

THE GLASGOW SCHOOL OF ART

RESEARCH EXCELLENCE FRAMEWORK 2014



Richard Wright 'Works on Paper'



An exhibition of works on paper by artist Richard Wright that took place in Kelvingrove Art Gallery & Museum, Glasgow, 20th April – 24th June 2012. The exhibition was the first dedicated to this area of the artist's practice and brought together 30 works from the period 1998-2011.

Submitted by K.M.Brown
Output No. 1

OUTPUT

The principal output took the form of an exhibition by artist Richard Wright within Kelvingrove Art Gallery & Museum, Glasgow, between 20th April and 24th June 2014.

The exhibition was the first and remains the only exhibition of Wright's work to date to focus exclusively on his works on paper. It was comprised of a total of 30 works of varying size, made between 1998 and 2011.

The exhibition was part of the main programme for the 2012 Glasgow International Festival of Visual Art.

Title

Richard Wright 'Works on Paper'

Submission No.

1

Authors/Creators

Dr. Katrina M. Brown

CONTEXT

The project stemmed from my established curatorial practice, along with knowledge of the artist's work and built on previous experience of creating temporary exhibitions of contemporary art in locations and venues not typically used for such purposes, in this case the Italian Art Gallery of Glasgow's Kelvingrove Art Gallery & Museum. The space was made available for the purpose of creating an exhibition for Glasgow International Festival of Visual Art, following on from the project realised there in 2010 with David Shrigley.

The opportunity to work with such a space at Kelvingrove offered both a meaningful and resonant context for the exhibition in the historical, permanent collection displays and the possibility of reaching an audience beyond the habitual contemporary art audience in the city.

The project also built on my previous work with the artist, Richard Wright, with whom I had worked on a major public project for the Edinburgh International Festival ('Jardins Publics', 2007) and a solo exhibition at Dundee Contemporary Arts (2004), which was documented in a publication. The latter had included illustrations of a small number of works on paper, alongside documentation of the wall paintings made in Dundee and a number of other large projects from the same period. Wright had first exhibited works on paper in his first show with Gagosian Gallery, London in 2002.

CONTEXT

Richard Wright lives and works in Glasgow. His first solo exhibition took place in 1994 at Transmission Gallery, Glasgow, and since then he has gone on to exhibit world-wide. He has been included in many important international exhibitions including The British Art Show 5, 2000, and Carnegie International, Pittsburgh, 2008. He was awarded the Turner Prize in 2009. In 2010, he realised a major, permanent installation for the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art Two in Edinburgh.

Wright is best known for his distinctive approach to painting, working directly on the walls and often ceilings of the spaces in which he is invited to exhibit. However, these labour-intensive works are short-lived as they are painted over at the end of the exhibition. Throughout his career and alongside these fleeting works, Wright has however also made paintings on paper. These unique, fragile and rarely seen works together give a sense of Wright's continuous exploration of how images are made: of the straightforward, immutable effects of colour and line.

Varying in complexity from the very simple to the highly ornate, the works selected for the exhibition offered a rare, expanded perspective on the work of one of Britain's most acclaimed and respected artists.

GLASGOW INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL of VISUAL ART takes place across the city for 18 days every two years. It is managed by Glasgow Life.

METHODOLOGY

The process that was employed involved:

- establishing availability and viability of space to be used for exhibition
- securing the participation of artist Richard Wright
- discussion with the artist of the idea of developing an exhibition devoted exclusively to his rarely seen works on paper
- establishing a long-list of c.50 relevant works known to be in existence, the vast majority of which had been acquired by private and public collections, both in the UK and abroad
- collating an image file of all relevant works
- developing a database of all relevant works including: date, dimensions, media, ownership, contact details, location (where known)
- identifying key initial contacts pertaining to each work
- corresponding with the artist's agents (BQ, The Modern Institute and Gagosian Gallery) in Glasgow, Berlin and London in the first instance
- working with those agents to establish ownership of all works and from there principal contacts for current owners
- creating a scale model of the exhibition space to be used and to-scale colour copies of each of the works
- agreeing technical requirements with Glasgow Museums staff



Scale model showing exhibition plan in development

METHODOLOGY

- developing an installation plan that used the artist's characteristic approach to space and the viewer's position within it, working with a primarily visual plan rather than either a chronological or thematicised configuration
- establishing a final selection of works based on a feasible hang in the available space
- making formal loan requests to a range of public and private collections in the USA, UK, Germany, Switzerland and Norway

A small number of works had to be discounted due to relative inaccessibility and / or cost and complexity of transportation to and from Glasgow.

The final selection of works was made through close discussion with the artist and sought to represent both the full range of the time period involved and the distinct and diverse shifts and developments that had been effected.

This selection comprised a number of works from the late 1990s that had a strong graphic focus, some of which included textual elements, through others with a distinctive use of geometry, demonstrating the artist's on-going concern the creation of perspective in the two-dimensional plane. The most recent works showed a use of mirroring and inversion, along with an increasing use of silver and gold leaf.



*Richard Wright 'No title', 2000
Gouache on paper
38.1 x 57.2 cm*

DISSEMINATION

The exhibition was disseminated through a broad range of means, from advance press and publicity campaigns to leaflets and street posters.

Some examples include:

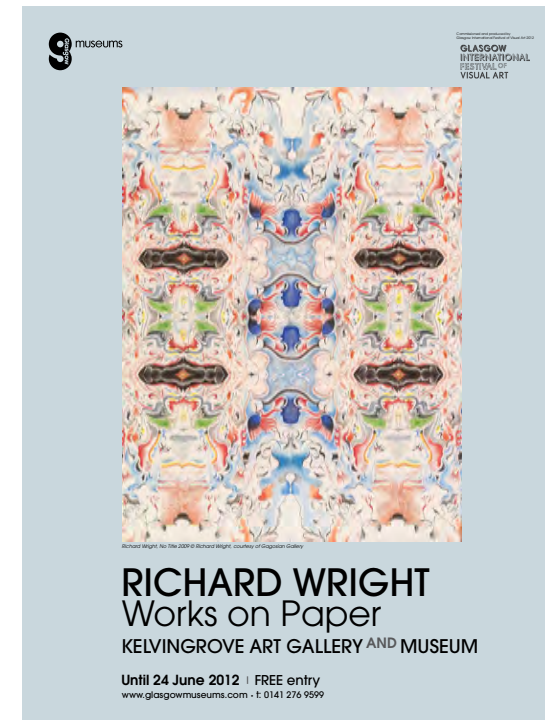
- e-flux announcement

<http://www.e-flux.com/announcements/glasgow-international-festival-of-visual-art-2012/>

- Glasgow International Festival of Visual Art 2012 Brochure (see page 10) 20,000 distributed locally and nationally

<http://issuu.com/gifestival/docs/2012guide>

- Glasgow Museums poster (widespread Glasgow distribution) – see opposite



Funded by:



Glasgow Museums poster

Acknowledgements

Richard Wright
The Modern Institute, Glasgow
BQ, Berlin
Gagosian Gallery, London, Los Angeles and New York
The Common Guild, including Colin Lindsay (gallery manager) and
Hannah Sanderson (intern)
Glasgow Museums

The lenders to the exhibition:
Artists' Pension Trust (APT London)
Arts Council Collection, Southbank Centre, London
British Council Collection
BSI Art Collection SA, Switzerland
Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh
Middlesborough Institute of Modern Art
Museum Brandhorst, Munich
The Museum of Modern Art, New York
Jörn Bötnagel and Yvonne Quirnbach, Berlin
Collection Hannelore and Peter Molitor
Collection of Marissa Sackler, London
Melinda and Ealan Wingate
and others who wish to remain anonymous.

frieze

GLASGOW INTERNATIONAL Various venues

The most talked-about work at the fifth edition of Glasgow International (GI) – an 18-day citywide biennial with no thematic remit beyond its location – was Jeremy Deller's *Sacrilege* (2012), an inflatable replica of Stonehenge installed in the city's oldest public park. On the day I visited, lashing rain meant that the bouncy castle-like structure was closed; an air of sadness clung to it like a mist, its wobbly bulk more threatening than genial (on sunnier days, the work calls to mind another faux-henge; the miniature stage-prop in the 1984 spoof documentary *This is Spinal Tap*). Part of the UK-wide Cultural Olympiad, *Sacrilege* is due to tour around Britain over the next few months and Deller has suggested that the project deals with 'British identity', which he appears to view as being rooted in bathos. The work may be tongue-in-cheek, but it feels particularly insensitive to its site (an icon of English Heritage on Scottish turf!). Such confusions make for a troubled project, due in part to what Tom Morton described in the last issue of this magazine as the Cultural Olympiad's proclivity for funding 'monuments to a committee'. I had hoped for more from Deller, an intermittently brilliant artist.

But *Sacrilege* summed up salient aspects of this year's GI: temporariness and mobility. Most exhibits were keenly aware of their own ephemerality – even those whose physical presence suggested otherwise. At the city's Gallery of Modern Art, Karla Black has installed *Empty Now* (2012), a monumental layer-cake of sawdust, stratified into layers of darker and lighter chippings. Seventeen tonnes of chipped wood were shipped from Amsterdam (the specific wood couldn't be locally sourced), and once the exhibition closes it will be transported to a nearby farm for compost. Physical weightiness evidently doesn't equate with ethical caution, but these such issues really don't seem to bother Black. She is an old-fashioned materialist who uses 'feminine' substances (lip-gloss, eyeshadow) in a manner that could be compared to Janine Antoni's early 1990s installations,

were it not for the sense that, 20 years after those works, such motifs render the fetish as a cliché rather than as a critique.

More engaging were the various iterations of dance in evidence across town, Alexandra Bachetsis's terse performance at the OCA, *A Piece Danced Alone* (2011–12), was a tour de force of double-bluffs and sarcasm, redolent of Jérôme Bel's audience-conscious productions. Two performers (Bachetsis and Anna Geering) occupied the stage alternately, acting and dancing as different versions of the auteur-choreographer-dancer, reading a parodic version of a CV, in which each claims to have started dancing from a very early age before going on to work with all the major dancers, choreographers and musicians in the Western world. There was lots of dance-as-quotation (including a startling imitation of Ian Curtis's spasmodic jitter), and the whole thing could have been merely academic if it wasn't for the brilliance of the performers themselves, who moved with electric precision and whose well-scripted words were keyed in to anxieties and gender expectations (a minimal rock-striptease, in which a shirt button was undone and done back up again, was a key moment).

Rosalind Nashashibi's superb new film *Lovely Young People (Beautiful Supple Bodies)* (2012) was made in conjunction with the Scottish Ballet, and installed at the GI Hub (a temporary exhibition space created for the festival). Inviting small groups of locals to watch the ballet's studio-based rehearsals, Nashashibi filmed their reactions and captured moments of hesitancy (as contrasted with the defined movements of the dancers), incidental looks and hiets of the slightly prurient or nostalgic act of looking (the title comes from words uttered by one audience member). Nairy Baghramian's sculptural intervention at The Mitchell Library was also subtle and architectonic. In the building's vast former reading room, she had installed a long, thin metal tension bar across the space, held in place by hidden mechanisms screened behind rather worn false walls and jammed between the building's pillars. The wire was installed at the same height as a ballet barre, lending the work a sense of imminent action.

At Tramway, the cavernous arts centre and former tram depot in the south of the city, the works tended toward the spectacular. Kelly Ripper's durational dance work and installation, *Block Forest* (2012), was installed



1
Jeremy Deller
Sacrilege, 2012,
inflatable structure,
dimensions variable

2
Rosalind Nashashibi
*Lovely Young People
(Beautiful Supple Bodies)*,
2012, film still

3
Alexandra Bachetsis
*A Piece
Danced Alone*,
2011–12,
performance
documentation

4
'Forget Fear',
installation view of the
KW Institute
for Contemporary Art's
ground floor,
7th Berlin Biennale,
2012

5
Bottle of Berlin '45,
2012,
performance
documentation

in a single large gallery space decorated with wall murals alluding to Rudolph Laban's mystic geometry; four dancers clad in red dresses and masks (like Mexican wrestling masks fabricated according to the rules of Suprematist theatre) enacted manoeuvres on a large white dance mat. The work edged towards engaging ideas, but felt burdened with references. Graham Fagan and Michael McDonald's high-budget meta-film-installation *The Making of Us* (2012) was filmed as a performance in front of a live audience on the opening weekend. I missed this event, but the remaining installation was an impressive set for a melodrama. Also at Tramway, Redmond Ennistie's new film *Work-Through* (2012) is an interesting, if somewhat academic exploration of pedagogical innovations at CalArts; and Moyra Davy's *Las Goddesses* (2011) is an epic, diastolic exploration of intertextual identity.

A number of other shows concentrated on archives and works on paper: a wonderful collection of Paul Thek's notebooks are on view at The Modern Institute; an enlightening show of prints by the Black Panthers' 'Minister of Culture', Emory Douglas, at Kendall Koppe; Richard Wright's drawings are installed at the Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum; Wolfgang Tillmans' ever-seductive photos at the Common Guild; Ruth Ewan's engaging archive of material related to socialist Sunday Schools at the Scotland Street School Museum; and 'The Art Lending Library' at The Mitchell Library, which allowed locals to borrow works of art by a number of younger artists. While few of these (with the exception of Ewan's project) related much to Glasgow as a place, there was something meditative and satisfying about delving into these hidden corners of creativity. The interest of this year's GI lay largely in its more reflective moments.

COLIN PERRY



The bouncing is courtesy of **Jeremy Deller** on Glasgow Green – the city's oldest and most central public park. 'Sacrilege' is a life-size replica of Stonehenge, bouncy castle-style. It's a celebration of play and letting go, for children and grown-ups alike. But it could also be about Britishness and identity and what it all means – or doesn't. It's the kind of clever, socially-engaged idea that has become Deller's trademark.

The open, public nature of 'Sacrilege' sets the tone for a festival that, on the whole, is good-natured, giving and rooted in human experience. Rooted in the city, too – many of the featured artists are based in or have strong links with Glasgow.

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In '**Dialogue of Hands**', an outside sculpture park at Glasgow City College, we're invited to touch, walk on and play with the work of **Corin Sworn**, **Mary Redmond**, **Camilla Löw** and **Chris Johanson**. The spirit of 1960s social and artistic experimentation is writ large here, although, for adults at least, the idea is possibly more engaging than the reality.

At the festival Hub, **Rosalind Nashashibi** presents her new film 'Lovely Young People (Beautiful Supple Bodies)', a co-commission with Scottish Ballet. Shot on 16mm film, dancers practice their steps while a variety of spectators – mums and dads, siblings, a gaggle of delightful old ladies, a couple of mesmerised policemen – look on. We can hear and see the physical effort of the dancers, feel the heat and energy. It's intimate, witty and surprisingly moving.

Over at the neoclassical Gallery of Modern Art (GOMA), **Karla Black** has filled the ground floor gallery with 17 tonnes of sawdust, arranged in layers like some vast sponge cake. It fits snugly in the centre of the space, between the building's Corinthian columns. Cellophane and sticky tape, twisted together to make swags and daubed in gold paint, hang from the ceiling. The materials are familiar to Black's work, but the effect is fresh and, despite its scale, respectful – reverential, even – of its setting.

Not so **Rob Kennedy** at the Centre for Contemporary Arts. He's reconfigured gallery spaces, hacked holes in walls and used the debris to build a rickety tower for video monitors. He asks in the show's title, 'Is there anything to do here, is there anything to see?' It sounds like a wind up, but the answer is, of course, 'Yes': Kennedy's own video works are dotted about the galleries and in the small cinema, presented alongside pieces by other artists, including a small, malevolently dark painting by Walter Sickert, 'Jack The Ripper's Bedroom'.

Nestled discretely in the intimate Italian Gallery of Kelvingrove Museum is more recent art history, courtesy of **Richard Wright**. Best known for his temporary wall paintings, here we're treated to a retrospective of his works on paper. Displayed in the manner of a busy, Victorian art museum – minus the chunky gold frames – they are intricate and labour intensive explorations of pattern and image making; quietly powerful, they speak in hushed tones.

At the tiny **Kendall Koppe** gallery, **Emory Douglas**, former Minister of Culture for the Black Panther party, is most definitely shouting, loud and clear. He presents a small selection of 1960s propaganda images, as they appeared in the Black Panther newspapers of the

Bewildered and beguiled




Phil Miller
Arts Correspondent

So yes, you may have heard, or seen, that there is an inflatable Stonehenge in the middle of Glasgow now.




Kara Black's two works for the festival take up the main hall of the Gallery of Modern Art, while Richard Wright's rare paper works hang in a more traditional space at Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum

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And, because of the same art festival, the city's modern art gallery has its enormous main room full of sawdust and cellophane. Elsewhere, there is a diamond made from the remnants of the London riots, and scattered and displayed Turner Prize winners, nominees, international stars, art celebrities and names who will bloom in the future. There may be the odd piece here and there that courts or may cause controversy or alarm. But there is also much beauty, as well as mere baffling loveliness, at the heart of the Glasgow International Festival of Visual Art, which opened this weekend.

Contemporary art can, even to frequent observers, sometimes seem distant, even slight, lost in its own discourses and references. The better work, however, breaks out of the strings of its own theories and portrays itself easily and honestly to any public which takes the time to view it. Where better to start a brief tour of this year's GI, then, than at the least contemporary venue in the city, the Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum? This is no astringent white space, but the comforting and inviting free museum for the city. Richard Wright said recently that he has wondered whether his strict conceptual rigour, with much of his art almost always confined to wall-based painting, has limited him in some way. For his first (and probably last) show on paper, at the Kelvingrove, he and curator Katrina Brown, also in charge of the whole festival,