

GOVERNMENT ART COLLECTION

Selected by Cornelia Parker

RICHARD OF YORK GAVE BATTLE IN VAIN

16 September – 4 December 2011



Whitechapel Gallery

With over 13,500 works of art spanning five centuries, the Government Art Collection is the largest most dispersed collection of British art in the world. Placed in offices and official residences, two thirds of the works are on display in British Government buildings in nearly every capital city. Dating from 1898, the Collection helps promote British art and history while contributing to cultural diplomacy.

Foreword

For the second display of the Government Art Collection at the Whitechapel Gallery we invited an artist to make a selection of works to offer an intriguing insight into the Collection.

We were delighted when **Cornelia Parker** accepted. As a leading British artist represented in the Collection, Cornelia's own work is concerned with collections and collecting. We had a sense that her selection would result in an installation in its own right. What we hadn't anticipated was the scale of her ambition and that she would select over 70 works.

Recalling this many works from around the world and finding replacements has provided some logistical challenges but the resulting display is an extraordinary array. Cornelia's idea for a colour spectrum has found a way of approaching this eclectic, normally dispersed Collection to stunning effect. I would like to take this opportunity to express our appreciation to her and hope that you will enjoy her selection.

Penny Johnson

Director, Government Art Collection

Richard Of York Gave Battle In Vain: An Introduction by Cornelia Parker

Having been invited to curate a show of works from the Government Art Collection (GAC), I made an initial selection, chosen exhaustively from over 13,500 works. Hoping for potential connections to present themselves, I found myself arranging the selected images on my computer by hue. The title of the infamous American book *Primary Colours: A Novel of Politics* popped into my head and I wondered what would happen if you applied a kind of colour theory to the selection. Could I curate a political spectrum using art plucked from the somewhat charged diplomatic arena?

I have made works in the past that explore a similar territory. For my show at the Baltic Centre for Contemporary Art in Gateshead in 2010, I took fluff from the vacuum cleaner used on the green carpet in the House of Commons and fluff from the red carpet in the House of Lords. A small amount from each was trapped in a glass slide and the tangled mass was projected onto the wall. The resulting piece *Political Abstract (Red and Green)* 2010, appeared as a Rothko-esque apparition, a kind of tinted 'noise' echoing the babble of the two Houses.

There are works in the GAC whose titles have oblique and not so oblique political associations – *Blue Tangle* [1964, **Kenneth Martin**] and *Red Eight* [1987, **Richard Wentworth**] for example – I love this potential knot! However I was conscious that I didn't want to paint anyone into a corner or make any spurious associations between political parties and individual artists. Of course there are the obvious associations that colours have with British political parties, red and blue being the most dominant and yellows and greens the more



Kenneth Martin *Blue Tangle* 1964



Richard Wentworth *Red Eight* 1987



David Cameron with Danish Prime Minister Lars Løkke Rasmussen, Downing Street, 2010

marginal. Maybe that's one reason why in the end it seemed best to go the whole nine yards and make a spectrum using all colours of the rainbow allowing for a less binding, more arbitrary system. Presenting a cacophony of colour; an optical mix that allows the opportunity to blend your own political tint.

The spectrum as a way of unifying or codifying the works gives rise to curious juxtapositions, random clashes of Old Masters rubbing shoulders with YBAs [Young British Artists]. The salon style hang presents the works roughly bunched together in a band of colour running round the gallery – red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo fading to black and white. Blues on the wall, right of the main entrance when you come in and reds on the left. The works are hung close together and piled up quite high on the wall. Some of the smallest works – paintings of postage stamps

[*Gibraltar and Bermuda*, 2008, **Matthew Corbin Bishop**] – are hung the highest so they appear almost the size that stamps are meant to be!

The idea is that there is a circular flow and that each work has its own space but there are dissonances between the individual works, some formal, some conceptual. There's a rhythm and a definite sense of place – both geographically and historically – and cumulatively through juxtaposition there could be a more radical undercurrent to the works.

The title of the show *Richard Of York Gave Battle In Vain* is a mnemonic used to recall the key colours of the spectrum [red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, violet]. There's something about drumming and repetition that I think strikes a chord. It's a found phrase, like the found objects I use in so much of my

Nigel Lawson, HM Treasury, 1989



work. The title resonates with many of the historical works in the selection including Richard III, the son of Richard of York, and several other portraits including Elizabeth I, Mary Queen of Scots, Charles I and Oliver Cromwell. Decapitation features quite strongly, a severed head hovering over a bucket and the Queen's head perched on a little easel, there are battles fought and lost in this show!

Paradoxically, imposing a fairly arbitrary system on the works has created a structure, you can decide where on the spectrum you want to be. There's a balance between the random and rigour which I hope is there in all my work. There are various devices that I think will help to hold the selection together – a repetition of certain artist's works in different colours [William Turnbull and Patrick Caulfield's prints] and some of the works feature all of the colours in just one work

Gordon Brown with Ghanaian cocoa farmers, Comfort Asare-Kwabe and Comfort Kwasibea, HM Treasury, 2006



Grayson Perry with his *Print for a Politician*, 2010

such as a print of the Beatles by Peter Blake and a screenprint by Gillian Wearing. What with works by artists such as Gary Hume, Grayson Perry and Angela Bulloch, you could say there is a little Brit Art refrain going on here.

The violet and indigo section features a series of nocturnes. *Flatford@Fullmoon*, 2000, Darren Almond's elegiac photo taken by moonlight mirrors *Blue Lane*, 2003–4, the night-time view of a house in Graham Crowley's painting, which in turn is echoed in the atmospheric *Houses of Parliament from the Thames by Moonlight*, 1874, by Henry Pether. Perversely, there is a geyser erupting in this section – and the smoke and mirrors of Hayley Newman – hinting at other layers of associations within the political context.

The spectrum here eventually fades to black with a Hamish Fulton text work declaring 'no talking for seven days', 1993, which hovers over a tiny

David Shrigley etching of a microphone, and **Martin Parr**'s man on a ladder who looks like he is heading for a pratfall. Black is followed by white with **Jem Southam**'s photo of Birling Gap. It shows white cliffs falling into the sea: a premonition perhaps of future ecological disaster. It is a work that resonates with a series of cliff pieces I have made over the years, such as *Words that Define Gravity* 1992, in which I threw the dictionary definition of gravity made in lead off the White Cliffs of Dover. Real gravity would have made them into an illegible tangle of words. I've also included one of my feather photograms. Invoking Icarus, *Feather from Freud's Pillow (from his couch)*, 1997, is from a series of six photograms of feathers, which hung in Gordon Brown's dining room at 11 Downing Street for 10 years when he was Chancellor.



Residence of Deputy Permanent Representative to the United Nations, New York, 2008

David Lammy, Senator **Barack Obama**, **Dawn Butler**, **Gordon Brown**, 10 Downing Street, 2008



In curating this display there is a sense that all these works of art have quietly eavesdropped on many an important conversation over the years. It's a great opportunity to recontextualise the works. By butting them up against each other, it allows them to engage in new dialogues and for a new set of meanings – however tangential or oblique – to emerge.

The works in the exhibition are listed here alphabetically and by colour.

The location in the last line of each entry refers to the most recent place that the work was on display.



Angela Bulloch (born 1966)
Panorama Island 1995
colour photograph
Commission for Architecture & the Built Environment, London



Matthew Corbin Bishop (born 1984)
Bermuda 2008
oil on canvas
Foreign & Commonwealth Office, London



John de Critz (after)
King James VI of Scotland and I of England (1566–1625) undated
oil on panel
Scotland Office, London



Patrick Caulfield (1936–2005)
I've only the friendship of hotel rooms from 'Some Poems of Jules Laforgue: Edition C (French Edition)' 1973
screenprint
British Consulate-General, Sydney



Jake & Dinos Chapman (born 1966 and 1962)
Double Deathhead from 'Screen' portfolio 1997
screenprint & plastic
Cabinet Office, London



Alexandre da Cunha (born 1969)
Blind 2001
oil on canvas, stretcher, plastic
British Embassy, Skopje



Daniel Gardner (1750–1805)
Portrait of Angelica Kauffmann, RA (1741–1807) c. 1773
oil on canvas
10 Downing Street, London



Sunnifa Hope (born 1973)
7 from 'Curio' portfolio 2007
C-type photograph
10 Downing Street, London



Callum Innes (born 1962)
Exposed Painting, Cadmium Red Deep 1996
oil on canvas
Residence of UK Deputy
Representative to the EU, Brussels



Sir Joshua Reynolds (attributed to)
The Virgin and Child with the Infant St. John the Baptist 1749–60
oil on canvas
Residence of Ambassador to the
Holy See, Rome



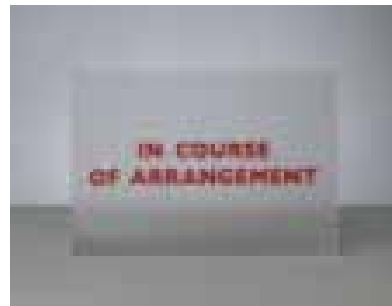
John Riddy (born 1959)
London (Garrick) 2008
colour photograph
Cabinet Office, London



Daniel Mytens (1590–1647)
Lady Anne Montagu (1604–1642) 1626
oil on canvas
Ambassador's Residence, Dublin



Nils Norman (born 1966)
Imaginary Portrait of our Lord Protector Gentrificator General from 'Studio Voltaire Print Portfolio' 2006
inkjet print
British Embassy, Tbilisi
On loan from Studio Voltaire, London



Peter Saville (born 1955) &
Anna Blessman (born 1969)
In Course of Arrangement 2005
acrylic
Department for Communities and
Local Government, London



Graham Sutherland (1903–1980)
La Puce from 'Le Bestiaire, ou Cortège d'Orphée by Apollinaire' portfolio 1979
etching & aquatint
Senior President of Tribunals, London



William Turnbull (born 1922)
Red Leaf Form 1967
screenprint
Ambassador's Residence, Panama



Unknown 16th century artist
William Cecil, 1st Baron Burghley
(1520/1–1598) Lord High Treasurer
c. 1600–10
oil on panel
Ministry of Justice, London



Craigie Aitchison (1926–2009)
Portrait of Alton Peters 1983
oil on canvas
10 Downing Street, London



Patrick Caulfield (1936–2005)
Crying to the walls: My God! My God!
Will she relent? from 'Some Poems of
Jules Laforgue: Edition C' portfolio 1973
screenprint
British Consulate-General, Sydney



Richard Wentworth (born 1947)
Red Eight from 'Artists' Choice'
portfolio 1987
lithograph
Department for Culture, Media
and Sport, London



Martin Creed (1968)
Work No. 253: THINGS 2000
yellow neon
Ambassador's Residence, Paris



Anya Gallaccio (born 1963)
Broken English August '91 from
'Screen' portfolio 1997
screenprint
11 Downing Street, London



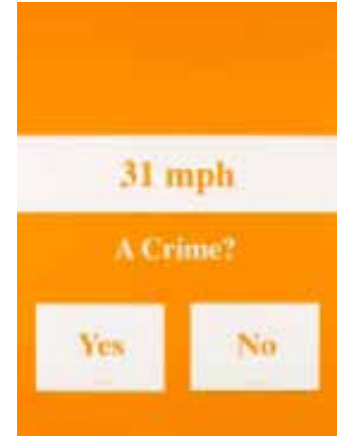
Marcus Gheeraerts the younger (1561–1635)
Queen Elizabeth I (1533–1603)
 1592–1603
 oil on panel
 10 Downing Street, London



Andrew Grassie (born 1966)
The Government Art Collection Sculpture Store 2002
 tempera on paper
 Department for Culture, Media & Sport, London



William Turnbull (born 1922)
Yellow Leaf Form 1967
 screenprint
 Ambassador's Residence, Panama



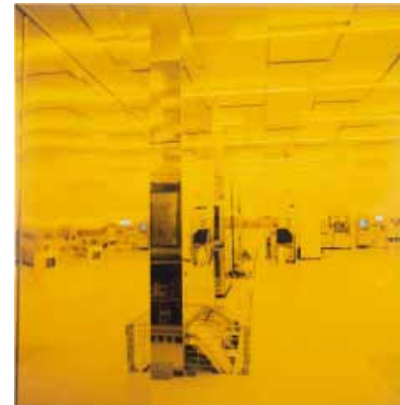
Eva Weinmayr (born 1963)
31 MPH A CRIME? from 'Today's Question' 2002
 enamel paint on aluminium
 10 Downing Street, London



Gary Hume (born 1962)
Poor Thing from 'Portraits' portfolio 1998
 screenprint
 HM Treasury, London



Ed Ruscha (born 1937)
Brews 1970
 screenprint
 Department for Business, Innovation & Skills, London



Jane & Louise Wilson (born 1967)
Safe Light, Reflected Ballroom 2003
 C-type photograph
 Cabinet Office, London



David Batchelor (born 1955)
Shelf-like No. 5 (Green) 1999
acrylic sheet, steel & paint
British Embassy, Skopje



Peter Blake (born 1932)
Love Me Do 2004
screenprint with diamond dust
Residence of Deputy UK Representative
to the United Nations, New York



R.B. Kitaj (1932–2007)
China of To-Day from 'In Our Time:
Covers for a Small Library After the
Life for the Most Part' portfolio 1970
screenprint
Cabinet Office, London



Bridget Smith (born 1966)
Odeon (Green) 1995
C-type photograph
Foreign & Commonwealth Office, London



Adam Dant (born 1967)
Come On England 2000
relief print
Department for Culture, Media & Sport,
London



R.B. Kitaj (1932–2007)
The Defence of Terrorism from 'In Our
Time: Covers for a Small Library After
the Life for the Most Part' portfolio 1970
screenprint
HM Treasury, London



Simon Starling (born 1967)
Rescued Rhododendrons 5 1999
C-type photograph on aluminium
10 Downing Street, London



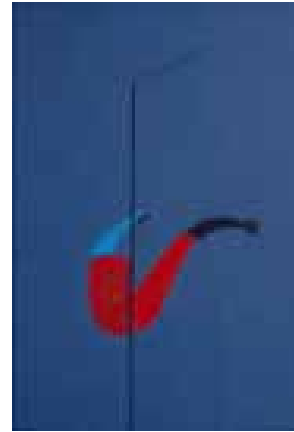
Unknown 16th century artist
King Henry VI (1421–1471) c.1530
oil on panel
Foreign & Commonwealth Office, London



Darren Almond (born 1971)
Flatford @ Fullmoon 2000
Lambda print
11 Downing Street, London



Edward Ardizzone (1900–1979)
Barrister and Clients undated
pen, ink & watercolour on paper
Royal Courts of Justice, London



Patrick Caulfield (1936–2005)
Pipe with Smoke 1990
acrylic on board with relief
Ambassador's Residence, Tel Aviv



Barrie Cook (born 1929)
No.2 Untitled 1976
acrylic on paper
Ambassador's Residence, Belgrade



Robert Buhler (1916–1989)
Twilight, Venice (II) undated
oil on board
British Embassy, Bucharest



Elizabeth Butterworth (born 1949)
Scarlet Macaw's Wing 1975
watercolour on paper
Government Art Collection, London



Matthew Corbin Bishop (born 1984)
Gibraltar 2008
oil on canvas
Foreign & Commonwealth Office, London



Graham Crowley (born 1950)
Blue Lane 2003–4
oil on canvas
UK Mission to the United Nations, New York



David Dawson (born 1960)
Lucian Freud painting the Queen 2001
 C-type photograph
 Cabinet Office, London



Edward Dayes (1763–1804)
The New Geyser 1790
 oil on canvas
 Foreign & Commonwealth Office, London



Anthony van Dyck (circle of)
Lady with a Tulip 1639–50
 oil on canvas
 Ambassador's Residence, The Hague



R.B. Kitaj (1932–2007)
People of the Abyss: Jack London from
 'In Our Time: Covers for a Small Library
 After the Life for the Most Part' portfolio
 1970
 screenprint
 Serious Organised Crime Agency, London



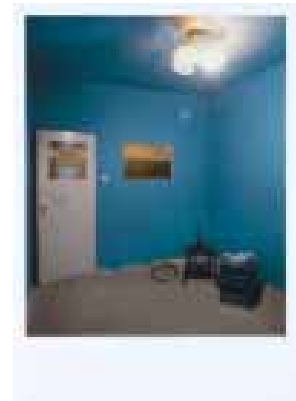
Arthur Devis (1711–1787)
Young Man: The Young Waltonian c.1750
 oil on canvas
 HMA Residence, Vienna



Anthony van Dyck (after)
King Charles I (1600–1649) 1633–49
 oil on canvas
 High Commissioner's Residence, Ottawa



Kenneth Martin (1905–1984)
Blue Tangle 1964
 oil on board
 Ministry of Justice, London



Mike Nelson (born 1967)
Heroin Room (The Coral Reef, 2000) from
 'E3 4RR' portfolio 2007
 Ultrachrome print
 High Commissioner's Residence, Nairobi
 On loan from Matt's Gallery, London



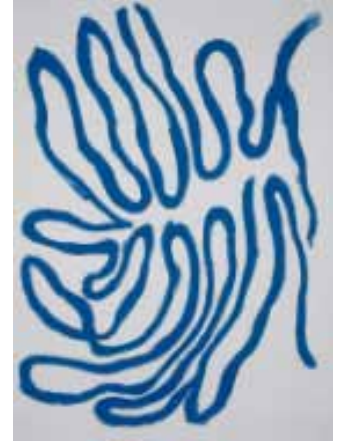
Hayley Newman (born 1969)
Volcano Lady from 'E3 4RR' portfolio
2007
double sided off-set lithograph
High Commissioner's Residence, Nairobi
On loan from Matt's Gallery, London



Henry Pether (active 1828–1865)
*Houses of Parliament from the Thames
by Moonlight* undated
oil on canvas
High Commissioner's Residence, Ottawa



Walter Richard Sickert (1860–1942)
The Integrity of Belgium 1914
oil on canvas
Cabinet Office, London



William Turnbull (born 1922)
Blue Leaf Form 1967
screenprint
Ambassador's Residence, Panama



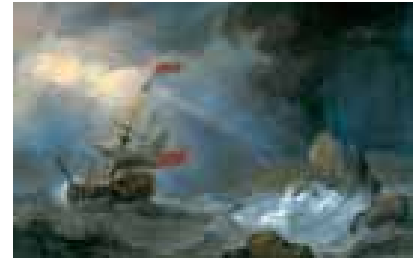
Thomas Rowlandson (1757–1827) &
Auguste Charles Pugin (1768/9–1832)
*Exhibition of Water Coloured Drawings,
Old Bond Street* published 1808
coloured aquatint
10 Downing Street, London



Peter Saville (born 1955) &
Anna Blessman (born 1969)
Object Removed 2005
acrylic
Department for Culture, Media & Sport,
London



Unknown 18th century artist
Boy with Parrot c. 1720
oil on canvas
Residence of the UK Representative
to the OSCE, Vienna



Willem van de Velde II (1633–1707)
Man of War in Distress off Rocky Coast
c. 1700
oil on canvas
Ambassador's Residence, Dublin



Robert Walker (after)
Oliver Cromwell (1599–1658) Lord Protector of England 1643–58
oil on canvas
Cabinet Office, London



Andy Warhol (1928–1987)
Queen Elizabeth II of the United Kingdom 3/40 from 'Reigning Queens' portfolio 1985
screenprint
Consul General's Residence, New York



Hamish Fulton (born 1946)
No Talking for Seven Days from 'Ten Toes Towards the Rainbow' portfolio 1993
screenprint
HM Treasury, London



Sunnifa Hope (born 1973)
3 from 'Curio' portfolio 2007
C-type photograph
10 Downing Street, London



Bedwyr Williams (born 1974)
Bard Attitude 2005
colour photograph
Government Art Collection, London



Rowland Lockey (after)
Mary, Queen of Scots 1542–1587
c. 1610–20
oil on panel
10 Downing Street, London



Cornelia Parker (born 1956)
Feather from Freud's Pillow from 'Up Down Charm Strange' portfolio 1998
photogram
Cabinet Office, London



Martin Parr (born 1952)
Man on a Ladder Hebden Bridge, Yorkshire 1976
photograph
Foreign & Commonwealth Office, London



Rudolf Sauter (1895–1977)
Arthur William Symons (1865–1945)
literary scholar, poet and author 1935
tempera on canvas
Residence of UK Representative to
the EU, Brussels



Grayson Perry (born 1960)
Print for a Politician 2005
etching (3 plates)
HM Treasury, London



David Shrigley (born 1968)
Untitled (Microphone) from 'Untitled'
portfolio 2005
soft-ground etching
British Embassy, Skopje



Jem Southam (born 1950)
Birling Gap, Limestone with Flints 2000
photograph
Department for Culture, Media
& Sport, London



Gillian Wearing (born 1963)
The Garden from 'Screen' portfolio 1997
screenprint
Cabinet Office, London



Homer Sykes (born 1949)
Haxey Hood Game, Haxey, Humberside
from 'Once a year: some traditional
British customs' portfolio 1977
photograph
HM Revenue and Customs, London



Rachel Whiteread (born 1963)
Mausoleum under Construction from
'London' portfolio 1992
screenprint
HM Treasury, London



John Wood & Paul Harrison (born 1966 & 1969)

Ladder from the series 'Twenty Six (Drawing and Falling Things)' 2000–1
DVD Video, 36 seconds continuous loop
Department for Culture, Media & Sport,
London



Unknown 17th century artist
King Richard III (1452–1485)
c.1675–1700
oil on panel
Residence of Secretary-General of the
Council of Europe, Strasbourg

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Related Exhibition Events

Tours: Government Art Collection

Tuesdays 27 September, 11 October, 8 and 22 November, 6.30pm
Government Art Collection, Queens Yard,
179a Tottenham Court Road, London, W1T 7PA
(Free)

A chance to go behind the scenes at the Government Art Collection's central London premises to learn about the role of the Collection and view the storage and conservation of works as they are prepared for display. Led by curators from the Collection.

In Conversation: Cornelia Parker and David Batchelor

Thursday 6 October, 7pm
Zilkha Auditorium (Whitechapel Gallery ticket price £5/£3 conc)

Cornelia Parker, artist and guest curator of *Richard Of York Gave Battle In Vain*, the second display from the Government Art Collection, discusses her selection with artist and writer **David Batchelor**.

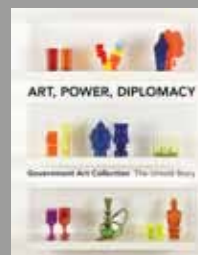
Gallery Talk: Nicky Hodge on Richard Of York Gave Battle In Vain

Thursday 3 November, 7pm
Gallery 7 (Free)

Government Art Collection Curator of Information & Research (Modern & Contemporary) **Nicky Hodge** leads a tour of work selected by Cornelia Parker for the second display from the Collection.

With BSL Interpretation

Further Information



Art, Power, Diplomacy

Government Art Collection,
The Untold Story

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www.gac.culture.gov.uk
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Government Art Collection

At Work

3 June – 4 September 2011

Richard Of York Gave Battle In Vain selected by Cornelia Parker

16 September – 4 December 2011

Travelling Light selected by Simon Schama

16 December 2011 – 26 February 2012

12 from No10 selected by Downing Street staff

9 March – 10 June 2012

Commissions: Now and Then

21 June – 2 September 2012

This exhibition is a collaboration between the Whitechapel Gallery and the Government Art Collection

Whitechapel Gallery

77–82 Whitechapel High Street
London E1 7QX

↻ Aldgate East / Liverpool Street
Liverpool St, Tower Gateway DLR

T +44 (0)20 7522 7888

F +44 (0)20 7377 7887

info@whitechapelgallery.org

Admission free

Opening Hours

Gallery, Bookshop and Café/Bar

Tuesday–Sunday, 11am–6pm

Thursday, 11am–9pm

The Foyle Reading Room

Tuesday–Friday, 11am–5pm

Whitechapel Gallery Dining Room

Tuesday–Saturday, 12–2.30pm

Wednesday–Saturday, 6pm–11pm

(last food orders 9.30pm)

Sunday, 12–3.45pm

Government Art Collection



department for
culture, media
and sport

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