

Forthcoming Exhibitions and Developments 2002 - 2004

(Major exhibitions in bold)

Brushes with Surprise: The Art of Calligraphy in Modern China

31 January - 19 May 2002

Room 91

Admission free

Picasso once said that had he been born Chinese, he would have been a calligrapher, not a painter. This exhibition examines the art which so fascinated him. Encompassing social commentary, satire and humour, as well as some beautiful poetry, it will contain nearly 50 highlights from the collection of modern Chinese calligraphy that The British Museum has assembled over the past decade. This collection is unmatched by any museum in the world, even in China. Calligraphy has changed more in the past 50 years than in the preceding 1,500. Indeed, this extraordinary art has emerged from unprecedented upheavals and reforms with a new vitality. The styles range from classical through to modern, neo-classical and the avant garde. All the leading Chinese calligraphers of the past half century are represented, including Mao Zedong, the leader of the Chinese Communist revolution who was also a highly talented calligrapher, and the internationally-renowned Gu Gan.

Imaging *Ulysses*:

Richard Hamilton's Illustrations to James Joyce

2 February - 19 May 2002

Room 90

Admission free

Commissioned as a retrospective by the British Council, this exhibition examines Richard Hamilton's lifelong ambition to illustrate James Joyce's modernist masterpiece. The material ranges from numerous preparatory watercolour and pencil studies, made in the late 1940s, to the etchings of these subjects executed during the eighties and more recently as *Iris* digital prints. Evolving technically and intellectually over a lifetime, these works trace Hamilton's imaginative response to Joyce over fifty years. The British Council, which is organizing a tour that will include Ljubljana and Prague, is also publishing the catalogue. For the British Museum venue additional works on paper will be borrowed from the artist whose 80th birthday (24 February 2002) coincides with the anniversary of the landmark publication of *Ulysses* on 24 February 1922, which was also Joyce's 40th birthday.

December 2001/67

The Poetry of Nature: Watercolours by John Sell Cotman 1782-1842

2 February - 19 May 2002

Room 90

Admission free

John Sell Cotman's *Greta Bridge* has been called one of the greatest creations of the Romantic movement and the most perfect image in the entire history of English watercolour painting. It forms the centrepiece of this exhibition of Cotman's work, the first devoted to the artist for twenty years.

Brief Lives: Changing Currencies in Western Europe

21 February - 8 September 2002

Room 69a

Admission free

On 1 January 2002 the Euro will supplant twelve of the world's major currencies in the countries of the Eurozone. By the end of February the old coins and notes in these countries will no longer be legal tender. This new exhibition marks the passing of some of the most important currencies in history, including the French franc, the German mark, the Italian lira and the Dutch guilder. Yet none are more than 200 years old. The franc was introduced as the main currency unit of Revolutionary France in 1795, while the mighty German mark is merely a sprightly fifty-something, born in 1948. Like the nation states they represent, these national currencies are modern inventions and may be nothing more than a passing phase in the fast-moving history of a continent. Also on display will be the new international coins and notes of the euro.

The Queen of Sheba: Treasures from Ancient Yemen

Sponsored by Barclays

9 June - 13 October 2002

Room 35

Admission charge

This major exhibition will examine the romance and mystery of the Queen of Sheba and introduce the magnificent ancient civilisation of Yemen where she is believed to have originated. The popular and enduring stories that surround the mythical Queen will be illustrated through rarely-seen paintings, drawings and other objects and images from the period. The kingdoms of Southern Arabia (modern Yemen) prospered through a lucrative spice and incense trade in the Near East and the Roman Empire; through the use of new archaeological discoveries the exhibition will reveal the area's rich Bronze Age culture, the early history of Saba (Sheba is an anglicisation of the ancient Arabian kingdom of Saba) and the kingdoms and chronology of the Yemen. Examples of architecture, religious iconography, dress and jewellery will evoke the daily life of the region whilst funerary busts will reveal the different approaches to death and the afterlife.

Brueghel to Rembrandt: Dutch and Flemish Drawings from the Maida and George Abrams Collection

13 June - 22 September 2002

Room 90

Admission free

Over 110 works from the world's outstanding private collection of Dutch seventeenth-century drawings. They range from studies by renowned masters - Jacob van Ruisdael, Jacques de Gheyn II, Hendrick Goltzius, Hendrick Avercamp and a recently rediscovered work by Pieter Brueghel the Elder - to works by lesser-known draughtsmen whose contributions are nevertheless essential to understanding the art history of the period. Other highlights include seven drawings by Rembrandt, excellent examples of Dutch landscape, and charming scenes of daily life by genre artists such as Willem Buytewech and Adriaen van Ostade.

Reflections of Glory: The medallic art of 16th century Italy

13 June - 22 September 2002

Room 90

Admission free

The Museum's collection of late Renaissance medals is one of the finest in the world. This exhibition, the first of its kind, includes works by such celebrated artists as the goldsmith Benvenuto Cellini and the sculptor Leone Leoni. It examines how such artists set about making medals, what messages were being communicated, and how they were used by the people who commissioned them. First created in the princely courts of Renaissance Italy as a signifier of personal status and accomplishment, by the 16th century the medal was transformed into a recognisably modern form and by 1600 was being mass-produced as an instrument of state propaganda.

Vietnam Behind the Lines: Images from the War, 1965-1975

13 June - 22 September 2002

Room 91

Admission free

Most of the images we associate with the America-Vietnam war come from Western film makers, journalists and artists. The 130 works in this exhibition, however, are all by the Vietnamese themselves. Some of them were engaged in the creation of propaganda materials for the Vietnamese government, some in the recording of the war, others simply exercising a creative talent. An extremely diverse range of traditional and contemporary media were used including hand-painted posters, paintings on rice paper, watercolours, pen and ink sketches, drawings in chalk, ink paintings, acrylics on cardboard, printed compositions and cine-film (which will be shown in the final section of the exhibition). This groundbreaking show will be organised around five principal themes to evoke a complex and vivid picture of life during wartime: official propaganda, wartime communications and base camp life, combat and the new active role of women, portraits, and depictions of working life behind the lines on the land and in industry. All the works were purchased by The British Museum with such an exhibition in mind.

Japanese Prints during the Allied Occupation 1945-1952

20 June - 1 September 2002

Japanese Galleries

Admission free

In 1945 much of urban Japan lay in ruins, and the land was, for the first time in its history, occupied by foreign powers. To many Japanese it seemed that everything had been lost, but in fact the nation was quick to demonstrate its ability to recover physically, economically and culturally from the disaster. In the visual arts, the years between 1945 and 1952 became a period of steady progress and considerable achievement in painting, calligraphy, prints, ceramics and other crafts. The exhibition will focus on prints and archive material by Onchi Koshiro (1889 - 1995) and Munakata Shiko (1903 - 75) acquired by American graphic artist Ernst Hacker (1917 - 87). These two Japanese artists are now recognised throughout the world as Japan's greatest print artists of the 20th century.

Discovering ancient Afghanistan: the Masson Collection

12 September 2002 - 9 January 2003

Room 69a

Admission free

Archaeological finds collected by Charles Masson (1800 - 53), the first explorer and recorder of ancient sites in the neighbourhood of Kabul and Jalalabad from the Greek to the Islamic period (3rd century BC - 16th century AD).

Drawings by Antony Gormley

October 2002 - May 2003

Room 90

Admission free

Around 50 drawings by Antony Gormley (b.1950), representing all aspects of his career to coincide with the installation of *Field for the British Isles* in the Great Court gallery. Drawing has been a vital element in Antony Gormley's artistic practice since the early 1980s, an essential part of the process whereby he has sought to 'negotiate a relationship between the body as a thing and the body as a place'. Some of the compositions relate directly to his sculptures such as *The Angel of the North* (1998), one of the most famous public monuments in the UK; others form part of a parallel activity such as the earth drawings connected with *Field*, while those made with his own blood are yet another aspect of his preoccupation with the human form as mediated by his own body. To coincide with this exhibition, British Museum Press will publish the first book devoted to Gormley's drawings as a whole.

***Field for the British Isles* at The British Museum**

15 November 2002 - 26 January 2003

Room 35

Admission free

Over the past decade Antony Gormley's communities of diminutive clay figures have become some of the most popular and widely acclaimed contemporary works of art. Drawing on his background in anthropology and his interest as a figurative sculptor in the relative perception of space and mass, the concept of a 'field' of surrogate human beings first took shape in Sydney in 1989. Further versions of *Field* were made in New York, Mexico, Brazil and Sweden, each one varying in number and arrangement until its final incarnation, *Field for the British Isles* made on Merseyside in 1993, which was acquired by the Arts Council in 1995 with the assistance of the National Art Collections Fund and the Henry Moore Foundation. Now to be exhibited at the heart of the Museum in the Great Court gallery, Gormley's 'terracotta army' will have a unique resonance within the context of the archaeological collections. This 'primal population made of the earth' will evoke a poignant comparison with the Museum's own army of terracotta, stone and ivory figurines dating from 7200 BC to 550 BC which can be found in the galleries devoted to the diverse ancient cultures of Jordan, Syria, Anatolia, Mycenaean Greece, the Cyclades, Cyprus, Egypt and the Indus Valley.

The Genius of Dürer: Graphic Work and Influence

6 December 2002 - 23 March 2003

Room 5

Admission charge

This major exhibition will be the first in 30 years to examine Albrecht Dürer's development as a graphic artist from his early work in the medieval tradition of Martin Schongauer, through his classical education in Italy, to his development of the techniques of woodcut and engraving which were to alter the history of printmaking. With over 200 works on display, the show will be organised chronologically to feature landmark projects throughout his career including the iconic *Adam and Eve*, his famous *Rhinoceros* and the colossal *Triumphal Arch*. The final section of the exhibition examines the extraordinary influence and reception of Dürer's art in later periods from the obsessive attention of artists and collectors in the late 16th century to his symbolic status in the 19th century during the rise of German nationalism. The Museum's exceptionally rich collections of drawings, woodcuts, engravings and printed books - the chief output of Dürer's artistic practice - will be supplemented by around 50 important loans from other collections including the National Gallery, the Royal Collection, the Ashmolean Museum and star pieces from Berlin and Vienna.

Precious Time: Early Watches

13 January - July 2003

Room 69a

Admission free

Looking at a quartz wrist-watch today, a person might well wonder what its origins are. About 500 years ago the small machine called a watch which everyone now takes for granted, began to be made in workshops in South Germany. It was not very long before the watch became a status symbol designed as much to impress the onlooker as it was to tell the time. Over the next 150 years the watch developed in shape and form and this exhibition will look at the ways in which the watchmaker, the silversmith, the engraver, the enameller and the lapidary of Europe used their talents to make watches to impress and amaze. The British Museum has one of the finest collections of early watches and this will be a special opportunity to exhibit remarkable pieces from the Museum's reserve collections.

Art and Memory

10 April - 7 September 2003

Room 35

Admission Charge

To celebrate the BM's 250th anniversary, 100 objects from the Museum's collections brought together in the Great Court gallery to investigate the subject of memory across different cultures and time. Encompassing such areas as portraiture, currency, funerary and commemorative sculpture, shrines, memorabilia, reliquaries and festivals, this innovative exhibition will address questions of who, how, when and why people, places or events are commemorated.

London, 1753

28 May - November 2003

Room 90

Admission Charge

In the middle of the 18th century London overtook Paris and Constantinople as the largest city in the world with 700,000 inhabitants. But London was a city of contrasts. Whilst the trade in luxury goods flourished and the building of houses and roads boomed, traditional support systems found they could not keep pace with such rapid expansion. Many citizens fell through the net as children were abandoned to foundling hospitals, crime and alcoholism were rife and religious non-conformity thrived. In the midst of this tumult, Parliament passed the British Museum Act and brought into being the first national public museum. The exhibition will take a geographical look at the distinct characters of different parts of London in 1753, from the Mall to Wapping, from Vauxhall to Bloomsbury. Prints, drawings and watercolours will provide an unprecedented and a wide range of artefacts from political and social satires to porcelains and gold watches, from tickets and posters to personal memorabilia, will supply a sense of London as a whole at this momentous period in its history.

The Story of The British Museum

June 2002 - Oct 2003

Manuscripts Salon

Admission free

To herald the Museum's 250th anniversary, this exhibition will illustrate the story of The British Museum from its foundation in 1753 to the present day. There will be well-known images such as George Scharf's 19th century watercolours of Montagu House and the construction of the Smirke building, together with Roger Fenton's photographs of the building and its exhibits. A miscellany of ephemeral material which has not previously been displayed will show less well-known and intriguing aspects of the Museum's life.

Medicine Man: Sir Henry Wellcome and his Collections

26 June - 16 November 2003

Room 5

Admission free

The pharmacist and collector Sir Henry Wellcome (1853-1936) saw the entire compass of human culture and history through medical eyes, and amassed one of the world's largest but least known museum collections to capture his vision for posterity. Over 60 years after his death, this ambitious exhibition will reunite for the first time an extraordinary range of objects from the heights and depths of Wellcome's gargantuan collection to provide a fascinating and unanticipated insight into the 'culture of medicine'.

Exhibitions for 2004

(major exhibitions in bold)

Jul 2003 - Jan 2004	Cityscapes
7 Nov 2003 - 29 Feb 2004	Buried Treasure: Britain's Story
Jan - May 2004	Badges as Symbols of Identity
Jan - Apr 2004	Prints and Drawings displays from the permanent collection
Jan - May 2004	Letters in Gold: Islamic Calligraphy
5 Feb - 16 May 2004	Hunt for Paradise: Court Arts of Safavid Iran
24 Apr - 1 Aug 2004	Spectacular Claims
27 May - 5 Sept 2004	David Milne: Works on Paper
14 July - Dec 2004	Sudan: Treasures from the National Museum
22 Sept 2004 - Feb 2005	The Forbidden City
Oct 2004 - Apr 2005	From Ashcan to Pollock: American Printmaking

Major Projects for 2002-2003

Sutton Hoo Visitor Centre - Suffolk

Sutton Hoo is one of Britain's most important archaeological sites. The burial ground of the Anglo-Saxon pagan kings of East Anglia, the original excavation of 1938/9 uncovered now famous treasures including a warrior's helmet and shield, gold ornaments and Byzantine silver which were given to the British Museum. The Sutton Hoo Estate itself, which was gifted to the National Trust in 1998, has been developed to include a new exhibition gallery housing a full-size reconstruction of the ship's burial chamber, a treasury, artefacts from recent excavations, new visitor facilities and improved access to the mounds. In the first of a series of loans from the BM (which will be on a six-month rotational basis), the treasury will display the magnificent Sutton Hoo shield and sword with its gold and garnet belt fittings. The centre opens on 14 March 2002.

Prehistory: Objects of Power

A new gallery showcasing the Museum's outstanding prehistory collections will open at the end of March 2002. The gallery will trace the birth of the cultural artefact back to the very cradle of mankind in East Africa, exhibiting 1.5 million year old stone tools from Olduvai. From this starting point, objects spanning the immense period to the end of the Bronze Age (c.800BC) will be used to explore the centrality of material culture in establishing key relationships between people and with the natural and spiritual worlds. Masterpieces of prehistory on display will include the Sintra Gold Collar, the Oxborough dirk, the Arretton hoard and, as the gallery centrepiece, the magnificent gold cape from Mold now newly restored.

The Manchester Money gallery

The British Museum and Manchester Museum are collaborating closely on the development of the new Manchester Money Gallery which will open in the summer of 2002. The main section of the exhibition space has been modelled on The British Museum's widely-acclaimed HSBC Money Gallery, which opened in January 1997. The Manchester Money Gallery will include the long-term loan of a large number of objects drawn from the collections of the British Museum's Department of Coins and Medals, with additional art and artefacts from the Departments of the Ancient Near East, Greek and Roman Antiquities, and Oriental Antiquities. The collaboration is one part of a new British Museum initiative to expand its relations with partner institutions around the country, providing unparalleled levels of access to its collections (see below).

Partnership UK

The British Museum is committed to working in partnership with other museums and galleries throughout the UK by making its skills, resources and collections available to as wide a variety of people as possible. Currently, the 'Partnership UK' programme incorporates 11 museums around the country. Exhibitions on loan to regional museums in 2002 include: *Unidentified Museum Objects: Curiosities from The British Museum* (12/12/01 - 28/02/02) at the Henry Moore Institute, Leeds; *Visions from the Golden Land: Burma and the Art of Lacquer* (8/12/01 - 2/02/02) at the Royal Albert Memorial Museum in Exeter and then Sunderland Museum and Winter Gardens (20/07/02 - 3/11/02) and the Museum of East Asian Art in Bath (17/4/02 - 1/7/02); and *Size Immaterial: Contemporary hand-held sculpture* (9/02 - 3/03) at Norwich Castle Museum.

The Wellcome Trust Gallery

The next step in the return of the Museum's ethnographic collections to Bloomsbury, this major new gallery of world cultures opening in 2003 will present an anthropological perspective on ideas and practices associated with well-being and misfortune. From the rituals and ceremonies of Papua New Guinea to the masquerades of Bolivia and the 'scare devil' performances of the Nicobar Islands, the gallery will provide in-depth case studies of four very different festivals associated with well-being from across the globe. Other displays will include star objects from the collections ranging from Dr Dee's speculum to the famous rock crystal skull, as well as contemporary art commissions and familiar everyday items. Through contrast and comparison, they will highlight that while encountering misfortune, illness and death is a universal human phenomenon, explanations, treatments and allocations of responsibility can be critically different across cultures and time.

The King's Library

By the end of 2003, the restoration of the historic King's Library, one of the most magnificent interiors in London and the first of architect Robert Smirke's galleries, will be complete. Coinciding with the Museum's 250th anniversary, the room will provide an appropriate setting for a permanent exhibition on discovery and learning in the Age of the Enlightenment, setting in context the history of the Museum and its origins in the great age of collecting.

All information is correct at time of printing but may be subject to change.

For further information or photographs please contact the Press Office.

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