



## **SELF-GUIDED TOUR**

**Please return this guide at the end of your visit**

**Please note that the Dome will be closed to visitors between midday and 2pm so we recommend that you change the tour accordingly to fit with these timings**

## INTRODUCTION

### Welcome to the New Hall Art Collection at Murray Edwards College

Murray Edwards College, formerly known as New Hall, is one of 31 colleges within the University of Cambridge. It was founded in 1954 by Dame Rosemary Murray as a college dedicated to women and their education. Today, 350 undergraduate and 100 postgraduate students live and study in the grounds.

Reflecting the ethos of the College, the New Hall Art Collection consists entirely of work by women artists. It began in 1986 when American artist Mary Kelly donated her work *Extase* after forming a friendship with the college president at the time Dr Valerie Pearl. In 1992, Valerie Pearl and the curator Ann Jones took a leap of faith. They sought to create a platform to celebrate women artists and place art at the heart of the college. They wrote to 100 influential women artists asking if they would like to be a part of the collection and received a staggering seventy-five donations which became the core of the collection.

Over the years the Collection has evolved with donations from artists, collectors and supporters. Today it houses over five hundred works of modern and contemporary art, by women making it the largest collection of its kind in Europe, the second largest in the world. It is open to the public every day from 10am to 6pm.

This self-guided tour invites you to explore artworks inside the iconic Dome, the corridors around the Fountain Court, the exhibition space and the beautiful gardens. The selection of works in this tour are in public areas and we ask that you please respect the students and their privacy.

*If you've arrived here as part of the **Cambridge Sculpture Trails** you are very welcome to join the art tour before continuing the sculpture trail. If you don't have time today, the porters can direct you to the Hepworth sculpture in Orchard Court so you can remain on the sculpture trail.*

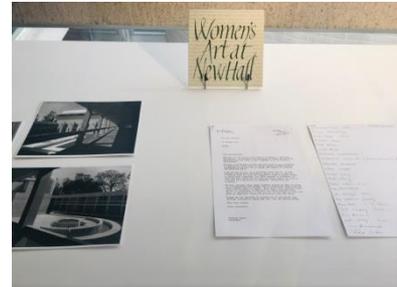
## MAIN WALKWAY



If you have collected this guide from the Porters' Lodge, walk through the glass doors into the Walkway which overlooks Fountain Court. Pass by the showcases on your left and continue to the far wall.

### ARCHIVAL DISPLAY

John Maltby, Photographs of New Hall, c. spring 1965  
Initial letter to artists and handwritten list of artists  
New Hall Art Collection catalogue, second edition, 1992



This archival display showcases documents relating to the foundation of the New Hall Art Collection. John Maltby's atmospheric black-and-white photographs of the Fountain Court, Main Walkway and Library show how the College looked when it was first built, before it was filled with artworks. The typewritten letter is the initial invitation sent out to women artists, asking them to donate work while the handwritten list indicates the curators' shortlist of artists, many of whom generously contributed to the Collection. The catalogue, which includes an essay by the writer Marina Warner, documents the works in the Collection while it was still in its infancy in the early 1990s.

### CLAUDIA CLARE

*Wedding Feast*, 1999  
Ceramic, 5 pieces  
Donated by the artist, 2001



Claudia Clare is British artist whose ceramic works reflect on contemporary social issues, such as migration, feminism and lesbian identity. Her experimental, narrative-based ceramic works reflect the impact of major historical events on individuals. Using her artistic practice as a form of activism, she sees her clay pieces 'both as memorials and as a call for action'.

Clare's series of works in the New Hall Art Collection was created during the Kosovo War (1989-99) as a tribute to her friend Rachel's relationship with a Kosovan woman, Igo. Comprised of five pieces, 'Wedding Feast' (1999) portrays Rachel and Igo's spontaneous 'wedding' in 1995, in Novi Sad, Serbia. It was both a celebration of lesbian emancipation and an anti-nationalist event. It was also a time of violence and oppression in Kosovo, (same-sex marriage was illegal in Kosovo at the time). One of the plates depicts Rachel and Igo, while the other is dedicated to Igo's mother. The central bowl is a patchwork of traditional patterns from all across Europe to represent the diverse group of guests at the women's celebration.

## GARDENS



Go through the door at the end of the Walkway and turn right into the gardens.

### BARBARA HEPWORTH

*Ascending Form (Gloria)*, 1958

Bronze, edition of 6

On loan from the Hepworth Estate

Hepworth (1903-75) is one of the best-known British artists of the 20th century. She was born in Yorkshire, but spent most of her life in St Ives, Cornwall and was a member of the St Ives School, along with Ben Nicholson and Naum Gabo. Though concerned with form and abstraction, Hepworth's art was primarily about relationships: not merely between two forms presented side-by-side, but between the human figure and the landscape, colour and texture, and between people at an individual and social level.



Some critics have interpreted the shape of *Ascending Form (Gloria)* as a pair of hands in prayer, a reading reinforced by Hepworth's renewed spirituality during this period of her life following the death of her son, Paul, in 1953. She made six copies of this sculpture and intended one of them as her gravestone. As it turned out, she was buried in a graveyard (Longstone Cemetery Carbis Bay, Cornwall) which would not allow it. However, this sculpture was clearly made with mortality in mind.

### NAOMI PRESS

*Improvisation*, 1988

Stainless steel

On loan from the artist, 2012

Naomi Press is a contemporary sculptor, who has exhibited widely in South Africa, the US and UK. She was born in Poland, raised in Zimbabwe and now divides her time between London, New York and Cape Town. She began her career as a ballerina and her understanding and training in classical dance has had a profound and compelling impact on her sculpture.



Press has been functionally blind since her 40s because of a neurological disorder, but has continued to make sculptures over the course of her seven-decade-long career. She works exclusively in sculpture but in a variety of different materials – bronze, marble, terracotta and steel. Many of her bronze sculptures depict female nudes. In the work *Improvisation*, some see elements of the human body in this work, while others see elements of music or dance.

## MAIN WALKWAY



Now return to the Walkway and walk back towards the Porter's Lodge, passing by the following artworks.

### ALEXIS HUNTER

*Approach to Fear XI - Effeminacy Productive Action*, 1997

6 photographs with green paint

Donated by the artist, 1991

Alexis Hunter (1948-2014) was an artist whose powerful and provocative works explored feminist issues through photography, film and text. Born in Auckland, Hunter moved to London at the age of 24, where she joined the Women's Workshop of the Artists Union. She later said that at that time she struggled to find printers which would print her photographs because she was a woman. Her photographic sequences are now considered key works of feminist art.



Between 1967-77 Hunter created a large body of work titled *Approaches to Fear* in which she pictured hands performing actions that challenged gendered expectations. For example, in these photographs the hairy male hands fixing a bike are bedecked with ornate feminine rings and a bracelet. Compositionally, the hands could be the viewer's own, directly implicating them in the work.

### CHANTAL JOFFE and ISHBEL MYERSCOUGH

*Fraser*, 2016

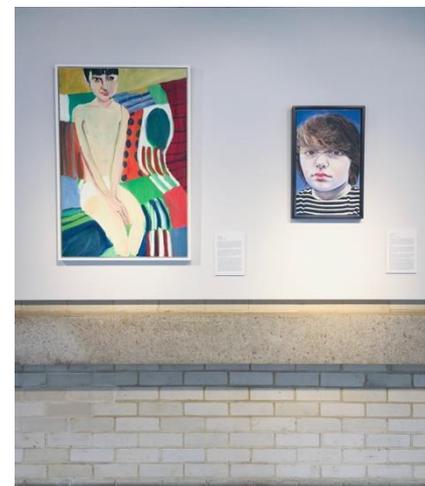
*Fraser*, 2017

Oil on board

Oil on panel

Donated by the artists, 2017

Chantal Joffe is a contemporary painter known for her expressive and intimate portraits of women, children and her family members. Her portrait of Fraser – Myerscough's son – gives importance to the psychology of his character: his innocence and the awkwardness of youth. The slim boy sits on a brightly coloured sofa that draws attention to his pale, almost naked body. His head and legs are cropped as though the painting were a snapshot.



British artist Ishbel Myerscough is recognised for her highly detailed and meticulously observed paintings. In her portrait, *Fraser*, her son's face fills the whole surface of the painting focusing in on every freckle and even the emergence of a faint moustache. The closeness of their relationship conveyed through Myerscough's evident familiarity with her son's face and his deep, trusting gaze. These contrasting portraits of the same child demonstrate the artists' different styles and approaches. Joffe and Myerscough met at the Glasgow School of Art in the late 80s and have painted portraits of each other's families for over 30 years.

## JAGJIT (JAI) CHUHAN

*Figure II*, 2006

Pencil on paper

Donated by the artist, 2007

Jagjit Chuhan is an Indian-born British artist, best known for her vivid expressionistic paintings which explore eroticism, voyeurism and race. Born in Punjab, India in 1955, Chuhan studied at the Slade School of Fine Art in London. Drawing on a range of influences from global art history, Chuhan's works often depict the human form, with a particular focus on sexuality and the gendered gaze.



Her intimate drawing *Figure II* (2006) - is part of a series of works called *Bodies* and portrays a pregnant woman leaning over a table, as though about to go into labour. The image is inspired by the artist's personal experience, as well as secondary sources such as medical diagrams, film footage and the tantric images of childbirth in South Asian art. In the artist's own words, her intention was to transcribe 'not only the physical experience of birth, but also the emotional and psychic experience, encompassing polarities of a pleasure and pain.'

## LEXI STRAUSS

*Tupperware Party*, 2013

*Hostess*, 2014

Acrylic on paper

Donated by the artist, 2017

British artist Lexi Strauss graduated from the Royal College of Art in 2014 and that same year was selected for the John Moores Prize and the Jerwood Drawing Prize. She creates paintings, installations, soundscapes



and performances which conjure surreal and theatrical narratives and engage with the themes of escapism, belonging and individuation.

*Tupperware Party* depicts a man breastfeeding a baby. The anonymous figure wears a suit and tie with fake breasts containing milk. He dominates the whole painting, giving no space to discern the context. The predominance of blues and greys isolates the composition and seems to strip it of humanity, while the gesture itself seems both tender and absurd. *Hostess* depicts a female nude, a pregnant woman, floating in a monochromatic composition. Far from painting a gentle and beautiful expectant woman the artist shows a ghostly, hideous and irregular figure. Strauss draws attention to the belly and breasts covering them with protuberances, giving the image a disturbing look. The semi-abstract quality of the work creates a borderlessness between the body and its background, while the haunting figure subverts expectations about what a female nude should look like.

## BAR



Take the door on the right into the student bar area. This guide only describes three of the works in the bar. Feel free to look at the others, but please respect the privacy of students who often use this area to study.

### ROSE WYLIE

*Billie Piper (A Combo Painting)*, 1994/2014

Mixed media

Donated by the artist, 2016

British artist Rose Wylie (b. 1934) creates paintings and drawings which are inspired by a wide range of sources including film, fashion photography, literature, mythology, newspapers, sports and her everyday life. Wylie employs an idiosyncratic visual lexicon, with cartoonish figures and flattened perspectives, while also making use of art historical references and conventions.



Wylie began the painting in 1994, inspired by her daughter's wedding. Two decades later, after seeing a photograph of Billie Piper in the Observer, she returned to the work and stapled a portrait of the actor on top of it. What had been a blue wedding marquee became a skirt for the bare-breasted, reclining Billie. The work has an air of both freedom and fragility. Painted directly on to unstretched, unprimed canvas and framed by strips of loosely stuck black fabric, it resembles a tapestry as much as a painting.

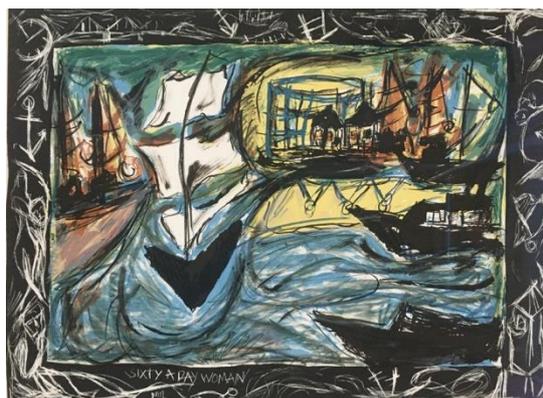
### TRACEY EMIN

*Sixty a Day Woman*, 1986

Lithograph in colour

Anonymous donation, 2014

Tracey Emin is a painter, sculptor and installation artist, who emerged as part of the Young British Artists generation in the 1990s. Her work is intensely personal, revealing intimate details of her life with brutal honesty and poetic humour.



*Sixty a Day Woman* is one of Emin's first prints to be published. It was created the year that she graduated from the Maidstone College of Art and editioned by her tutor, John White. It depicts the tall ships race that were held on the Medway River and its estuary near where Emin grew up. The title refers to a local woman who frequented the dockyard bars and smoked sixty cigarettes a day. A year before this print was made, Emin's then-boyfriend, the artist Billy Childish, wrote a poem titled *Sixty a Day Woman*, in reference to Emin herself.

## **FIONA BANNER**

*Beagle Punctuation*, 2011

Neon, perspex frame, wire and transformer

Anonymous donation, 2015

Fiona Banner was born in Merseyside, North West England. She graduated from Goldsmiths College in the early 1990s and was part of the generation known as the Young British Artists (YBAs). Banner's work is an ongoing exploration of text, through sculpture, installation and publications. Her early work took the form of 'wordscapes' or 'still films' – blow-by-blow accounts written in her own words of feature films.



*Beagle Punctuation* is part of a larger exploration of the famous dog from the cartoon *Peanuts*. In the work, Banner plays with words, letters and punctuation. Here, the image of Snoopy's face teeters on the edge of abstraction: two neon question marks and a full stop, labelled in pencil, conjure his unmistakable face, yet these punctuation marks seem to question the very existence of the dog.

## **HAZAR BAKBACHI-HENRIOT**

*Neighbourhood*, 2013

Mixed media

Donated by Anne Lonsdale 2017

Hazar Bakbachi-Henriot graduated from the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Damascus, Syria, and the University of Paris. Her unique work, which incorporates collage and painting, has been exhibited widely in Europe and the UK.



Originally from Aleppo, Hazar's work remains influenced by her roots and the desperate humanitarian situation in her native country. 'Neighbourhood' portrays a community engulfed by conflict and suffering. The raw construction of the collage reflects the broken fabric of Hazar's home country. She juxtaposes abstraction and reality – the gestural strokes of colourful paint contrast with photographs of people stricken with pain and grief.

## **MIRIAM SHAPIRO**

*Madness of Love*, 1987

Mixed media

Donated by Keith Robinson and William McPherrin

In memory of Marion Duff Liska

Canadian-born Miriam Schapiro (1932-2015) was a pioneering feminist artist in America, renowned for her vibrant paintings, collages, sculptures and prints.



In the 1970s Schapiro spearheaded the Pattern and Decoration movement and invented 'femmage' - collages which carry a conscious feminist subtext, constructed with craft materials and processes, such as fabric and embroidery, associated with women and femininity. Through these she paid homage to creative women of the past who had been ignored by art history.

Schapiro said: 'I wanted to validate the traditional activities of women, to connect myself with the unknown women artists who had made quilts, who had done the invisible 'women's work' of civilisation. I wanted to acknowledge them, to honour them.' Her 'femme' *Madness of Love* is made up of a combination of vivid brushstrokes and decorative floral patterns. The abstracted composition portrays a couple dancing in a close embrace on what appears to be a stage.

## **DOME: please note this area is closed from 12pm to 2pm**



Leave the bar through the same door. Immediately take the left door in the corridor which leads to the first staircase up to the Dome – the College's Dining Hall. There's a lift by the next staircase further down the corridor. **STOP** as you go up the staircase and look down!

### **WENDY TAYLOR**

*Three Dung Beetles, 2000*

Bronze

Donated by the artist, 2006

Sculptor Wendy Taylor was born in Lincolnshire in 1945 and studied at St Martins School of Art in London. Her impressive range of large-scale, site-specific sculptures total over seventy. The well-known Timepiece at Tower Bridge and Octo in Central Milton Keynes are both Grade II listed.



There are two elements to her sculpture: she creates both highly detailed, anatomically correct animals, as well as large, abstract works. Taylor uses a variety of materials in her work, from stainless steel to bronze to bricks and mortar, and, a Fellow of the Royal Zoological Society, she creates a prolific quantity of drawings and sketches to support her sculptural work. Taylor was one of the first artists of her generation to 'take art out of the galleries and onto the streets'.



At the top of the stairs is the Dome, home to works with a wide range of styles and subject matter, some exploring colour and abstraction whilst other raise questions about women in society. Head towards the alcove on the far side of the room with four works above the raised 'high table.' Begin with Maggi Hambling's work on the left and then work clockwise round the room.

## MAGGI HAMBLING

*Gulf Women Prepare for War*, 1986

Oil on canvas

Donated by the artist, 1992

Slade School of Art graduate Maggi Hambling is notable for her expressive painted portraits and sculptures. In 1980, she became the first artist in residence at the National Gallery and went on to teach at the Wimbledon School of Art. In 1995, she was awarded an OBE for her services to painting, followed by a CBE in 2010.



Hambling's art works challenge art historical norms, particularly around the female form, as seen through 'Gulf Women Prepare for War' (1986) and the defiant expression found in 'Hebe and Her Serpent' (1979) two (of four) works that are part of the New Hall Art Collection. 'Gulf Women Prepare for War' depicts a group of women wearing hijabs preparing for the Iran-Iraq War. The desert is painted in a range of flesh tones and the figures that populate the landscape take on assertive and active roles.

## PAULA REGO

*Inês de Castro*, 2014

Oil on canvas

Painted by the artist for the College's 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary

Paula Rego is a Portuguese-born artist known for her politically-charged paintings and prints, often inspired by folktales. Born in Lisbon in 1935, Rego moved to London aged 16 and attended the Slade in London. She has described her work as a subversion of hierarchies.



'I can turn the tables and make women stronger than men,' she says. 'I can make them obedient and murderous at the same time.' She has made work which explicitly deals with violence against women - through FGM, sex trafficking and honour killings.

*Inês de Castro* was painted in 2014 to mark Murray Edwards College's 60th anniversary. Taking inspiration from Portuguese history and folklore, Rego (who is an Honorary Fellow of @meccambridge) depicted the tale of Inês de Castro - a 14th-century Galician noblewoman, who had an illegitimate affair with Prince Pedro of Portugal and was brutally murdered by his father, King Alfonso IV, along with her two children. Allegedly, when Pedro ascended to the throne, he exhumed Inês' corpse and gave his dead lover a lavish coronation. In her vibrant interpretation of the tale, Rego foregrounds the female protagonist so that she dominates the painting's composition, even in death. The characters' courtly pose and the gilded colour palette give the work the appearance of an illustration from a medieval illuminated manuscript, while Rego's bold, abstracted style gives it a strongly contemporary feel.

## EILEEN COOPER

*Perpetual Spring*, 2016

Oil on canvas

Loaned by the artist, 2017

Eileen Cooper emerged as an artist in the mid-eighties, at a time when most artists were experimenting with conceptual art and performance. Cooper, however, remained true to figuration, drawing inspiration from an eclectic mix of sources, including Greek mythology, fairy tales, bible stories, early special effects films and her own life.



Though many of Cooper's draw on her own autobiography, dealing with sexuality, motherhood, life and death, they are allegorical rather than anecdotal. She often changes and paints over her canvases months or years after they are 'finished': for example, *Perpetual Spring* – initially depicted a man and woman. Some interpret the figures as dancing, while others see them as tussling. Their pose is ambiguous, as is the setting which appears to be autumnal, despite the title.

## SHANI RHYS-JAMES

*The Collector*, 1994

Oil on canvas

Donated by Elizabeth and John Gibbs, 2005

Shani Rhys James MBE was born in Melbourne, Australia in 1953 and moved to Wales with her family when she was a child. She works mainly in oils and uses thick, textured brushstrokes to depict her still lifes, portraits and domestic scenes.



In *The Collector*, she subverts traditional still lifes, which were denigrated for much of art history, because of its associations with femininity and domesticity. Rhys James' still life is filled with dynamism and includes a self-portrait in the top left-hand corner. She has said that she was influenced by Francisco Goya, who is very famous for his disturbing and macabre works. Her self-portraits also have an affinity with the visceral painterly vivacity of Edvard Munch, Francis Bacon and Lucien Freud.



Now carry on down towards the lower ground floor for some more works at the bottom of the staircase.

## ROSE GARRARD

*Models Triptych: Madonna Cascade*, 1982

Plaster relief and paint

Donated by the artist

Rose Garrard is a contemporary British artist whose work in the Collection spotlights lost and invisible histories of women artists. Garrard was born in 1946 in Worcestershire, England and studied sculpture at Stourbridge, Birmingham and Chelsea School of Art, before extending her practice to installation, performance, video and audio art. In 1982-83, she created 'Models Triptych' - a series of works which recreate self-portraits by historic women artists who were once highly regarded, but fell into posthumous obscurity: Artemisia Gentileschi, Élisabeth Vigée Le Brun and Judith Leyster. Each painting is bordered by a deconstructed frame which suggests a breaking away from the traditional art history which had suppressed these women artists.



*Models Triptych: Madonna Cascade* depicts fragments of a self-portrait by the Dutch seventeenth-century painter Judith Leyster, in which she holds her paintbrush and palette and stares out at the viewer. Leyster was almost erased from art history: for two centuries following her death her work was wrongly attributed to her male contemporaries, notable Frans Hals. The self-portrait is framed by cascading plaster figurines of the Virgin and Child, based on one which Garrard's Catholic mother placed by her bed when she was a child. In this work she intimately combines the personal and political.

## ART EXHIBITION



Carry on through the door ahead of you (marked 'Toilets') then turn left at the end. Continue down the corridor and turn right into the ART EXHIBITION.

## Femfolio

Our current exhibition is on *Femfolio*, a new donation to the Collection. *Femfolio* brings together the work of 20 women artists who were influential in the feminist art movement in America in the 1970s. The works represent a variety of feminist voices and styles – united in their desire to challenge stereotypes, transform cultural attitudes, and redefine what it means to be an artist.



## RETURN TO PORTERS' LODGE



Go back to the Porter's Lodge to return this self-guided tour.

That's the end of the self-guided tour. Please feel free to wander round the gardens before you leave. Other parts of the Collection may be visited by special arrangement: email us at [art@newhall.cam.ac.uk](mailto:art@newhall.cam.ac.uk).

You can buy the fourth edition of the New Hall Art Collection catalogue from the Porter's Lodge for £15.

**Thank you for visiting the New Hall Art Collection!**