University of Leeds, David Hill.

The great passion of Leeds architect Sydney Kitson was collecting watercolours by English Romantic artists. John Sell Cotman was his main interest and over the course of his life, he collected more than a thousand Cotman works. Kitson wrote what is still considered to be the definitive biography of Cotman: *The Life of John Sell Cotman* (Faber & Faber, 1937). His collecting and writing activities over an intensive ten year period between 1926 and 1937 are detailed in his archive, primarily through a series of 12 bound research diaries titled, *Cotmania*.

Joining the project team in October 2016, my initial task was to catalogue the archive and to work with Wilkins to create a bespoke, multi-functional catalogue which would sit within the *Re-thinking John Sell Cotman* website (www.cotmania.org) developed by Wilkins as a user-friendly portal into the Leeds collections (Cotman and Kitson). A volunteer team of ten was recruited and trained to assist with the cataloguing and transcribing.

I developed a creative partnership with Wilkins whose novel combination of coding and web development expertise and understanding of collections management systems was vital to the success of the project. Initial discussions about the catalogue centred on the differences

“Discussions
centred on the
differences
between
archive and art
collections”



Cotman catalogue screenshot.
©Leeds Museums and
Galleries, 2017.

between archive and art collections. The cataloguing of a museum collection centres on the object/work of art. The cataloguing of an archive on the other hand gives more significance to the record's place within a collection and to original order. Although relational, modern museum collection management systems have a flat/web like structure. Archive collection management systems however, differ in that their arrangement is hierarchical (ISAD(G) compliant). The challenge was to make sense of these differences and unify the two parts. In practice a difficult task involving creating two catalogues brought together through a separate search index.

By July 2017 the main features of the catalogue were in place. Work undertaken includes:

Design and Build: Creating a new collection management system to capture and store archive data. This was UX (user experience) designed with simplicity and ease of use at the core. We used Markdown a lightweight easy to use mark-up language.

Collection datasets: The two datasets (artworks and archives) remain separate (to allow their different structures to persist) but linked by date, people, place and subject. The search index harmonises the two. Key constituents are indexed and linked to browseable resources, e.g. biographies, which were generated in-house.

Discoverability: Data is machine readable and can be understood as 'things not strings', i.e. real world entities that hold meanings and connect with people, places, events and concepts.

Digitisation: Many item level entries (and every page of the Cotmania volumes) have an individual image, visible alongside their transcriptions. A powerful IIIF zoom function aids viewing.

Search function: A cloud based search engine enables a full-text, numerical, and faceted search capable of delivering real-time results from the first keystroke. Users can search and filter in a number of different ways. For example, by collection; by record status, e.g. 'record with transcription' or 'record with image'; by date; and by type, e.g. watercolour, photograph, and so forth.

The success of this work has far-reaching implications in terms of using this model to make other Leeds Arts Galleries and Museums collections discoverable. It also successfully piloted new ways of working with volunteers; working in a cohesive team; working remotely (making crowd sourcing a reality); and creating a new volunteer role profile, 'Super Volunteer' - allowing the transcription work of the team to continue beyond the end of the project.

For more about the progress of the project see the Leeds Museums and Art Galleries blog,
www.secretlivesofobjects.blog

Jane Speller
Leeds Art Gallery

Creative Destruction: the National Gallery of Ireland refurbishment reveals hidden treasures

In 2011 the National Gallery of Ireland closed the doors of its Milltown and Dargan Wings to begin an ambitious and essential refurbishment programme. We have just re-opened after an arduous six year process, but there is no doubt that the disruption was well worth it.

There had for many years been issues with water damage, dampness and climate control that made these buildings inappropriate to house the national art collection. The refurbishment objective was to transform the gallery back to its original beauty, while ensuring it was a useable and modern space. For example, we wanted to keep the entrance on Clare Street open, where the café and bookshop would still be available, and the hanging space in the Millennium Wing and Beit Wing that allow highlights from the collection and some curated exhibitions to be open to the public.

In the six-year meantime, the contractors built a 'buffer zone' so that visitors to the gallery would have no idea of the wholesale demolition that was occurring just feet from where they were! We had other major 'space' issues to manage. With buildings such as this a substantial amount of space during a major refurbishment can be taken up with plant, which in a city centre space has traditionally been placed on rooftops. Given the

absolute requirement for light to be brought into the gallery spaces through the glass roofs this was not a viable option for us, so we excavated the forecourt and created an underground space where all plant could be located, entirely unseen. The current trending joke in the gallery is that when we are asked where all the money for the refurbishment has gone, we say we buried it!

If you had been a regular, casual visitor during the refurbishment, you would have seen the gallery encased in scaffolding for an extended period and might have believed that the work was proceeding at a slow pace. Internally however, the construction workers were undertaking the painstaking and nail-biting task of removing all the original structural supports from the building and placing it on temporary pins, while running the plant from the forecourt into the fabric of the building. From an insider's perspective it was remarkable to witness how this beautiful, Victorian building could be subjected to such demolition while original features remained protected.

From my perspective this refurbishment turned into a very special archival project. The building had undergone various refurbishments throughout its 150 years, but nothing on this scale. We knew it would be a fundamentally different space at the conclusion of the project. We wanted

Site objects.
Image by
permission
of the
National
Gallery of
Ireland



Merrion Square
Forecourt July 2014.
Image by permission
of the National
Gallery of Ireland



Site objects.
Image by
permission
of the
National
Gallery of
Ireland





Setting timelapse cameras in the roof. Image by permission of the National Gallery of Ireland

to record the process to the best of our ability, and record/keep anything that might contribute to the story of the institution to date and in the future. Fundamental to this was establishing a relationship with the construction company from the very beginning. Once the site has been handed to them it is entirely in their control, so we were extremely lucky that they understood our viewpoint and were happy to work with us. Over the course of the project the company allowed us to enter the site and place time-lapse cameras in strategic locations to record significant events, such as the raising of the roofs and the removal of the floors, as well as periodically photographing the works as they progressed.

The company also worked with us to ensure that any objects found that might illuminate the story of the gallery and its building were saved. This ended up including numerous examples of old alcohol bottles and cigarette packages, pieces of coving, small sections of tiled floors, scraps of wallpaper, old conservation materials, and the last small section of pipe that



Forecourt excavation. Image by permission of the National Gallery of Ireland

had run gas into the gallery when the rooms had been lit by gaslight many decades ago... I could go on. So while the public can now enjoy our stunning refurbished rooms, behind the scenes in the archive we are, as always, getting down to the job of processing the material that the refurbishment

Site objects. Image by permission of the National Gallery of Ireland



revealed. It may be a little more rustic than the grand art collections we are used to dealing with but no less fascinating.

Leah Benson

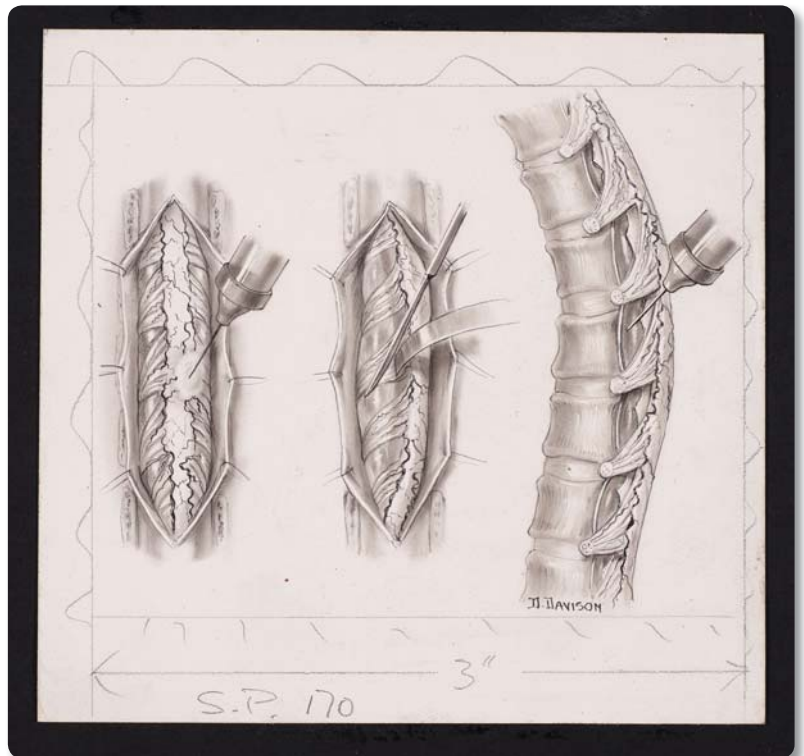
National Gallery of Ireland

Art and medicine: complementing patient records with Medical illustrations

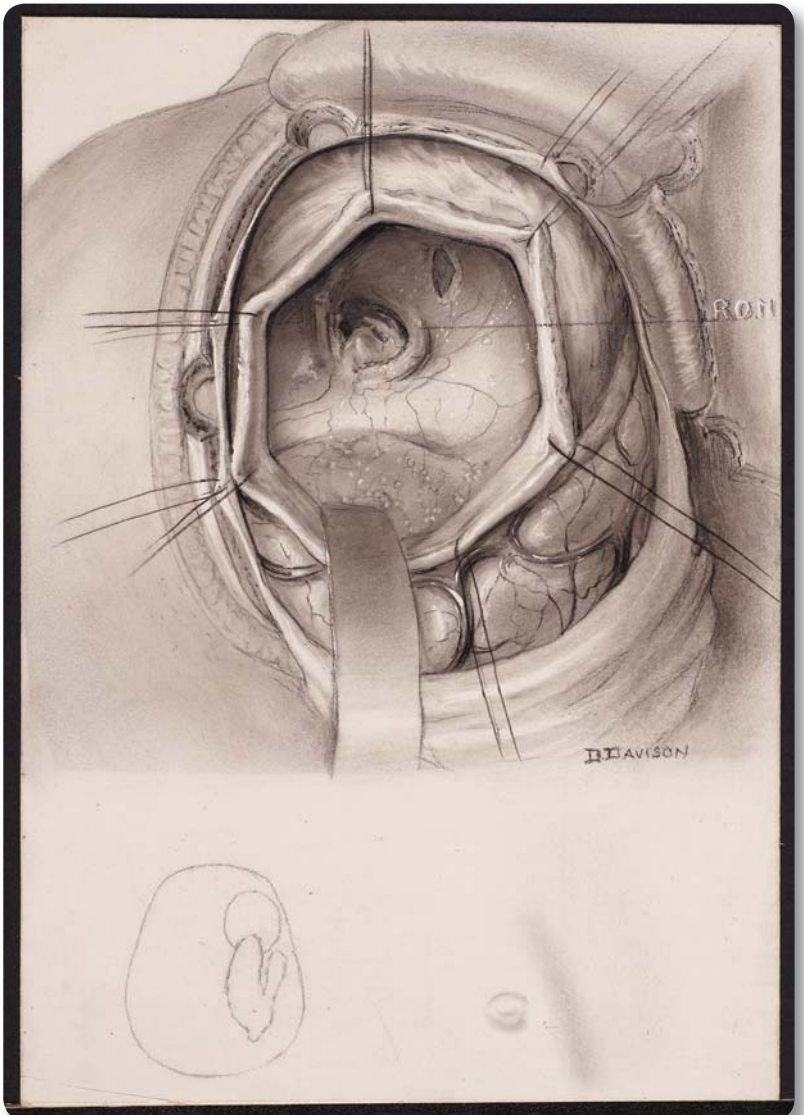
Karen Rushton looks at the challenges of implementing different cataloguing standards (ISAD(G) and SPECTURM) for different collections, while still making them accessible for users.

A recent Wellcome Trust funded project at the University of Manchester has seen efforts to catalogue a collection of neurosurgical case files alongside a collection of medical artwork dating from the 1920s to the 1950s. The case files belonged to 20th century neurosurgeon Sir Geoffrey Jefferson (1886-1961) whilst the related artwork was created by medical artist Dorothy Davison (1890-1984). It was vital that the cataloguing process maintained the strong relationship between these two collections and acknowledged the role of medical artwork as a common tool for the communication of ideas between medical professionals and not just as a single piece of art.

The implementation of different cataloguing standards and methods, EAD/ISAD(G) for archive collections and SPECTRUM for visual collections, creates an arbitrary divide between collections based on format that is not necessarily recognised by users. This was exacerbated further at the University of Manchester by the hosting of the resulting catalogues on different platforms. To overcome this it was decided to create a crosswalk between EAD and SPECTRUM to maintain the necessary adherence to national and



Operation on the spinal cord, 1952. Copyright of the University of Manchester.



Operation for cholesteatomatous cyst, 1949. Copyright of the University of Manchester.

international standards, whilst breaking down the barriers created by professional approaches to different materials. The necessary guidance was found in the work of P. Shepherd and R. Pringle “Mapping descriptive standards across sectors: a comparison of ISAD(G) and SPECTRUM”, *Journal of the Society of Archivists* vol. 23 issue 1, (2002) pp.17-34. As a result, it has been possible to link the relevant aspects of SPECTRUM to EAD tags, thus making it compatible with the rest of the University’s archive catalogues and with the ArchivesHub.

The importance in maintaining the links between the two is demonstrated by the detailed image of the operation on the spinal cord. There is very little additional information with the image itself, however links to the patient case file tells us that the patient was suffering from meningitis and paralysis of both legs, and was operated upon to drain a cyst anterior to the spinal cord. Likewise the images add more weight to the information provided in the case files especially in their ability to draw out specific details considered to be important by the surgeon.

The work in this collection is clearly that of an accomplished artist and whilst they can now stand alone as images to be appreciated in their own right, they began life as a record of a surgeon’s work to be used in publications and lectures. Medical artwork from this period was commonly used to enhance the work of medical professionals and medical artists were held in high regard for the value they could bring. In recent years this has largely been superseded by modern photography and there are interesting comparisons to be made with the contemporary photography in the collection. A photograph of the operation for cholesteatomatous cyst is housed alongside an artist’s drawings, and whilst it is a clear and accurate image, the artist has been able to enhance this by highlighting relevant details and removing extraneous elements.

The artwork is further supported by a separate collection of Davison’s working sketches and notes, which demonstrate the processes involved in producing such works. This reflects the different techniques used and the methodology behind the formation of the detailed final product. The sketches also often feature notes from Jefferson in which he offers opinions and corrections to ensure the final piece is anatomically correct and accurately reflects the operation or specimen it depicts.

All three collections (Dorothy Davison Artwork- VFA.8; Geoffrey Jefferson Case Notes - JCN; Dorothy Davison Working Sketches - DDS) are available to use at the University of Manchester Library.

Karen Rushton

University of Manchester

The David King collection

Morwenna Roche explores the David King collection at the Tate archive.

David King was a designer, artist, photographer, and a collector. The David King collection, which relates to twentieth-century Russian and socialist history, was acquired by the Tate in 2016. It comprises a large photographic and poster archive, together with a library, varied objects and ephemera.

He began his training in 1959 at the London School of Printing and Graphic Arts, where he was introduced to Soviet constructivist design and political graphics before working as art editor at the *Sunday Times* magazine for ten years. In the early 1970s whilst trying to locate images of Trotsky for a publication he found that in several of the official Soviet archives,



Just some of the many red cabinets the collection was stored in at David King's House. ©Tate



A rare photograph of Trotsky and Kamenev at a speech given by Lenin in 1920. ©Tate

Trotsky (along with many other individuals) had been all but eradicated from the records. Inspired by this censorship David over several decades unearthed and amassed several hundred thousand images, books, ephemera, and posters not only of Trotsky, but also of the Russian Revolution, the history of the Soviet Union, mugshots taken during the great purges and so on. The records were found not only in Russia but from across the world. Over time David's collection also extended into communist China and the world of Chairman Mao.

Some of the stories of how he found the material are at least as interesting as the photographs themselves! His work has ensured that thousands of people who 'disappeared' during the Soviet-era are no longer forgotten and now have a voice and place in history.

Using these materials he published several books; *'Trotsky: A Documentary'* with Francis Wyndham, *'The Commissar Vanishes'* which concerns the doctoring of images by Stalin, *'Red Star over Russia'* a visual history of the Soviet Union, and one relating to his collection of posters some of which have already been exhibited at Tate Modern *'Russian Revolutionary Posters: From Civil War to Socialist Realism, from Bolshevism to the End of Stalinism'*. Sadly, David died in 2016: shortly after his death we acquired all of his wonderful material.

How did we go about cataloguing this vast and unique collection? In the first instance it was divided between three workgroups at the Tate; Library, Archive and Posters, with of necessity several cataloguers being hired in each department. Most of the archive material arrived in several cabinets (aptly coloured red) and were already well organized: each one had been sorted either by person (e.g. Stalin, Lenin, Trotsky) and then in chronological order or into specific events. For example, there were two cabinets



The collection has a number of objects including these pin badges, showing images of Lenin and from the space race. ©Tate



Images of some of the thousands of people arrested during the 1930s for 'crimes against the state'. ©Tate

devoted to 1917, with each drawer relating to a month within that tumultuous year. There were also several boxes of objects and ephemera; such as statues of Mao, Marx, pin badges, papercuts and even a Soviet chess clock! David never used a computer to create the layout for his books so he made many photocopies and would arrange these alongside the original material until he got the layout to his satisfaction - there were several boxes of these photocopies to catalogue. This arrangement and David's organisation enabled us to catalogue the collection in a relatively straightforward manner and divide it into three sub-fonds:

- The David King Picture Library
- Books written by David King
- Objects, 3D items and ephemera.

The remaining challenge was safe preservation without limiting the utility for researchers. The photographic material is of all different sizes and formats; prints, slides, photocopies and original negatives and transparencies. A conservator was hired for the project to survey the entire collection. She recommended packaging of the material into

melinex sleeves which are to be placed in clam shell boxes, so researchers can easily view the material without having to handle the images themselves. In addition, specialist boxes are being made for some of the small objects such as the pin badges, so these can be viewed easily whilst being conserved correctly. The larger sculptures (such as of Chairman Mao) are being photographed and will be sent to our off-site storage facility, as he and the others sadly won't fit on our shelves!

During cataloguing, some material from the collections was selected by a group of curators to be in the exhibition 'Red Star Over Russia' at Tate Modern, that will be opening in November 2017, to tie in with the centenary of the Russian Revolution. The David King collection will be available for researchers to use in the Tate Library and Archive Hyman Kreitman Reading Rooms from November 2017.

Morwenna Roche

Tate Archive

Animal analogies: creative signatures from the Churchill Archives Centre's collections

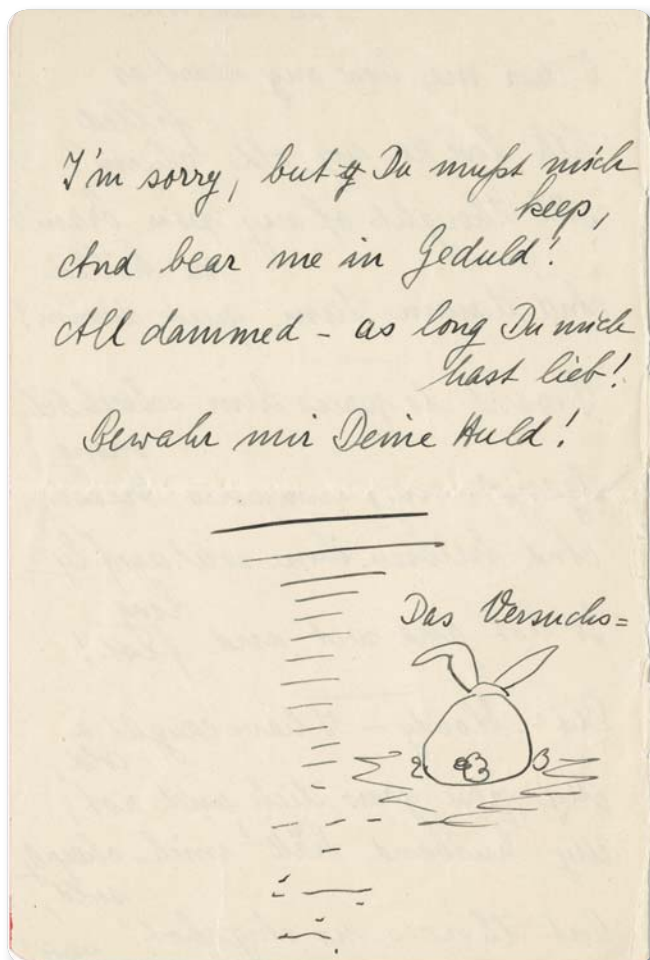
Julia Schmidt explores the hidden art in the Churchill Archives Centre

The Churchill Archives Centre holds the papers of almost 600 important political, military and scientific figures from the Churchill era and after, most famously the papers of Sir Winston Churchill himself. As the centre collects modern personal papers, it might not come as a surprise that a number of documents include material

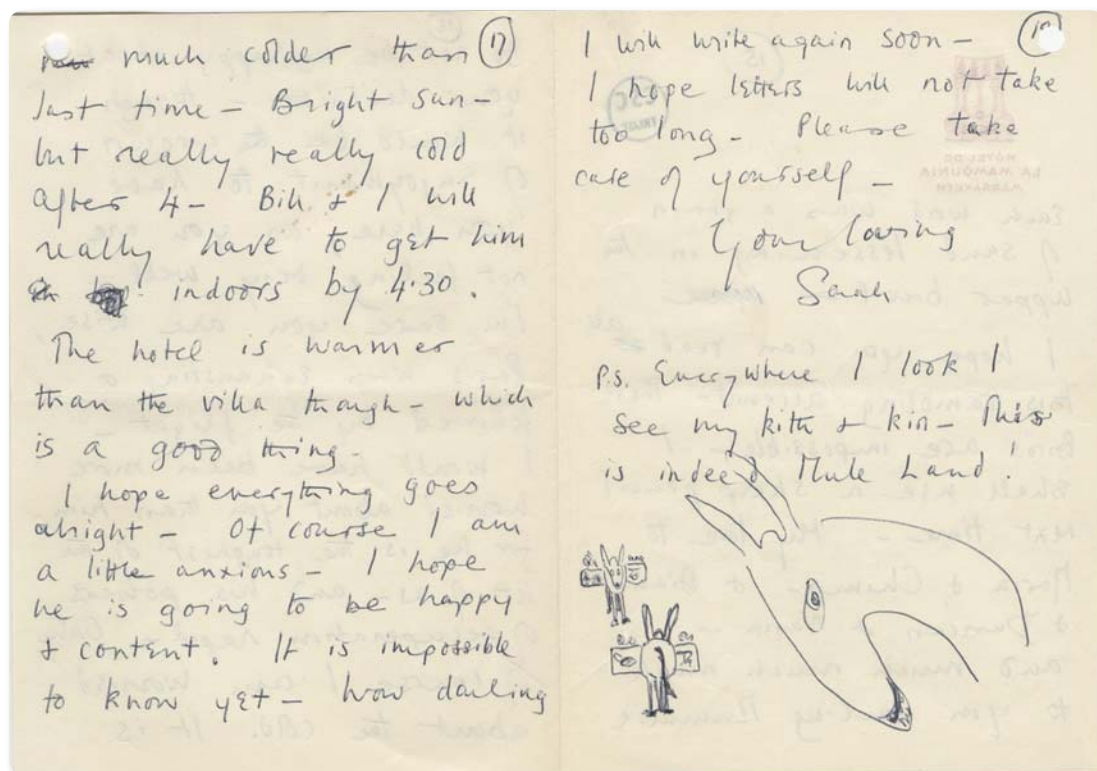
of a more personal nature. In addition to the written records, the centre's collections include some artwork that ranges from political caricatures to depictions of everyday experiences, including Churchill's drawings of fellow-schoolboys during his time as a pupil at Harrow and a watercolour found in the midshipman's logbook belonging to the fifteen year-old John de Robeck (later Admiral of the Fleet).

Amongst the rich and varied expressions of creativity found amongst our records, one group of drawings stands out particularly: hand-drawn signatures, in which animals represent the author of the respective letter. Most famously, Sir Winston Churchill and his wife Clementine ended their letters to each other with a small drawing that depicted their pet names - Winston was her pug whilst Clementine was his cat. The same use of simplified animal-drawings accompanying a signature can also be found in letters sent from Sarah Churchill to her family. The third child of Winston and Clementine was known for her stubborn nature and was hence nicknamed 'mule' by her parents. Accordingly, she signed her letters with an abstract drawing of a mule, as for example in her letter from Marrakesh, which she describes as 'Mule Land.'

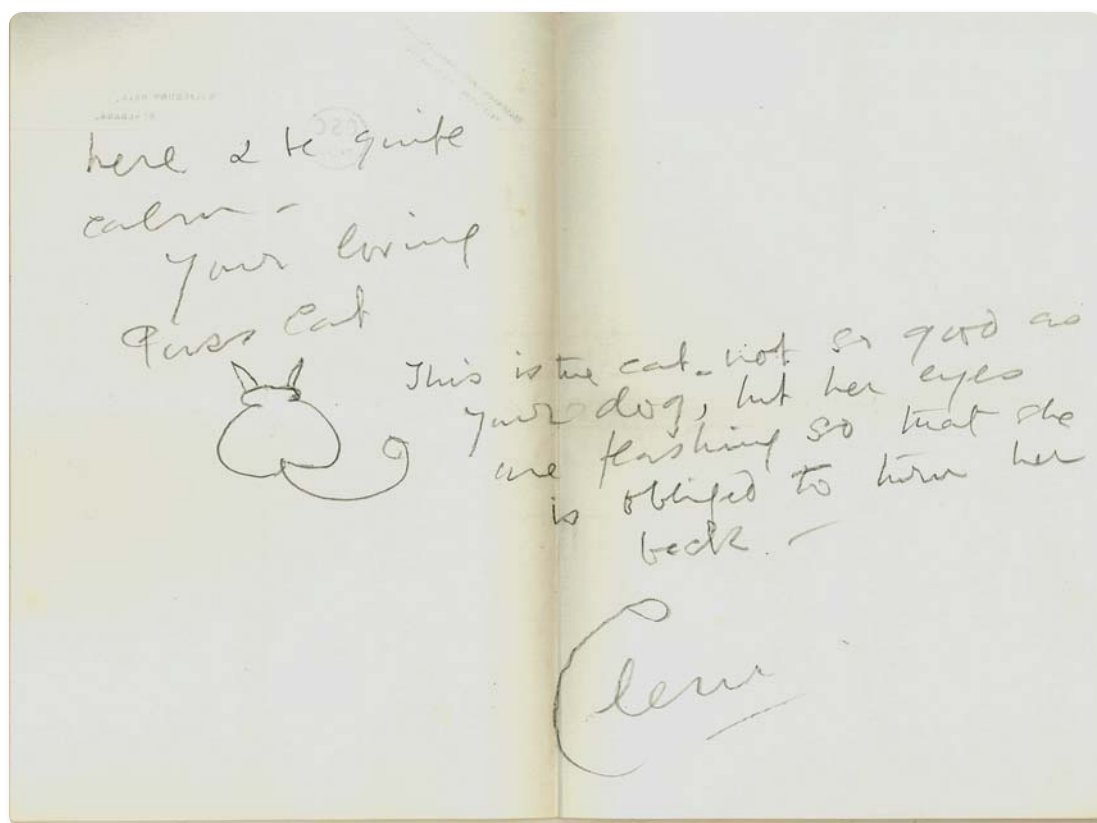
Similar types of humorous and revealing drawings can be found in one of the archives centre's science collections. The papers of the pioneering German physicist and mathematician Max Born include letters sent by his wife, Hedi Born, to Max, which she signed in a strikingly similar fashion to the examples from our core collection, the Churchill Papers. Hedi Born's letters are currently kept alongside her husband's papers, but are extraordinary in their own right. Hedi's letters, sent to friends and family, were famous for her poetic yet frank nature. Drawing as well as writing poetry were in fact two of Hedi's favourite pastimes and she was actively encouraged to pursue these by her husband's friend and colleague, Albert Einstein. Her poems, written half in German and half in English, reflect a unique sense of humour and creativity. Her affectionate letters, in which she expresses her pride in her husband's achievements and her emotional attachment to him, are signed with abstract drawings of a rabbit. In some cases, as for example in a love letter sent instead of an Easter present, this rabbit is turned into an Easter bunny. In another case, in which Hedi Born uses a mixture of English and German to create an ironic poem about their relationship, her signature is turned into a 'Versuchskaninchen' (the German equivalent to a guinea pig).



Letter from Hedi Born to her husband Max, 1914. Signed with a drawing of a 'Versuchskaninchen' (the German equivalent to a guinea pig). Reproduced with permission of the Master and Fellows of Churchill College, Cambridge.



Sarah Churchill's
'mule' signature on a
letter from Marrakesh,
11 December 1947.
Reproduced with
permission of the Master
and Fellows of Churchill
College, Cambridge.



Clementine Churchill's
'cat-signature', 1908.
Reproduced with
permission of the Master
and Fellows of Churchill
College, Cambridge.

The examples from the Churchill and Born collections illustrate how creative expressions, such as the animal-signatures, can shed light on the writer's personality and their relationship to others. They reveal another layer of otherwise hidden information and present a humorous form of self-portraiture. At first sight, these drawings might appear unremarkable and simple, but they enable the reader to understand how the person regarded themselves and how

others perceived them. The drawings, which might not be 'high' art as such, are worth exploring in the context of the collections they are held in as they reveal the personal side of politics and science and act as a reminder of the people behind historic events.

Julia Schmidt

Churchill Archives Centre

‘I love beauty of every kind’: the archive of Claude Muncaster

Here at West Sussex Record Office we are currently in the process of cataloguing an extremely exciting collection: that of local artist, Claude Muncaster.

This remarkably complete collection contains material from Muncaster’s early life up to his death in 1974. The archive includes sketchbooks and loose sketches from c.1916 to 1967 which reflect Muncaster’s development as an artist and his fondness for marine and nautical scenes. His extremely detailed diaries, 1948-1973, record sketching trips, exhibitions, and key personal events, providing a fascinating insight into Muncaster’s life. Extensive professional and personal correspondence also survives, including touching letters between Muncaster and his wife, Primrose. The archive features photographs; a visual record of both Muncaster’s works and his travels around the world which provided inspiration for many of his paintings.

As well as being a talented artist, Muncaster was a prolific writer who wrote for the BBC’s ‘Thoughts for the Day’, produced an autobiography and wrote books recording his many and varied experiences. The archive contains many of Muncaster’s articles, scripts and drafts of his literary work.

Claude Muncaster was born Grahame Hall in 1903 to the well-known artist, Oliver Hall and his wife Sarah in West Chiltington. Muncaster’s school days were somewhat chequered, he himself admitting that he was ‘neither a good nor keen scholar’. However, he put his artistic talents to good use by copying famous paintings for other boys in exchange for them doing his maths work (a subject he struggled with).

Muncaster left school at the age of 15 with the idea of becoming a landscape painter. He sold his first work (a pencil study of an ash tree and ivy) in 1919, the day before his sixteenth birthday. The following year he had two works accepted by the Royal Academy, his paintings began to

sell well, and his work gradually became better known. However, there were comparisons with the work of his father and insinuations that Oliver Hall may have had a hand in these early paintings. In 1922, in order to establish his identity as an artist in his own right, Graham Hall took the surname of Muncaster (an old family name) and the first name Claude. So Claude Muncaster was born.

Over the next few years, Muncaster developed what would prove to be an enduring love of ships and maritime life as a subject for paintings, inspired by sketching trips to Portsmouth and the Port of London. 1926 saw Muncaster’s first one-man exhibition at the Fine Art Society in New Bond Street, with the Tate purchasing one of the paintings from this exhibition (‘Demolition on Hay’s Wharf’).

In subsequent years, Muncaster travelled to Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Liverpool and Manchester, seeking new industrial and shipping subjects. The years also included a prolonged trip to Norfolk and a show in Norwich.

In the wake of a failed love affair, Muncaster took passage on a ship to Spain, setting sail in 1930 and gathering plenty of inspiration on the voyage, one result of which was Muncaster’s election as an Associate of the Royal Society of Painters in Watercolour at the age of just 27.

The years before the war included a voyage to Helsinki on the Swedish barque Favell, to Australia on an ex-German freighter Tasmania, as a deck hand back to Cardiff on the sailing ship Olivebank (which he wrote up in his book *Rolling Round the Horn*), all of which would prove to be grist to Muncaster’s creative mill.

Shortly after his return to England, he met his future wife, Primrose Balfour, at a tennis party at Petworth and the pair were engaged just a fortnight later, marrying in September



An ink drawing commenting on the events surrounding the 1909 People's Budget and the following 1910 election results, 7 February 1910. Archives at the Royal College of Surgeons of England.

The archives of the Western Friendly Medical Club

Archivist Louise King talks about the illustrations in the signature books from the Western Friendly Medical Club

Amongst the collections in the archives at the Royal College of Surgeons of England is one that branches away from the truly surgical nature of others. It is the attendance books from the meetings of the Western Friendly Medical Club (ref. MS0163) dating from 1862 to 1946.

The Western Friendly Medical Club was formed for the purpose of "establishing and maintaining a sociable and convivial intercourse amongst its members". Amongst the first members were T.B. Curling (later President of

this College in 1873), Samuel Cartwright (Surgeon to the Dental Hospital), Charles Hawkins (of St George's and Queen Charlotte's Hospitals) and H. Spencer Smith (Dean of St Mary's Medical School).

The club first met on 20 October 1862, it was formed of 12 members, and would meet on the first and third Monday evenings of the month from October to April. The club's fifth resolution states: "That Whist be played from eight until eleven o'clock, after which no rubber is to be commenced under a penalty of five shillings". The ninth resolution states: "That tea and coffee be handed round at 8 o'clock, biscuits and wine at 9, and that the supper consist of Sandwiches, Oysters, Ham or Tongue, Salad - with or without a Lobster, Wine and Cup. For any other dishes a fine of 5s." Whist was later replaced by bridge as the club game.



A pagan Father Christmas bestows seasonal goodwill upon the members of the Club, 17 December 1866. Archives at the Royal College of Surgeons of England.

The books contain the signatures of members attending meetings, occasional notes on activities at the meetings, photographs of the members and poems written by members. What makes these volumes stand out is that each volume is decorated with drawings, paintings and sketches, which we believe were produced by different members, presumably at a later date.

The illustrations range from seasonal - bees and butterflies in summer, ice skating in winter - to card playing (naturally) as well as contemporary social and political events. Sometimes they manage to get card playing into a commentary on current affairs. The styles vary so a pagan Father Christmas is depicted in a different media and is more colourful than some of the political commentaries. Some illustrations are less refined than others. Illustrations by different artists are clear as you look through the pages of just one volume because it might cover twenty years' worth of meetings.

From 1934 onwards, there are no illustrations included on the pages of the books. After 1939, only three meetings were recorded. The club met for nearly a century, before



The death of King Edward VII recorded in a suitable regal illustration, 23 May 1910. Archives at the Royal College of Surgeons of England.

“Each volume is decorated with drawings, paintings and sketches”

winding up their activities and donating their possessions to the College in 1952. The members had included many prominent surgeons such as William Watson Cheyne, Robert Davies-Colley and Lord Webb-Johnson (former President of this college, 1941-1948) as well as other medical men. Although we hold other collections that contain excellent illustrations by talented medics, this collection is always a hit with any audience whenever it is displayed.

Louise King

Royal College of Surgeons of England

Using arts archives to create more arts archives: the Thomas Pitfield effect

Heather Roberts, archivist at the Royal Northern College of Music, discusses how they have used their Thomas Pitfield collection to inspire students.

At the very least, the arts and its mediums presuppose certain purposes. On very basic levels, music is meant to be listened to, art is meant to be looked at, and poems are meant to be read.

When you have arts archives, it gets even better. You get the sketches and the inspirations, the changes and the scribbles. All this feeds into the context that enriches archives and the arts, boosting our understanding of something's meaning and relevance and inspire new responses, new works.

Especially in, say, a College full of arty creatives.

A Royal Northern College of Music hiccup

It should be simple. We are a building full of musicians, singers and creative types. They search for inspiration, guidance and resources to help them make the best of their time here.

Take a room full of all that is in the archive and match up the supply and demand and voila! You have a well-used and satisfying service.



Thomas Pitfield engraved angel choir Christmas card printing block, nd. Ref TP.5.1.1.4. Copyright The Pitfield Trust.

Joint display with Manchester Fashion Institute, Mar 2017. Copyright RNCM Archives





Thomas Pitfield's elephant mask from his play, 'Adam and the Creatures', 1960s. Ref TP5.2.3. Copyright The Pitfield Trust.

Sadly, that isn't the case. Traditionally, our archives had been used mainly as an academic research resource. Whilst a completely valid use of the collection, it is not the interest of the majority of (what should be) our ready user group.

I needed something that would bridge this gap. Something that was distinct, rich and accessible enough that it could charm all those who glanced it. An arts archive that I could present solely as art, rather than an archive.

I needed Thomas Pitfield.

The Thomas Pitfield opportunity

The collection consists of the life and work of Thomas Pitfield (1903-1999) and is exquisite. It contains his artwork, sketchbooks, compositions, writings, poetry, calligraphy, prints, sculptures, costume designs, inventions, posters and all sorts from pretty much his entire life.

All that he designed and created beams with such distinct personality that you look at anything by him and your brain spasms out an uncensored, "That right there is a

Pitfield", in the way that you look at a Picasso and go, "Picasso!"

His interests and influences such as accents, dialect, religion, politics, myth, folklore, wild moors, architecture and more all contributed to every single one of this polymath's passions. It's perfect!

However, just because you know it is good, does not mean that other people will suddenly have an interest. I needed a catalyst.

The Manchester Fashion Institute solution

I met David Leathlean at the Manchester Fashion Institute at an educators/cultural organisations' 'meet and greet' event last year and we got chatting. Another case of supply and demand came up. He needed unique material to introduce to his students so that they could try different ways of working and I just so happened to be displaying one of Pitfield's sketchbooks (one of his 20-something visual diaries).

The plan hatched that his students would come and see the Pitfield sketchbooks and create their own inspired by them. Both their work and the Pitfield collection would

“Think about the archives as art works in order to engage the students.”

then be displayed for all to see at the Royal Northern College of Music.

The results were magnificent. The students took on his processes but most interestingly, they took on his product, his aesthetic. They created their own archives. Physical documents which detailed the journey they explored from start to finish. They created evidence, which contained context, which became art and archive in the same fell swoop.

An unexpected outcome but one welcomed with a rather enthusiastic flourish by myself. This would be perfect for our students. Using archives of the arts as artworks in themselves to inspire new artworks which would then become their own archives.

So, we installed the exhibition and it was a smash hit. Staff and visitors were investigating it with a curiosity hitherto reserved for things other than the archives. It showed not just what Thomas Pitfield did as an artist, but what his collection does for other artists.

An ongoing experiment

All of our services are so different, but in some ways, we may encounter the same problems of gathering momentum and interest in our collections. Whilst I am still awaiting the flood of bookings about the collection, this little experiment proved very useful in helping me think about the archives as, sometimes, art works first and foremost in order to reach the archive service's goals of engaging the students. If you've had similar success or hiccups then I'd love to hear from you.

Heather Roberts

Royal Northern College of Music

Exile art in the archive: The papers of Margarete Berger-Hamerschlag

Dr Clare George explores the varied artwork in the collection of a Jewish exile living in the UK

The archive of Austrian-British artist Margarete Berger-Hamerschlag is one of a number of collections of personal papers of German-speaking exiles from Nazi-occupied Europe held by the Institute of Modern Languages Research at the University of London. Since 2012, the Miller Trust has been funding a cataloguing and promotion programme for these archives, some of which had remained unlisted and undiscoverable to researchers since they were deposited in the 1970s. Many of them belonged to figures known for their cultural or literary activities in German-speaking countries before their emigration. It included theatre directors, actors and writers and contains valuable information on the contribution this wave of immigrants made to British culture. Like the other exile collections, the Berger-Hamerschlag archive tells the story of the refugee in the 1930s: alienation, loss and a life-long struggle to fit in in a new homeland, but it is the only one to tell this story through art.

Born in Vienna in 1902 to Jewish heritage, Berger-Hamerschlag attended art classes as a child which inspired her to pursue the subject as a career. Significant moments of her early years are depicted in a wonderful series of paintings entitled *Childhood autobiography in pictures*, such as this one of herself with her first boyfriend, captioned “Hans sagte, du hast wunderschöne Augen” (“Hans said you have wonderful eyes”).



The Lost Tune, c.1942. Margarete Berger-Hamerschlag Archive. Copyright University of London

In the 1920s, she worked as an illustrator and artist and exhibited her work in Vienna and Frankfurt in Germany. By the age of 20, she was editor of the fashion magazine *Wiener Mode*. Further success came when she was asked to design costumes for a production of *La Morte di Dottor Faust* by the Italian pioneering theatre director, Anton Bragaglia, for his futurist theatre in Rome in 1928. The Faust designs in the archive are all the more significant given that few records of any kind exist of this highly acclaimed avant-garde theatre. Two of the designs were exhibited at the Jewish art gallery in London, the Ben Uri, in 2012.

In 1933, with work hard to find in impoverished Austria, Berger-Hamerschlag and her architect husband Josef Berger emigrated first to British-Mandate Palestine and later, in 1935, to the UK. Within three years, all hope of returning to Austria disappeared with Nazi Germany's annexation of Austria.

In London at that time the refugees who had already left Germany were some of the most politically engaged and culturally active figures in the country, but in the UK many were struggling to make ends meet. In one letter



An autobiography in pictures, No. XXI, c.1950. Margarete Berger-Hamerschlag Archive. Copyright University of London

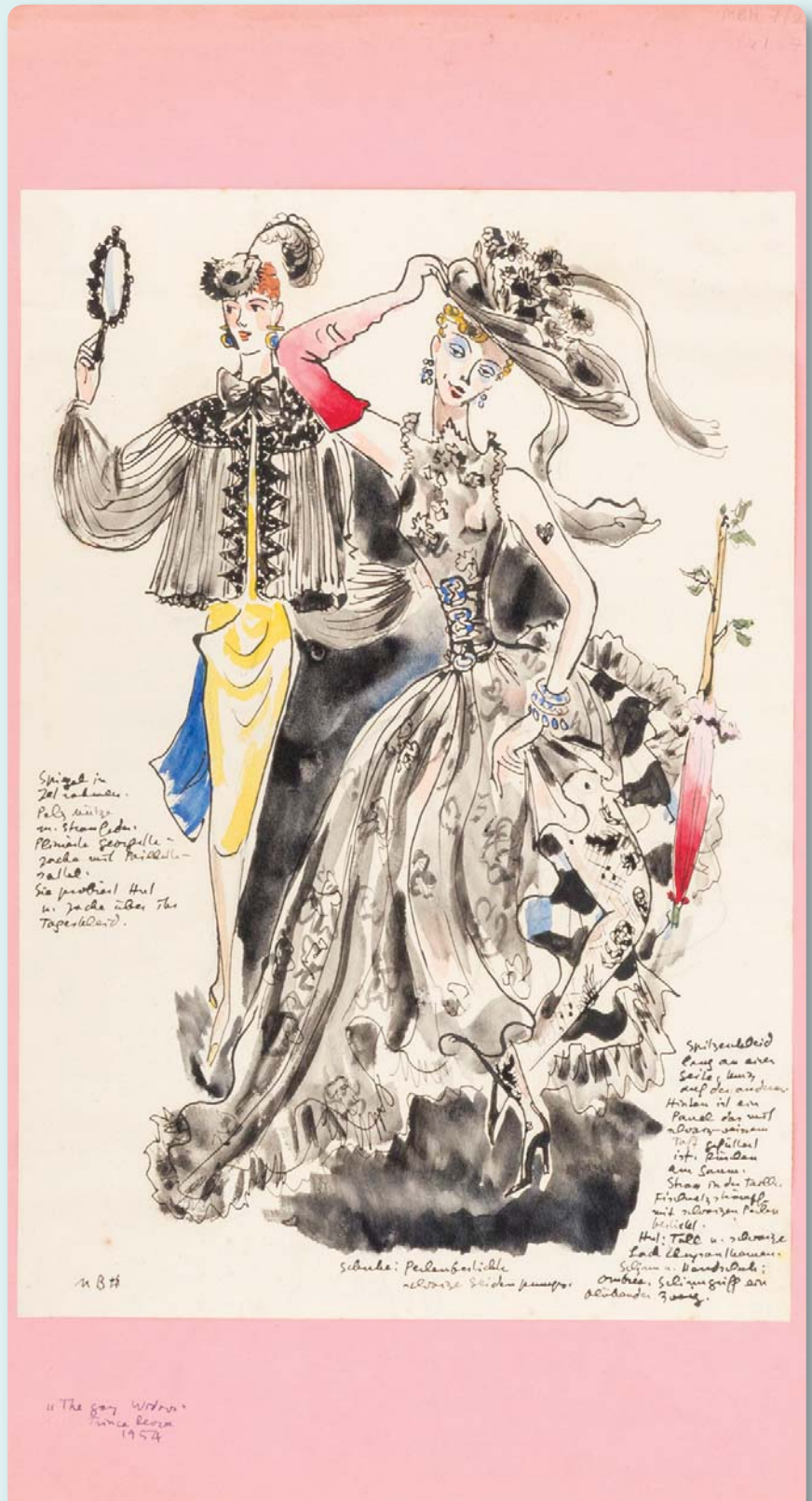


Costume design (1) for *La Prostituta*, 1928. Margarete Berger-Hamerschlag Archive. Copyright University of London

from this period, Berger-Hamerschlag gently mocks the advice she has been given to host some dinner parties, which would supposedly help her establish herself and build her reputation within the sorts of circles who might buy her art. Given the state of poverty in which she lived, how was she supposed to start giving dinner parties?

During Second World War the couple faced the same fate as many other refugees families: separation, first as a result of evacuation from London for Berger-Hamerschlag and her young son, then in 1940 with the imprisonment of her husband in line with the UK policy of mass internment of so-called enemy aliens. Correspondence during these periods shows how strong a role art played in their relationship. Their letters are littered with sketches of the people and surroundings of their everyday lives, but also of the longed-for places they might have been in had their lives not been disrupted by the rise of Nazism.

In the post-war period Berger-Hamerschlag settled in the UK but resumed her travels and painting in Europe. In 1954 she returned to Italian theatre, designing a wide range of costumes for Italian impresario Achilles Trinca, whose identity has been only been uncovered during the cataloguing process through detailed research. She also began writing - mainly children's stories for her son, with beautiful illustrations shown here. However, her greatest success as a writer was with a book on her experience of teaching art education in youth clubs. *Journey into a Fog* contained 16 of her own illustrations, notably her paintings of teddy boys, and caused a sensation in the UK with its exposure of the level of disengagement and social problems amongst the young people she taught. One critic described it as "a holding record, with material that stays long in the memory", which perhaps also sums up the archive she left when she died prematurely in 1958.



The archive catalogue will shortly be available via the Senate House Library website, and full access to the archive can be arranged through Senate House Library's Special Collections team.

Dr Clare George
University of London

Costume design for *The Merry Widow*, Italy, 1954. Margarete Berger-Hamerschlag Archive. Copyright University of London



Voices from the British Art World: National Life Stories' Artists' Lives

Dr Cai Parry-Jones looks at the Artists' Lives oral history project

"My son, who is a painter now, did wonderful drawings from a very early age, most imaginative. My drawings didn't take off in that sense, till I was about 11 or 12. Before that they were boring little ponies, little figures, little houses. I just don't understand how it all emerged from that"

Elisabeth Frink (1930-1993) interviewed by Sarah Kent, 28 December 1992, *Artists' Lives*, C466/12.

Initiated in 1990 by National Life Stories (the charitable trust based in the oral history department at the British Library) and run in partnership with the Tate Archive and close collaboration with the Henry Moore Institute, *Artists' Lives* is an oral history project that aims to record the personal and professional experiences of British visual artists, curators, dealers and critics, in their own words.

The painter and photographer, Eileen Agar (1899-1991), was the first person to be interviewed as part of the project, which now comprises over 380 life story interviews - 192 of which are now freely available to listen to online via the art portal on British Library Sounds (www.sounds.bl.uk/Oral-history/Art). To explore the collection in full, please search the British Library's Sound and Moving Image catalogue (sami.bl.uk) using the collection reference C466. A list of individuals recorded between 1990 and 2016 is also available via the Artists' Lives project webpage (www.bl.uk/projects/national-life-stories-artists-lives).

Although thematically linked by the subject of 'art', the interdisciplinary and biographical makeup of the life story interviews in *Artists' Lives* will also be of interest to researchers of modern British social and cultural history.



Dame Elizabeth Frink and John McKenna. ©Johnsculpt

“*Artists’ Lives is an invaluable archive for art historians and researchers, and has resulted in a thriving public engagement programme.*”

Themes and topics discussed in the interviews are plentiful and varied, ranging from personal experiences and memories of childhood to life in Britain during the Second World War.

Artists’ Lives is not only an invaluable archive for art historians and researchers, but has also resulted in a thriving public engagement programme. A double CD, *Connecting Lines: Artists Talk about Drawing*, was published in 2010 (funded by the Rootstein Hopkins Foundation), while extracts from the project, rather than being in a subsidiary role, have led several exhibitions, including *Artists’ Lives: Speaking of the Kasmin Gallery* (Tate Britain, November 2016 - January 2018); *In Their Own Words: Artists’ Voices from The Ingram Collection* (The Lightbox, Woking, May - July 2017); and *South Asian Modernists 1953-63* at the Whitworth, Manchester (September 2017 - April 2018).

Artists’ Lives is an on-going oral history project that relies on external funding from sponsorship, as well as charitable and individual donations. National Life Stories is grateful to all its sponsors but in particular to the steady support of The Henry Moore Foundation, The Rootstein Hopkins Foundation and The Yale Center for British Art.

Dr Cai Parry-Jones

British Library

Art and archives inspiring the next generation

‘Joe Bach’ and his journey from Poland to the Swansea Valley

In 1942-1943, a film ‘The Silent Village’ was made in Ystradgynlais in the Swansea Valley. It depicted the Nazi obliteration of the Czech mining village of Lidice, where all the men were executed and all the women and children sent to concentration camps. Two years later, the artist Josef Herman arrived in Ystradgynlais. ‘Joe Bach’, as he became quickly known in the locality, had fled the situation in his native Poland.

Herman stayed in Wales for eleven years. Like another great artist driven from his country by intolerance, Paul Robeson, Joe Bach became accepted as true a Welshman as anyone native-born. While in Ystradgynlais, Joe Bach depicted on canvas the life of a Welsh mining community in his unique, distinctively sombre, yet very human way. The true measure of his artistic achievement in this period was in 1951, when the Festival of Britain organisers commissioned him to produce a mural, which he called ‘Miners’. This is now one of the great artistic treasures of Wales and is housed at the Glyn Vivian Art Gallery in Swansea.

Other than his art, Joe Bach’s other lasting legacy is The Josef Herman Art Foundation Cymru, a registered charity that promotes appreciation of the life and work of the artist himself as well as fostering in his name a wider participation in the arts. We seek to do this through the archive collection of Herman’s works, the annual Josef Herman Schools Project, exhibitions, events, lectures and we support an annual prize – Dewis Y Bobl (People’s Choice) - at the



Members of the Josef Herman Foundation attending Archives and Training Session with Tate's Archivist, Adrian Glew. ©Carolyn Davies



Trustees of the Josef Herman Foundation attending an archive training session at their base in The Herman Room, The Welfare, Ystradgynlais. ©Carolyn Davies

National Eisteddfod of Wales. A recent example of our outreach work was an excellent Sky Arts programme on Herman and Ystradgynlais involving Michael Sheen, who also subsequently came to the Welfare Hall, our arts and community centre, for a showing and also Q and A. More about the Foundation is at: www.josefhermanfoundation.org.

The Foundation has also recently been part of the prestigious Tate programme called Transforming Tate Britain: Building Archives and Access, funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund. ARA members may be aware that Archives and Access has enabled refurbishment work at the historic Tate Britain building and supported the digitisation of 52,000 items from the Tate Archive. For Tate this has meant - among other things - open access to the archive for the first time and the creation of new online resources to support public engagement with, and understanding of, archives relating to art.

But there has been since 2012 a (perhaps) less-well-known element that has been vital for smaller organisations like

ours. This Learning Outreach Programme, has involved Tate working with five lead partners across the UK to explore local and national heritage and explore how Tate's new digitised archive could be used in learning projects. We were one of those partners.

Our strand of the learning outreach programme ran for five years up to 2017 and focused on improving access, creating a regional network, growing the skills of the Foundation and its partners, facilitating engagement and use of digital tools, among many others. You can find full details of the programme at: www.tate.org.uk/about/projects/archives-access-learning-outreach-programme.

Locally, thanks to programme funding, we were able to employ a part-time project manager, an administrative assistant and an archive intern for two years. All played a significant part in the development of new resources. The most significant outcome has been the creation of a direct link between the Foundation's collection of Joe Bach's artwork in



The Foundation's Archive Intern, Catrin James, sharing original Herman artwork from the Foundation's collection with pupils of Dolau County Primary School, Pontyclun. ©Carolyn Davies

Ystradgynlais, and Tate's own archive material, as well as the focus on developing local, regional and national network partners, working with schools, developing new audiences and inter-generational work.

We have run a thriving annual school's project since 2000 involving hundreds of children and young people across south Wales. The project encourages pupils to access, engage with, and create their own responses to the Foundation's collection, and the life, times, and work of Josef Herman in Ystradgynlais. As part of this, we appoint an 'Artist in Residence' every year to work with the schools; s/he guides visiting pupils around Ystradgynlais, following in the footsteps of Josef Herman, to explore the village, including the valley, chapels, houses and studios where he worked. The pupils then get to look at the collection of original Josef Herman works on display at The Welfare. The project encourages learners to record their experiences through direct observation, e.g. drawing or digital photography/film.

This year the Foundation worked with four secondary schools in four counties, in partnership with University of Wales Trinity Saint David and Swansea College of Art. School pupils visited the Glynn Vivian Art Gallery to see the collection and exhibitions and the University's art studios to undertake a taster session in one of the faculty's programmes, then did workshops back in their classrooms with the Artist in Residence to research, develop and produce creative responses on their experiences, including using our growing community archive.

The Foundation also recently secured funding and installed purpose-built archive storage units that conform to recognised archival standards to hold the collection. Thanks to support from West Glamorgan Archive Service, we have also been able to create an Archive Location Index. This work will help to protect and preserve the collection for the future, and we have already had visits from sixth-formers, local students and two community groups to put us through our paces.

Carolyn Davies and Professor Hywel Francis

Josef Herman Art Foundation Cymru

Art into textiles

Helen Taylor examines the artistic merits of the Heriot-Watt University textile collection.

There is a close connection between art and textile design and in the 20th century many artists began to produce designs for industry. The textile collection at Heriot-Watt University's Scottish Borders Campus in Galashiels is a research resource focusing on Scottish textile heritage and includes many collections showing the close connection between art and the textile industry.

By the 1930s, there was a growing appreciation in Britain of the importance of design as a commercial activity and the need for government direction. In the nineteenth-century William Morris had emphasised the creative worth of artisanal craft skills such as tapestry weaving and hand block printing. Improved transport in major cities also led to the growth of the suburbs and a growing market for affordable furnishings with good design. In 1932 the Gorell Committee reported on the economic implications of the lack of government policy on commercial design. As a result, the Council for Art and Design was established in 1933 to encourage textile education, commercial use of design and convey the cultural importance of design.

Many firms producing textiles, ceramics, carpets, wallpaper and cards began to employ artists as freelance designers which also provided a useful source of income for artists. The archives of Dundee furnishing fabrics company Donald Brothers includes examples of many such artists and one interesting aspect is that as art was regarded as an acceptable area of study for women, many women worked in commercial design. The collection includes pattern books, 1500 loose fabric samples, photographs and publicity material from 1896-1973. The collection has benefitted from support from Museum and Galleries Scotland and the Esme Fairbairn Foundation to conserve photograph and rehouse half the largest fabric samples.



Coopersale, design by Eva Crofts, 1939. Donald Brothers. Image courtesy of Heritage and Information Governance, Heriot-Watt University.



Jacket by Bernat Klein in pink and green space dyed wool, giving the effect of orange, c.1968. Image courtesy of Heritage and Information Governance, Heriot-Watt University.



Delamere-blue, design by Marion Dorn, 1939. Donald Brothers. Image courtesy of Heritage and Information Governance, Heriot-Watt University.

One of the most highly respected designers working in Britain in the 1930s was Marion Dorn (1896-1964), who produced six designs for Donald Brothers. Originally from San Francisco, she studied graphic design at Stanford and moved to London in 1923 with graphic designer Ed McKnight Kauffer. She became known initially for batiks and founded her own company in 1934. Her work included designs for Eltham Palace, the Savoy, Claridges and the White House.

Eva Crofts (1895-1946) was the sister of artist Dame Laura Knight and both worked as commercial artists in the 1930s. Eva produced work for Clarice Cliff and Donald Brothers. Her designs have the effect of a rustic wood carving which work well printed on canvas which was a distinctive feature of Donald Brother's work.

www.archives.org.uk

Most artists working in industry tended to produce printed rather than woven textile designs. Creating woven designs requires a working knowledge of weaving and what is possible to achieve. However, art still has an influence in weaving with the application of colour and colour mixing. The most famous artist who moved into designing woven textiles was Bernat Klein (1922-2014). Bernat was born in Serbia and studied at Bezalel School of Art before moving to Britain after the war and settling in Galashiels in the 1950s. He was greatly influenced by impressionists and created the effect of the Pointillist artist Seurat in woven and knitted textiles by his use of space dyeing to create "dots of colour". His use of colour mixing was inspired by his own paintings, which were colour studies where he broke down the colours in nature. He was particularly skilled at mixing colours together to create the illusion of another colour. In the 1970s he developed a closer connection between his art and textiles by using images of his paintings to create woven tapestries and printed synthetic jersey, and finally painting directly onto his fabric. The collection includes pattern books, fabric samples, costume, wool and knitting patterns photographs, articles and publicity material.

The textile collection has business records and fabric from the Scottish woollen industry from the 1830s to 1990s, tartan and Highland Dress from 1700 to 2010 including early and rare examples, Paisley shawls, costume, international textiles and dress and knitting patterns. The collection is managed by the University's Heritage and Information Governance service and is accessible by appointment. Heriot-Watt University, tel: 0131 451 3218, email: heritage@hw.ac.uk.

Helen Taylor

Heriot-Watt University

Maps and art: a new inspiration

It all started with an innocent enquiry from a local artist to hold a series of arts workshops at The Hive, Worcester. It ended with innovative design and artwork inspired by the collections held by Worcestershire Archive and Archaeology Service (WAAS).

The requests originated from a MapArt Interest Group which now meets at The Hive on a regular basis. Discussions with the group immediately identified WAAS's map collections as a source of inspiration for the artists and art historians involved. For the group this offered a new source of inspiration. There is a wealth of experience within the group using various media to produce maps as pieces of artwork, but the idea of using a local archive as a starting point is new. For the archive service it gave the opportunity to see the maps used in an entirely different way.

WAAS worked with the artists in the initial stages to outline the type of maps available and to introduce the service to new users of archives. After this, they were left to explore the collections and discover their own sources of inspiration.

Over a period of months some fascinating artworks were produced, using a range of techniques including fabrics, mixed



Drains of Kidderminster. Rosie McMinn

media, acrylics and pen. The group felt that there was a real attraction in creating pieces of artwork based on very large scale maps. All maps contain fascinating detail and could, in theory, generate many pieces of artwork, but using large scale maps sidesteps the challenge of choosing which material in a map to use and which to reject.

The artists drew inspiration from quite unexpected aspects of the map, including a piece based on a much-loved allotment layout and an interpretation of a map showing the pattern of drains around Kidderminster! As artists, rather than cartographers, some leeway with accuracy is allowable, but the aim is to produce work that will please whilst retaining its identity as a map.

There has been a groundswell of interest in maps as art, and we are thrilled that Worcestershire is contributing to this growing area in such an interesting and inspiring way. The work produced shows how fascinating maps are generally, how much use can be gleaned from historic maps and what a solid foundation they can provide for new artwork. For the archive team, it introduced a completely new use for the collections.

Dr Lisa Snook

Worcestershire Archive and Archaeology Service

Rosie McMinn

QTMSI, MapArt Course Leader



Path Through the Woods. Cynthia Pearson

Li Yuan-chia (1929–94): Chinese artist and innovative curator

The Chinese artist, Li Yuan-chia (1929–94) distilled the complexities of the universe into four colours (white, black, red, gold) fusing Eastern mysticism with everyday Western materials. While Li remains relatively unknown in the country of his birth, he is recognised as one of the most important Chinese artists of the twentieth century. Today his papers are held at the University of Manchester Library Special Collections while the charity the Li Yuan-chia Foundation preserves and administers his art works (www.lycfoundation.org/).

Li Yuan-chia was a great innovator who worked across a wide range of media, including ink painting, sculpture, performances and participatory works, concrete poetry, film and photography. He also established the LYC Museum and Art Gallery, an experimental venture in participatory art and exhibition space at Banks, Cumbria, near Hadrian's Wall. Li's artistic trajectory crossed many national boundaries. He was born into a peasant family in rural Guangxi Province and moved to Taiwan after the Communist victory. There he studied art and in 1956, with a number of fellow artists, formed the Ton Fan Group, securing his reputation as one of the first Chinese conceptual artists. By the early 1960s Li was on the move again, exchanging the repressive conditions of a Taiwanese regime governed by martial law for the artistic freedoms offered by the European art world. He joined Il Punto ('The Point'), an international artists group formed in Milan in 1961 and subsequently travelled to Bologna where he stayed for four years. After an invitation to exhibit at Signals Gallery in 1965

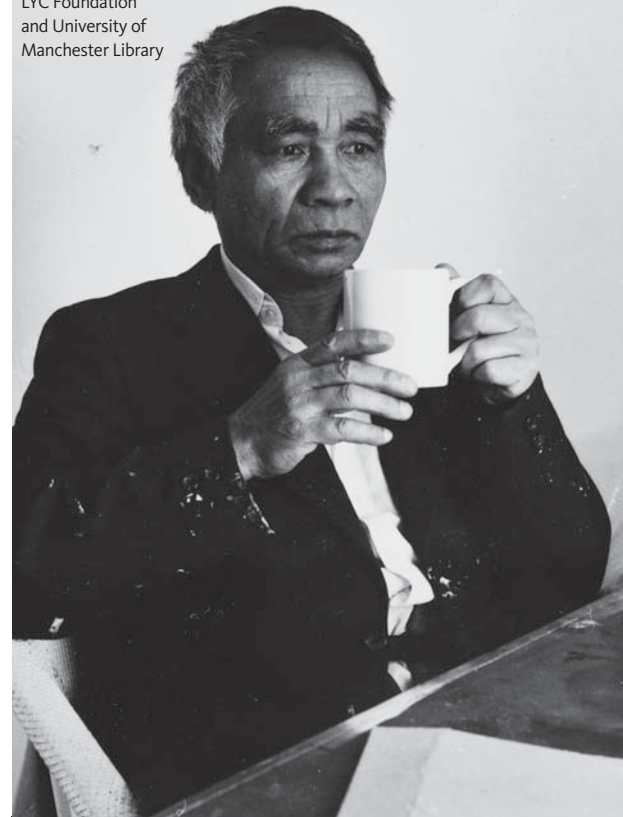
Li became part of the London art scene exhibiting at the Lisson Gallery alongside Dom Sylvester Houédard and David Medalla. While in London he taught himself photography and also began writing poetry, or what he called 'songs'.

By the end of the 1960s Li had left London and moved to Cumbria, where he renovated a dilapidated farmhouse at Banks, near Hadrian's Wall. In 1972, this building opened to the public as the innovative LYC Museum and Art Gallery. Over 300 artists exhibited there, while Li occupied himself in painting, sculpture, installation, photography and poetry. It was a place of tranquillity where art could flourish. The LYC Museum also served as an important 'community space', that included a library, a children's room, a sculpture garden and a small theatre.

The LYC Museum has another fascinating story. The electronic musician, Delia Derbyshire (1937–2001), who is most often remembered for her digital realisation of Ron Grainer's theme tune for Dr Who, was a great friend of Li Yuan-chia. After Delia left the BBC Radiophonic Workshop she spent some time in the mid-1970s living and working at the LYC Museum helping Li run the gallery and printing press and supporting the work of artists and poets. A copy of the 1977 Artist Book No. 4, issued to LYC friends and supporters, bears the signature of both Li and Delia.

Until recently Li remained on the peripheries of the art world but interest in his work is steadily growing with recent exhibitions at the Taiwan Fine

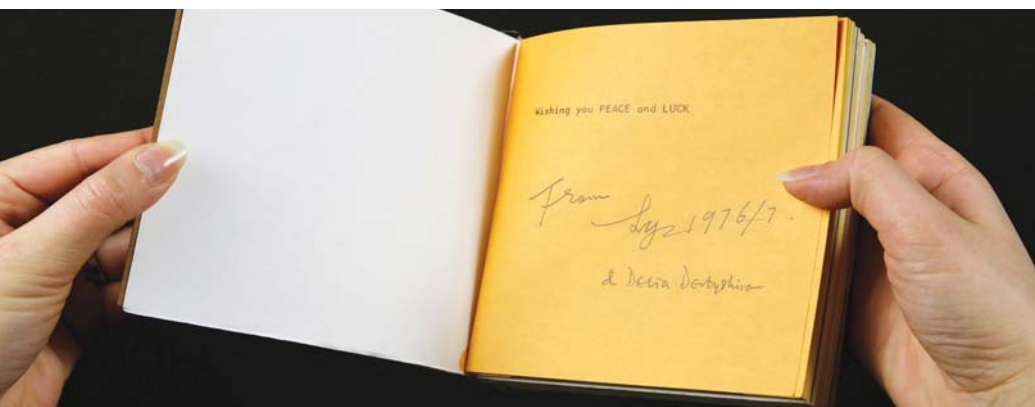
Li Yuan-chia (1929–1994). Image by permission of the LYC Foundation and University of Manchester Library



LYC Museum badge. Image by permission of the LYC Foundation and University of Manchester Library



Li Yuan-chia outside the LYC Museum. Image by permission of the LYC Foundation and University of Manchester Library



1977 Artist Book No. 4, signed by Delia Derbyshire and Li Yuan-chia. Image by permission of the LYC Foundation and University of Manchester Library

Arts Museum, *View-Point: A retrospective of Li Yuan-chia* (2014); the Saltoun Gallery, London, *Spotlight On: Li Yuan-Chia* (2016) and *From China To Taiwan* (1955-1985), Ixelles Museum, Brussels (2017)

The Li Yuan-chia archive held at the University of Manchester is a rich and multi-faceted collection documenting Li's life from the 1950s to the 1990s. It comprises holograph literary manuscripts that trace each phase in the development of Li's poetry, from pre-composition (notes, sketches, drawings, notebooks, marginalia, annotations) to production (three-dimensional works, kinetic poems, artists' books, etc.). There are audio-visual materials relating to Li's practice as an artist, including a large quantity of photographs and Super 8 films. The archive also includes personal, artistic, literary and business correspondence with other writers, artists, musicians, filmmakers, performers and arts institutions, alongside Li's engagement diaries and

address books. There are visitor and comments books for the LYC Museum, some legal and financial records and printed material such as annotated books, LYC museum artist catalogues, poems and news cuttings. This large collection is, as yet, uncatalogued although a box list provides some access.

The Li Yuan-chia archive is stored only a few shelves away from the papers of two of his friends, Dom Sylvester Houédard and Delia Derbyshire: a cosmic coincidence which would have pleased Li greatly.

For further information on the Li Yuan-chia archive please contact Dr Janette Martin, email: janette.martin@manchester.ac.uk.

Dr Janette Martin

John Rylands Library, University of Manchester

Inspiring new art through our collections

At Leeds Central Library we have been looking at how we can make our special collections, consisting of over 17,000 printed and manuscript items, more accessible and widely used. One way in which we have been successful in doing this is through our arts programming that encourages artists to use our collections as inspiration to create new and exciting work.

We were keen to establish our own distinctive identity and offer, rather than compete, with the other cultural organisations, arts venues and performance spaces in Leeds. We recognised that people needed a reason to engage with art in a library, rather than in a gallery or theatre, and strong links to our collections is a way in which we felt that could be achieved.

Our aim was to collaborate with artists instead of acting solely as a venue to host exhibitions or performances and this has worked well and resulted in greater coherence in our arts programming. We have enjoyed witnessing the excitement artists have had when they have started their research and then working alongside them as they generate ideas and identify things in the collection material that they can use as inspiration.

We have worked with musicians, illustrators, poets, playwrights and visual



Oliver Twiss, *The Workhouse Boy* edited by 'Bos', 1838 – pirated penny edition of *Oliver Twist*. Leeds Library and Information Service.

artists who have provided us with a great diversity of work that has attracted new audiences as well as promoted our special collections. These are a few examples of some of the projects we have been involved with.

The Victorian Dinner Table

In partnership with Leeds Gallery at Munro House, we commissioned five artists to reinterpret our collection of Victorian recipe books and manuscripts. The exhibition was timed to coincide with the Leeds Indie Food Festival which generated extra publicity. We were also able to welcome Whitelocks, the oldest pub in Leeds, to cater the exhibition launch using authentic recipes that they had uncovered in our collections. The exhibition itself was a striking combination of contemporary artwork and nineteenth century material. The artists' finished work was completely different to one another's although they all accessed the same source material as they chose different mediums such as embroidery, print and ceramics and focussed on specific elements that had particularly resonated with them.

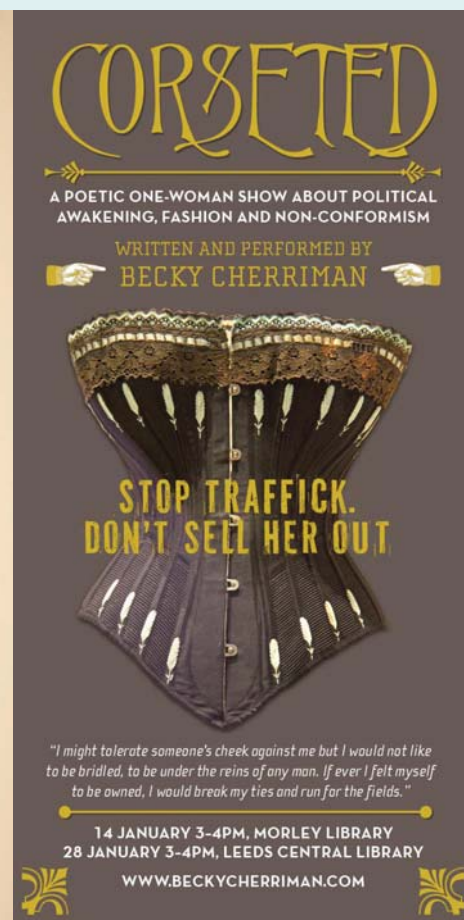


The Commoners Choir. Photograph by Casey Orr.

The Commoners Choir

We were approached by Boff Whalley, conductor of the Commoners Choir, who was interested in creating a new piece of music and curating an exhibition that celebrated the printed word. This passage from his blog wonderfully summarises his experience of working with our collection, "Every so often, as I worked my way through the collections of ancient

broadside ballads and penny pamphlets, one of the librarians would arrive with another book, wondering if this or that chapter might contain useful ideas. I'd told them I wanted to collect a series of quotes, modern and contemporary, to describe and illuminate the power of print, of the printing press, of how the press gave people power. How cheap print spread information, how songs and ballads turned printed information



Prints inspired by the collection. Leeds Library and Information Service.

into oral tale-telling to be passed around and remembered. How public libraries further gave ordinary folk access to a world previously denied them. All this stuff was in my mountain of books pulled from various public and hidden collections, and three days spent wading through them was a nothing short of a privilege (the smell of 'em was enough)."

As a result of this research, Boff composed a new song called 'Mechanical Moveable Type' which celebrated the invention of the printing press and the impact it had on society. The choir performed this alongside their other songs at an event at the library. An exhibition of banners displaying powerful quotes about literacy decorated the space and hand printed souvenirs were given out to the audience. The success of this event led to the Commoners Choir embarking on a regional tour of libraries, which was a fantastic legacy for the initial collaboration.

Corseted

Another example of using our archival material to inspire art was the Corseted project led by poet Becky Cherriman. She secured funding to write a play inspired by a scrapbook in our collection that was compiled by Alice Cliff Scatcherd, a social reformer and philanthropist born in 1842. The scrapbook revealed different aspects of Alice's life, particularly her interest in fashion. This led Becky to explore social conformity and the impact of fashion on women in her play and to commission a historical costume designer to create a piece for the project.

The artists spent time with the scrapbook and other items, such as the fashion plates that make up part of our Sanderson Collection, to feed into the development of the play, the costumes created and the exhibition that would accompany the performance.

To increase the engagement with the source material we asked the artists

Flyer for the performance of Corseted. Leeds Library and Information Service.

to deliver workshops to the public, which included making Victorian embellishments, learning about the history of the corset and creative writing inspired by Victorian fashion magazines.

The script in hand performance of Corseted was a powerful piece that explored challenging social issues but also brought to life a fascinating, but largely unknown local character.

Our collaboration with artists has led us to new discoveries in our collections and taken us on an exciting journey where no two experiences have been the same. The art that has been created has responded to our collections in new and interesting ways, bringing a perspective that we could not have achieved on our own. We hope to continue to work with artists in this way and root much of our arts programming in our collections in order to establish a distinct artistic identity for our organisation.

Rhian Isaac

Leeds Central Library



Built to last

Trusted worldwide for their strength and quality, our sturdy metal edge boxes are constructed of high quality acid-free board. Available in a variety of sizes to match your requirements and strong enough to stack safely without risk to contents, you can maximise your storage space with PEL.

pel
giving history a future

T **+44 (0)1379 647400**

W **www.pel.eu**

E **info@pel.eu**

@preservation_e 

Preservation Equipment Ltd, Vincennes Road, Diss, Norfolk, IP22 4HQ, UK



**Archives & Records
Association**
UK & Ireland



International Council on Archives
Conseil International des Archives

International Conference **2019**



Edinburgh International Conference Centre
21 - 23 October 2019