Yale Center for British Art Exhibits New Works in the Collection by John Golding, Gwen John, Lewis Morley, Ben Nicholson, and More in A Decade of Gifts and Acquisitions

A Decade of Gifts and Acquisitions
On view from June 1 through August 13, 2017

NEW HAVEN, CT (June 1, 2017) — In celebration of its fortieth anniversary, the Yale Center for British Art features a suite of distinct exhibitions that showcases the most recent additions to its collections. The displays that constitute A Decade of Gifts and Acquisitions are presented across the Center’s second-floor galleries—some are organized around a theme, such as The British Empire in India; others are focused on a specific artist, such as the abstract painter John Golding (1929–2012); while others highlight individual gifts to the Center, which include the final works received from the Center’s founder Paul Mellon (1907–199; Yale College, Class of 1929). In addition, works throughout the galleries on the third and fourth floors that were acquired within the past decade are specially labeled and help transform the entire building into a space to commemorate the growth of the collections.

“We are most grateful to Paul Mellon for his splendid gift of the Yale Center for British Art to Yale University. The Center opened its doors to the public forty years ago, and through its magnificent collections, engaging programs, and groundbreaking exhibitions and publications, it has continuously reinforced the significance of British art in the United States and abroad. Through direct gifts of objects from Paul Mellon, the Paul Mellon Fund, and the generosity of many additional donors over the past four decades, the Center has steadily expanded its holdings, acquiring a remarkable range of artworks and reference materials that illustrate the story of British art and culture,” said Amy Meyers, Director, Yale Center for British Art. “The Center is the proud steward of over sixty thousand works of art, thirty-five thousand rare books and manuscripts, and forty thousand reference volumes, and electronic resources which support research in British art and related fields, and those numbers increase daily.”

The individual exhibitions include the following:

A Miscellany of Historic Drawings showcases some of the most important additions to the Center’s outstanding collection of historic British drawings, including masterpieces in watercolor by Thomas Girtin (1775–1802) and David Cox (1783–1859).
At the heart of *A Decade of Gifts and Acquisitions* is *Paul and Bunny Mellon: The Final Gift*. This selection of artworks from Mr. Mellon’s last gifts to the Center are largely intimate, personal objects with which he and his wife, Rachel Lambert Mellon (1910–2014), enjoyed living, and many of which she possessed until her death. The display includes works by James Seymour (1702–1752), George Stubbs (1724–1806), Gwen John (1876–1939), and Ben Nicholson (1894–1982), and more.

*Joseph McCrindle and Brian Sewell: Art and Friendship* explores the over forty-year transatlantic friendship between the American philanthropist and publisher Joseph McCrindle (1923–2008; Yale LLB 1948) and the British art critic Brian Sewell (1931–2015), both of whom left important bequests to the Center. This display reveals the friends’ overlapping interests, particularly in British art of the first half of the twentieth century, and includes paintings and drawings by Augustus John (1878–1961) and Eliot Hodgkin (1905–1987).

Known as an outstanding teacher, writer, and curator, John Golding (1929–2012) was first and foremost a painter. *John Golding: From the Artist’s Estate* draws extensively on the rich gift of his work to the Center that charts his journey from figurative art to abstraction.

Works in pastel have been a collecting focus of the Center in recent years. *Pastels and Portraits* brings together pastel portraits, with more unusual uses of the medium in landscape and in copying old master paintings. Other portraits, studies for portraits, and portrait miniatures in a variety of graphic media are also on display, including works by Sir Peter Lely (1618–1680) and Sir Thomas Lawrence (1769–1830).

*Modern and Contemporary Prints* features two outstanding print portfolios shown in their entirety for the first time at the Center—*Shadow IV* (2011), by Anish Kapoor (b. 1954), and *Thirty Pieces of Silver* (2015), by Cornelia Parker (b. 1956), as well as prints by Richard Hamilton (1922–2011) and other exponents of British pop art.

*Instruction with Delight* looks at British childhood from the eighteenth through nineteenth century. While child labor and poverty were constants throughout the Industrial Revolution and the expansion of the British Empire, there was a growing recognition of childhood as a special time of life, ripe with creative energy and potential. On display are children’s games, books, and illustrated manuscripts from this period.

*War and Conflict* explores the material culture of British military engagement from the Napoleonic Wars of the early nineteenth century to the Second World War (1939–1945). The selection includes a drawing of a warship by a French naval officer who took part in the Battle of Trafalgar (1805), artwork and poetry of the First World War, as well as photographs and ephemera that documented the effects of war in Britain during the Second World War.
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The British Empire in India highlights objects that document the experience of British India. Works by both British and Indian artists provided a visual record of the subcontinent for British and continental audiences.

The Inexhaustible Regions of Nature highlights the ways in which self-taught naturalists and artists observed and recorded the natural world from the eighteenth century to the present. The selections juxtapose historic works with those of contemporary British artists and focus on the flora and fauna of the British countryside. Drawings, photographs, and illustrated books are on view.

Over the last decade the Center’s photographic holdings have grown dramatically through gift and purchase. On display in Photography are works from pioneering British photographer Roger Fenton (1819–1869) to twentieth-century photographers Bill Brandt (1904–1983), Cecil Beaton (1904–1980), Lewis Morley (1925–2013), and contemporary artist Yinka Shonibare MBE (RA) (b. 1962).

On view from June 1 through August 13, 2017, A Decade of Gifts and Acquisitions has been curated by Elisabeth Fairman, Chief Curator of Rare Books and Manuscripts; Matthew Hargraves, Chief Curator of Art Collections; Lars Kokkonen, Assistant Curator of Paintings and Sculpture; and Sarah Welcome, Assistant Curator of Rare Books and Manuscripts; under the direction of Scott Wilcox, Deputy Director for Collections. A booklet by the same name, as well as one entitled John Golding: From the Artist’s Estate, accompany this exhibition series and are available for free in the galleries.

ABOUT THE YALE CENTER FOR BRITISH ART
The Yale Center for British Art houses the largest collection of British art outside the United Kingdom. Presented to the university by Paul Mellon (Yale College, Class of 1929), the collection reflects the development of British art and culture from the Elizabethan period onward. The Center’s collections include more than 2,000 paintings, 250 sculptures, 20,000 drawings and watercolors, 40,000 prints, and 35,000 rare books and manuscripts. More than 40,000 volumes supporting research in British art and related fields are available in the Center’s Reference Library.

The Center offers a year-round schedule of special exhibitions and a robust public program of lectures, conferences, films, concerts, performances, and family activities. Resources include the Reference Library and Archives; conservation laboratories; a Study Room for examining works on paper, as well as rare books and manuscripts; and an online catalogue of the collections. In May 2016, the Center reopened to the public following the completion of a multiyear project to conserve its iconic Louis I. Kahn building. Admission is free. Visit the Center online at britishart.yale.edu.
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