

Large Print Labels

Still Life

Flowers



Usher Gallery – Still Life: Flowers

Introduction

The group of works in this room, brought together predominantly from the Usher Collection, span a period from the early 18th Century to the present day. Although varying in appearance and artistic approach they are all connected by a desire to capture or communicate a particular message through the display or reference to a series of objects or materials.

Still Life is the name given to a work of art that depicts mostly static objects and materials. Popularised in Western Art in the late 16th Century, a typical Still Life depicts commonplace objects, either natural or man-made, including, but not limited to, flowers, foods, rocks, dead animals, glasses, books, vases and jewels.

The carefully selected objects depicted in a Still Life work are often chosen by the artist for their hidden or symbolic meaning; for example, a fallen petal from a flower acts as a reference to mortality and death, apples allude to original sin, the parrot is an image of sexual lust and longing, coins and jewels show wealth and power.

Flowers are the main subject matter of the paintings on display here, and historically within art, as well as within literature, they have been both a source of decoration as well as a stand in for messages of love and sentiment.

Pink carnations are said to have first appeared on earth from the Virgin Mary's tears, marking them the symbol of a mother's

undying love. White carnations however have long meant pure love and good luck. Carnations are also the flower for the first year of marriage. The painting by Peter DeWint (1784 -1849) in which he has chosen to depict two pink and white carnations side by side in separate glass holders alludes to these different types of love and possibly also to two individuals within a burgeoning relationship.

Similarly, the roses in Anna Airy's work 'Roses Triumphant' can also be read as significant. White roses have long been associated with love at first sight and purity. In Airy's work however the petals are beginning to fall, perhaps a nod to the end of an affair or to the loss of innocence.

The two living artists in the room, Lauren Gault and Stephanie Mann, were both selected because of their interest in the format of the Still Life. Mann's installation, entitled 'The White Ring', brings together two photographic and film works, set against a golden backdrop, all of which plays with our understanding of the Still Life as something static and fixed.

Lauren Gault brings the concept of a Still Life into the 3D physical world with her installation 'Your own rushing blood (I)'. Combining carefully chosen materials and imagery, Gault has created a layered composition that references many of the other works in the room.

Labels



Please turn to your left to follow the labels in the correct order.



Lauren Gault (b. 1986)

Your own rushing blood (I)

metal, print on trace paper, paint, glazed ceramic, fizzy water, glass, wood, 2014

Working primarily in sculpture and installation, though previous works have also included elements of film, video and sound, Gault is interested in how an object or material can be inhabited by a process or human presence inflicted upon it. Like many of

the *Still Life* paintings in this room, the objects or materials brought together in Gault's multi-part installations often have symbolic or hidden meanings.

The work on display here, *Your own rushing blood (I)*, was made specifically for this space and brings together a range of materials including ceramics, wood, glass and fizzy water. It can be seen as a physical manifestation of a *Still Life*, and aims to capture a slice of life in the same way many of the paintings in this room also do. Gault's interest in the form of the *Still Life* is primarily in the 'missing element' within the work; and the fact that what we see is the end result of a series of hidden decisions or actions made by the artist.

Produced on a scanner, Gault's tracing paper print assembles together glass, fallen petals, water and gelatine to create a ghostly vision of a *Still Life*. Many of these materials are seen in

the other works on show. Crucially however, we are viewing the objects from the underside on a transparent material that can be seen through. In selecting this method and material, Gault is opening up views of objects that are never normally possible. Employing a rich variety of materials, selected for not only their physical properties, but also their specific histories, previous works by the artist have been composed of handmade, found, and natural elements. Gault normally produces her work in response to a given space and context, bringing together objects and materials to form installations that are given a single title. Her work is borne out of significant periods of research, and recent areas of interest have included divining, archaeology, and theories around the 'vessel' as object.

She currently lives and works in Glasgow. Further work by the artist can also be seen in the Portrait room downstairs.



Robert Sutton (1774 - 1835)

Longcase Clock

c. 1800

The movement is English oak, *lignum vitae* and brass; the case is mahogany and the dial is ebonised mahogany.

Robert Sutton, from North Lincolnshire, is the only known clockmaker to have made clocks with wooden movements after the style of the renowned John Harrison (1693 – 1776). The only two known examples of

Sutton's work with wooden movements are in the Usher Gallery

collection (the other stands on the landing). Both clockmakers worked in the North Lincolnshire area, so it is understandable that there would have been a number of Harrison's clocks around for Sutton to become a specialist in repairing them. He not only copied Harrison's work however, but developed his own innovations, including double rows of teeth on wooden gear wheels and a novel design for maintaining power.

This clock has an eight day movement of English oak throughout, with large lignum vitae rollers and all wheel pivot bearings, ensuring the movement requires no additional lubrication at any time. It has a grasshopper escapement. The case is mahogany, with an unusual mahogany ebonised dial with gilt decoration on a black ground. The hood is surmounted by unique ebonised ball finials with brass embellishments, and the pediment terminates in mother of pearl and ivory paterae. The free standing ribbed columns have Corinthian capitals.

LCNUG : 1988/1

Purchased from Mr P.W.T. Whyte with the assistance of the Science Museum Fund, the Art Fund (Eugene Cremetti Fund) and the Heslam Trust, 1988



William Logsdail (1859 - 1944)

Daffodils

oil on canvas, 1935

In 1922, aged 63, Logsdail moved to Noke in Oxfordshire and resumed painting architectural and topographical subjects, following a period of prolific portrait painting.

He took a great interest in working in his garden at Noke, which he also enjoyed painting, along with the flowers from it. Two other paintings of garden flowers by William Logsdail may be seen in this room.

LCNUG : 2007/03
2002

Gift from Goldwynne R. Jones,



Peter DeWint (1784 - 1849)

Carnations

oil on canvas, 19th Century

This study of two white and pink carnations standing in glass bottles hints at a Dutch influence.

DeWint's father's family was originally from the Netherlands

before moving to the United States.

LCNUG : 1927/1961

Gift from Miss E. Scrivenor, 1951



William Logsdail (1859 - 1944)

Flowers in a Persian Bottle

oil on canvas, 1935

LCNUG : 2007/04

Gift from Goldwynne R. Jones,
2002

Tables



LEFT AND RIGHT TABLES

Rosewood card tables

On both of these tables the swivel top folds out to reveal a playing surface of inlaid green leather with gilt punched decoration.

LCNUG : 1986/14 and LCNUG : 1986/15

Gift from Mrs E.F. Gordon, 1986

CENTRE TABLE

Fruitwood games table

Inlaid with a chequerboard design on a tip-up top, supported by a turned baluster column.

LCNUG : 1977/2894

Gift from Mrs E.F. Gordon, 1977

Easel

Large wooden easel with no known provenance



Stephanie Mann (b.1990)

The White Ring

digital prints, video and wall painting, 2012

Film one - *Sand Hands Print one / Print one - Still Life with Flemming Cherries / Print two - Still Life with Pastry / Film two - Still Life on Face*

The White Ring is a work composed of various different elements, video, photography and wall painting, all of which play with the idea of what constitutes a *Still Life*.

In the film, *Still Life on Face*, we see the artist's profile set against a pitch-black background. As the video progresses, Mann places a

range of materials on to her face; plasticine, a small plant, gold leaf and fruit peelings are all brought together to create an ad hoc composition that balances precariously, often toppling. Mann brings movement into the idea of a *Still Life*, toying with what is normally a static format.

The two photographic works that form part of the installation allude to the process of capturing an image, and play with our sense of what is real. Both photographs show a grouping of objects, some natural others man-made, beside which there is a meticulously rendered painting of the same objects. In *Still Life with Flemming Cherries* Mann has even included the paint pots that she has used to make the work with. The white ring that appears within this work gives its name to the installation, and also appears on the wall painting that provides the backdrop to the works.

Mann makes work across a variety of different formats, including video, performance, photography and painting. Bringing together materials to compose abstract compositions, her works often elude categorisation and leave the door open for multiple readings and meanings.

There is no hierarchy in material choice for Mann, an object is not selected because of what it means or what it is associated with, instead it is chosen for its physical properties. Texture, shape, colour and feeling are the most significant factors for the artist.

Mann studied at the Edinburgh College of Art, graduating with a Masters Degree in 2012. She lives and works in the city.



**Peter Brannan
(1926 - 1994)**

Flowers in a Jug

oil on board, 1980

Peter Brannan was born in Cleethorpes and was part of an artistic family, with his father and brother also painting. He studied at the Grimsby School of Art and then the Leicester College of Art. He was greatly inspired by the French Post-Impressionists and by the still-lives of Chardin. He also found inspiration in the Lincolnshire landscape.

LCNUG : 1995/58

Bequeathed by Peter Brannan, 1995



Vanessa Bell (1879 - 1961)

Zinnias

oil on canvas, 1943

Bell regularly planted zinnias at Charleston, the house she shared with fellow Bloomsbury Group artist Duncan Grant. She wrote

"The garden is now a mass of flowers and as gay as possible with hollyhocks, sweet peas and zinnias - tobacco and stocks smell strong in the evening. I often wander about in it at odd moments for the pleasure of the sights and smells". The background has a lovely tonal quality which sets off the flowers. The textured application of paint in almost petal like shapes complements the flowers, as does the juxtaposition of colours. Bell rejected the brighter colours she had used before the war and in the 1920s and 1930s painted flower pieces and still lifes with rich but sombre colour harmonies.

LCNUG : 1927/2232

Gift from The Contemporary Art Society, 1954



William Logsdail (1859 - 1944)

Garden Flowers

oil on canvas, 1935

LCNUG : 2007/05

Gift from Goldwynne R. Jones, 2002



William Hilton Senior (1752 - 1822)

Still Life with Parrot

oil on canvas, late 18th Century

William Hilton Senior is perhaps lesser known than his son who became Keeper of the Royal Academy and was great friends with Peter DeWint. Hilton Senior was mainly known as a portrait painter but was also a japanner and scenery painter. A large painting by him depicting the raising of Lazarus may be seen in the Parish Church of St Mary Magdalene, Newark on Trent.

LCNUG : 1927/244



Anna Airy (1882 - 1964)

Roses Triumphant

oil on canvas, c. 1930

A gifted and prolific artist, Anna Airy produced works in a variety of media including oil, watercolour and pastel.

She trained at the Slade School of Art and became one of the most successful female artists of her generation, exhibiting at the Royal Academy from 1905. She was one of the first women war artists employed by the newly founded Imperial War Museum in 1918 and produced four large works. Airy was particularly admired as a draughtswoman and her interest in botanical studies was evident throughout her career, expressing the forms of leaf and flower with great realism.

LCNUG : 1927/168

Purchased from the artist, 1930